Special Education leavers in Central Scotland: a socio psychological perspective.

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The principal aim of this thesis is to examine the reasons that special education leavers with a mental handicap give for their labelling. The thesis consists of three parts. In the pilot study seven trainees at an Adult Training Centre were interviewed between March and April 1985. Six of these trainees were reinterviewed between November 1986 and January 1987. In the second part of the thesis, the normative study, a survey was carried out which established the employment history of 80 of the 105 leavers from a special school and a special unit between 1982 and 1985. The normative study also established that at least 35 of the 60 leavers on whom it was possible to gather information had been the victims of informal labelling. In the final part of the thesis, the ipsative study, eleven special school and special unit pupils were interviewed. The first interviews were carried out in the term before the participants left school in 1985. The final interviews were conducted at the end of the participants' first year after leaving school, in January 1987. I argue that the leavers that I interviewed actively interpreted labelling and produced often quite detailed and complex explanations. For the leavers these explanations served the function of limiting the extent to which they were personally responsible for their placement in a special school or a special unit.

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For Andrea, Molly and John

who have given me so much.

I'm not handicapped, but I'm slow with my work and things like that. But I'm not handicapped, it's just that when you're in a class, it's just classes like anybody else, it's just that you cannae do the work that they folk can do. And you're getting on with the work that us, we can do, but they can do the harder work. It's just that we're down the lower and they're up the higher and there's nothing to it, but they keep on calling us that because we don't do a lot of their work.

Gavin, a pupil at Summerdale Special Unit, 26:11:85.

I got shifted to the unit not because of my work, ken, that I couldn't do it, it was because of the kids in the class, ken that I couldn't get on with them. And that made me even worse because the other people would know that I was in the unit and I, they would spat at us and that, ken. I kept on hiding, hiding under, actually physically hiding under desks. Because I could see my wee brother looking into the class, and I used to hide under the desks, because people were walking by, you know, and they can just look in. I kept moving away, slide under the table, just so that they couldn't see me. That's what it was, it wasn't actually schooling I didn't like, ken I've got pals there and everything.

Angie, a former pupil at Summerdale Special Unit, 24:2:86.

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Foreword.

This thesis is concerned with the explanations that special education leavers with a mental handicap give for their labelling. Many participants in this study had had painful experiences of labelling. Some of them had been physically assaulted, while others had been told by their parents that they were 'mental'. All had been separated from the majority of their peers because of academic difficulties. In the pilot study and the main part of the study, which are reported in Chapters Four and Six, I used participant observation to establish a relationship with the seven trainees at an Adult Training Centre and the eleven leavers who were involved in this study. I am still, three years after the start of the study and living 400 miles away from Central Region, in touch with two participants. I hope that in some ways this thesis will be able to tell part of their story.

The first two chapters of this thesis form a review of recent research into labelling and special education. In Chapter One I argue that the majority of studies which have examined the psychological consequences of labelling have assumed both that labelled individuals passively accept their labels and that the effects of labelling can be investigated through quantitative measures of self-concept. The qualitative approaches to the effects of labelling that exist have tended to adopt a limited explanatory framework, for instance the highly influential work of Robert Edgerton (eg Edgerton, 1967) confined the responses of deinstitutionalized patients to two categories: denial and passing.

By contrast, in this thesis I argue that the psychological effects of special educational placement need to be examined qualitatively as well as quantitatively. The special education leavers that I interviewed actively interpreted what had happened to them, and their accounts varied

enormously. Some participants, for instance, consistently denied that they had ever been called names, although their parents told me that this happened frequently. The majority of leavers, however, either attributed their labelling to a variety of factors that were outside their control or limited the extent of their difficulties to certain areas. In addition, some of the leavers emphasised positive aspects of their life or suggested that their problems would be short lived. All of these coping strategies represented positive and active adaptations to a threatening environment.

This study consisted of three parts. Firstly, the pilot study involved interviewing seven trainees, their parents and instructors during the spring of 1985. Six of these trainees were reinterviewed over the winter of 1986/87. The pilot study showed that although there was a wide amount of variation between trainees' accounts of the reasons for their labelling, these accounts changed very little between the first and the final interviews.

The second or normative part of the study involved a survey of 110 leavers from a Special School and a Special Unit for pupils with a mild mental handicap in the Central Region of Scotland. This survey had three main aims: to establish what happened to these special education leavers in the three year period immediately after leaving school, to explore the leavers' and their parents' opinions of special education, and to assess the extent of the name-calling experienced by these pupils. The final or ipsative element of the study followed a group of eleven special education leavers from their last terms at school to the end of their first year in the world outside special education.

I have presented these findings in a series of Case-Studies and have argued that labelling is not a consistent phenomenon but varies according

to individual and situational factors. These variations may have consequences for the ways in which an individual adapts to a more independent mode of living and may also have implications for the counselling of individuals with a mental handicap.

CHAPTER ONE: THE LABELLED INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY.

1.1 Introduction.

In recent years the major influence on the development of services for individuals with a mental handicap has been the policy of community care. Alongside practical developments, such as the closure of large institutions and the growth in the provision of education and day services, there have been calls for a change in society's attitudes towards people with a mental handicap. This has been illustrated by a change in the terms that we use to label individuals. We no longer use the phrases *educationally subnormal* or *retarded*, but refer to people as having *learning difficulties* or *special educational needs**.

The growth in community based services has to a large part been based on the principles of normalisation (e.g. O'Brien and Tyne, 1981). In attempting to apply these principles some professionals have become concerned with the quality of services that they have been able to offer clients, while others have sought to establish self- and citizen-advocacy schemes (e.g. Wolfensberger, 1977, 1982; Sang and O'Brien, 1984 ; Cooper and Hersov, 1986; Brandon and Brandon, 1988). Although individuals with a mental handicap are now seen as people and not as patients (Mittler, 1979), and as individuals who can speak for themselves (Williams and Shoultz, 1982) there is still a need for research which can analyse the interaction between these labelled individuals and society, and which can therefore enable workers to help people with a mental handicap to help themselves.

Life in the community for people with a mental handicap has not been

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* For the sake of consistency within this study I will refer either to special educational leavers or to individuals with a mental handicap.

without its problems. Flynn (1987), for instance, found that of 88 adults who had a mental handicap and lived in their own homes in the North West of England, at least a quarter had been victimised by their neighbours. It is unclear, however, what the effects of such victimisation are, and how they can best be countered. Reiss and Benson (1984) described a range of emotional disturbances amongst out-patients who had a mental handicap. They claimed that all of their patients had suffered prolonged exposure to at least one of seven different negative social conditions. In addition to victimisation these included infantilisation, rejection and ridicule. Yet as Sovner and DesNoyers Hurley (1983) have suggested, although these problems are frequently encountered by people with a mental handicap and may cause them considerable pain, these individuals have very few opportunities to openly discuss these issues:

> In our experience, the topic most avoided, when counselling the mentally retarded, is that of mental retardation. Few counsellors or therapists deal with how the individual must cope with the consequences of impaired intelligence and psychosocial functioning. This subject is a painful and difficult one to face by both participants in the therapeutic relationship. Nevertheless, it is one of the most crucial themes that must be confronted (Sovner and DesNoyers Hurley, 1983, p. 41).

1.1.1 Labelling.

Once an individual has been recognised, by whatever means, as having a mental handicap or learning disability, and the local services have made provision to meet his or her needs, he or she can be said to have been formally labelled. *Formal* labelling involves the categorisation and subsequent allocation of an individual to a qualitatively different form of treatment than that reserved for non-labelled individuals.

Chapter One: The Labelled Individual and Society.

Once an individual has been formally labelled as having a mental handicap, he or she is often victimised, called names or otherwise abused by some members of society. For instance, as this thesis will show, pupils at a special school in the Central Region of Scotland were sometimes called 'bo-bo', 'mongol' or 'benny' by children who knew that they went to a special school. This type of labelling is known as *informal* labelling and is potentially much more hurtful for the victim than the more ordinary nicknames that many children are given because it is based upon a formal or official labelling process. The special education leaver has already been found to be educationally 'different' by the school authorities and not just by his or her peers.

Many of the effects of formal labelling have been researched in detail. Some investigators have suggested that it is the process of labelling and classification itself that creates mental handicap. These authors have argued that mental handicap (as distinct from mental impairment) is a social construction. In the next section of this chapter I will consider this issue, and in particular the contribution that deviance theory has made to our understanding of labelling. I will then go on to examine Robert Edgerton's ethogenic approach which explored the methods that labelled individuals use in their everyday lives to deny or to pass over the fact that they have been labelled. Finally, I will describe some recent ideas taken from social psychology which suggest that the relationship between society and the labelled individual should be seen as an interaction in which the individual seeks to make sense out of, or actively interprets the reasons for, his or her labelling.

1.2 Deviance theory.

Definitions of mental handicap usually describe mental handicap as including both an intellectual deficit and a lowered level of social functioning. The Mental Health Act (1983), Section One, Paragraph Two, for instance, defined mental impairment as

> a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind (not amounting to severe mental impairment) which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning and is associated with abnormally aggressive or seriously irresponsible conduct on the part of the person concerned.

The intellectual and social abilites of an individual, however, are dependent on the learning opportunities that he or she has previously experienced. In many ways, therefore, mental handicap (as distinct from any underlying impairment) can be regarded as a social construction. Social forces act upon the individual first of all to determine his or her learning experiences, and secondly to define and categorise some individuals and not others as mentally handicapped.

Deviance theories take this argument a step further and suggest that not only are children from lower social classes and minority ethnic backgrounds discriminated against by I.Q. tests (e.g. Henschel, 1972; Mercer, 1973) but that the labelling and categorisation of individuals as having a mental handicap is the act of a social and ethnic majority imposing its will upon minority groups. Researchers using ideas taken from deviance theory (e.g. Braginsky and Braginsky, 1971; Sarasson and Doris, 1979; and Rowitz and Gunn, 1984) have therefore suggested that mental handicap is the consequence of the labelling of deviant behaviour and not simply a cause of such labelling.

Deviance theory is based on four major principles. Firstly, deviant behaviour is only said to occur when society and its agents judge the

behaviour of an individual to be rule-breaking. Secondly, once an individual is judged to be deviant, he or she is formally labelled and is then removed from normal patterns of interaction. Thirdly, the labelled individual is assigned a definite role, together with the expectations of others as to how he or she will behave. Finally, the removal of an individual from an ordinary environment is an irreversible act (MacMillan, 1982). Mercer (1970) succinctly summarised many of the main elements of deviance theory as follows:

> From a social system perspective, mental retardation is not viewed as an individual pathology but as a status which an individual holds in a particular social system and a role which he plays as an occupant of that status. In this context mental retardation is not a characteristic of the person, but rather a description of an individual's location in a social system, the role he is expected to play in the social system and the expectations that others in the system will have for his behaviour. Mental Retardation is an achieved status. It is a position in a group that is contingent upon the performance or, in this case the lack of performance of the individual (Mercer, 1970, pp. 383-384).

There are two possible routes by which a pupil in a special school or unit can be affected by his or her placement (MacMillan, 1982; Guskin et al., 1975): firstly, labelling may *directly* affect the individual once the pupil realises that he or she has been labelled; and secondly, labelling may *indirectly* affect the school pupil through the expectations of others. In the latter case, influential people in the pupil's life, such as teachers and friends, come to know that the individual has been labelled as having special educational needs. This affects their behaviour towards the labelled person and this in turn affects his or her social, educational and psychological development

1.2.1 Direct effects of labelling.

One possible way in which labelling may have a direct effect upon a

labelled individual occurs if he or she begins to play the role of a 'mentally handicapped' person. English (1975), for instance, has detailed how such a process may occur:

> The unfortunate consequence of such salient group stereotypes is that the stigmatised person adopts a deviant social role ... why not be more limited than you really are if almost everyone expects this of you ... retarded persons are stereotyped as docile, forgetful, distractible, perseverating and childlike. Such strong stereotypes can represent irreversible life scripts that isolate the different, deprive them of their rights and uniqueness and guarantee the circular maintenance of the stereotype itself (English, 1975, p. 1051).

Rowitz and Gunn (1984) suggested that as children we learn stereotypes of mental handicap and that these are then continually reaffirmed in ordinary social interaction. Consequently, individuals who are labelled as having a mental handicap are first of all rewarded by society for playing the stereotyped deviant role and then punished when they attempt to return to conventional roles. Rowitz and Gunn added that 'When a rule breaker is publically labelled as mentally retarded, the individual is highly suggestible and may accept the proferred role of the mentally retarded person as the only alternative ' (p. 159).

The concept of an individual as adopting a deviant or handicapped social role is not wholly convincing. For instance, if deviance is seen not as a property of the individual, but as a definition that is conferred upon the individual by part of society (in this case the medical and educational authorities), then what is seen as 'deviant behaviour' in one situation may be seen as normal behaviour in another (Mercer, 1970). Thus in social systems that have different social rules, the individual may not be recognised as deviant and will consequently not be required to play the role of the deviant or handicapped person. In his or her local community, for instance, a special education pupil may be accepted as a perfectly

ordinary member of society, whereas at school he or she may adapt to fit the 'deviant' role. It is possible, therefore, that any handicap that such a school pupil may show will only be apparent during the six hours of a school day. Yet evidence to support this idea of a 'six-hour-retarded-child' is inconsistent (e.g. Koegel and Edgerton, 1982).

As MacMillan (1982) has recognised, labelling is a far more complicated process than a simple role-play model allows for. Labelling does not occur in a vacuum: instead factors such as who labels the individual, whether the labelling is formal or informal and the attitudes of parents and peers, all play their part in determining the individual's experience of labelling. Moreover, the notion of social roles posits a discrepancy between the real self and the roles that an individual plays, and introduces the possibility that if we examine only the social roles of a deviant individual then we are not really examining the fundamental core of that person's being.

A further criticism of role theory (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987) is that it represents individuals as the passive recipients of information and thus ignores the extent to which people are actively trying to make sense of their social world. While it is true that an individual cannot arrrive at a system of values independently of the social attitudes within which he or she lives (Tajfel, 1981), nevertheless the individual still plays an active part in determining his or her own identity. Thus the contribution of the individual to the construction of his or her identity must not be ignored. Breakwell (1986) has argued that the processes of individual cognition interact with the processes of social influence to produce personal beliefs and values. This personal evaluation process is selective and purposive. She has argued that an individual who is threatened, for instance by being labelled as having a mental handicap, does not simply

internalise the dominant system of social values but creatively re-evaluates information in accordance with previously internalised value systems and beliefs.

In conclusion, Stobbart (1986) noted that the criticisms of MacMillan (1982) and others (e.g. Guskin et al., 1975) have undermined any direct appeals to labelling alone to account for the adjustment difficulties of children with a handicap. If the knowledge that he or she had been labelled as having a mental handicap directly affected a labelled individual then, as MacMillan (1982) noted 'we would expect to find an individual having a lower self-concept, being more self-derogatory, having a lower level of aspiration, or otherwise manifesting devaluation of self-worth as a direct result of being labelled' (p. 270). Research has failed to support this conclusion. Coleman (1985) for instance commented:

> The premise that handicapped labels and special-class placements negatively influence children's self-concept is one of the most firmly held but poorly justified tenets within the literature on special education (Coleman, 1985, p. 32).

1.2.2 Indirect effects of labelling.

Instead of labelling directly affecting individuals, some authors have suggested various indirect methods whereby a number of factors mediate the effect of the label on the achievement levels and self-concept of the labelled school pupil. Amongst possible mediating factors that have been investigated are social class (e.g. Coleman, 1985), social comparison (e.g. Strang et al., 1978) and social acceptability (e.g. Freeman and Algozzine, 1980; Siperstein et al., 1980).

The concept of indirect labelling suggests that labelling on its own does not directly affect the way in which an individual perceives him- or

herself. Instead, labelling an individual as having a mental handicap may act as a self-fulfilling hypothesis. The label lowers the expectations of others and thereby limits the individual's ability to achieve his or her potential. Algozzine and Mercer (1980), for instance, represented labels in terms of 'expectancy generating stimuli'. They demonstrated that labelling could affect the expectations of both teachers and classroom peers towards the labelled individual and that this in turn led to lowered levels of academic achievement.

The indirect effects of labelling may lead a labelled individual into a 'deviant career' (e.g. Burbach, 1981; O'Brien and Tyne, 1981). A deviant career takes the form of a vicious circle in which, because of an initial achievement delay, the individual is first of all labelled and is then treated by others in terms of that label rather than as an individual. People have low expectations of an individual who has been labelled as having a mental handicap and, as a result, he or she is not given sufficient opportunities to develop to his or her true potential. This in turn brings about a more severe performance delay and thus confirmation of the original expectations.

Burbach (1981) produced a model of labelling which included both the direct and indirect effects of labelling. He distinguished between primary and secondary, or career, deviance. Burbach's secondary deviant was similar in many ways to the 'social dope' model of English (1975) which has been described above in Section 1.2.1. For the secondary deviant his or her differences from others gradually become the central feature in his or her self-concept. The individual's self-perceptions thus come to coincide with the expectations of others and their reactions have a reinforcing effect on the deviant's behaviour. The primary deviant, however, believes him- or

herself to be non-deviant and although the individual does not deny that he or she is different from others, this difference is not seen as being significant. Where labelling has an effect on an individual's self-concept this is achieved indirectly by breaking down the consensus through which the individual is able to negotiate his or her identity with society. Burbach suggested that

> To the extent that we are able to successfully negotiate our own meanings, we can establish and sustain a viable self in our social world. Conversely, if we are unable to bargain effectively for these crucial self-meanings, the entire process of defining a self breaks down (Burbach, 1981, p. 374).

However the reactions of others towards people with a mental handicap seem to be influenced as much by the individual characteristics of the labelled person (such as his or her level of competence, challenging behaviour and physical attractiveness) as by the label itself (MacMillan, 1982). Moreover, it is clearly one thing to demonstrate that the achievement levels of individuals suffer if they are labelled as having a mental handicap, but another to claim that such individuals necessarily see themselves more negatively.

1.3 The quantitative examination of self-concept.

Whether researchers have regarded labelling as affecting individuals directly or indirectly, the most common means of studying labelling has been through the use of quantitative measures such as questionnaires. This lead Goode (1984) to comment that:

> With the notable exception of Edgerton's ethnographic work (1967) and some few others ... the vast majority of papers in this field have been either clinical or experimental, relying almost exclusively upon "scientific" procedures such as: hypothesis generation; sampling; measurement of variables; hypothesis testing; statistical analysis of data; theory building and the like (Goode, 1984, p. 228).

Yet if we are to make any sense of the data which these procedures provide, then, as Campbell (1984) has commented, we also need information with which we can calibrate the scales. Damon and Hart (1982), for example, have criticised those studies which arrive at quantitative measures of self-esteem. They argued that conceptual understanding is a cognitive activity that must be assessed qualitatively, for it is impossible to determine the type of understanding that an individual has in purely quantitative terms. Instead, they suggested that such an analysis should rely on the descriptive accounts that people use in their efforts to comprehend what is going on in the world.

Research which relies solely on statistical measures of the effects of labelling is often unable to draw conclusions which are based on the reality of labelling for the labelled individual. Instead, researchers have been forced to make assumptions about how individuals feel about being labelled. Carroll et al. (1984), for instance, after using three different statistical measures of academic self-concept, described two means by which mentally retarded children could be helped to feel better about themselves; first of all they suggested the use of a glove puppet show, and secondly the presentation of biographies of other handicapped people who have 'made it', such as Roosevelt, Einstein and Stevie Wonder. This study appears to leave a large gap between its quantitative representation of self-concept and the reality of what it is actually like to be verbally abused or placed in a special school.

Another example of the inadequacy of the conclusions that have been drawn from purely quantitative studies is provided by Simpson and Meaney (1979). They investigated the effects of learning to ski on the self-concept of mentally retarded children. The authors reported beneficial consequences

that were related to the progress of each child. It is difficult to understand, however, how success on the nursery slopes can be related to helping children cope with the more fundamental problems that they encounter. Research which is not based on an analysis of the realities of labelling seems unable to do anything more than to guess at the best way to lessen the effects of labelling.

Another criticism that can be made of a quantitative approach to the psychological effects of labelling is that many authors have resorted to generating a myriad of intra-psychic constructs revolving around self-concept, self-esteem and self-perception. Even with an area which has been as thoroughly researched as self-concept, there has been little consensus either as to what exactly self-concept is, or what is the best way to study it. Schurr et al. (1970), for instance, reviewed several studies of special and mainstream education children. They concluded that:

> At this stage at least in part because of differences in subjects and instrumentation, findings are equivocal and no generalisations can be made about the mentally retarded's self-concept ... Clearly one of the major problems in self-concept research is the extreme flexibility of the idea. Depending upon one's orientation, it is possible to generate a range of logically disparate items, and include them in various self-concept, self-attitude and self-evaluation scales which makes it necessary to study research procedures at the item content level before making any comparative statement or generalisations based on a group of studies (Schurr et al., 1970, pp. 40-42).

Dividing self-identity into various components inevitably tends to mask the whole person. Self-esteem, for instance, as a measure of how good or bad a person feels about him- or herself, is more or less meaningless if it is considered in isolation from that person's *overall* view of him- or herself. Moreover, conceptions of the self (e.g. Jones et al., 1984) that divide social actions into a series of learnt roles, or self-concept into a central core of schemas (self-as-athlete, self-as-mother etc.) only serve

to fractionate identity still further. One consequence of breaking the self down in this way is that any effects of labelling on one aspect of identity could be thought to occur without other aspects being affected. The researcher therefore loses sight of the complete person and becomes involved with a series of abstract entities whose relationship to each other is uncertain.

In addition to these weaknesses, there are also two general criticisms that can be made of many of the experimental investigations into the effects of labelling on self-concept. These can roughly be divided into difficulties in testing and methodological weaknesses.

1.3.1 Difficulties in testing.

Barton et al. (1975) have observed that particular problems arise when using quantitative techniques with people with a mental handicap. These include illiteracy, poor verbal comprehension and concrete responding to the testing material. Many tests require considerable verbal skill and they may discriminate against, or break down altogether, when used with individuals who have poor verbal abilities. This can occur even with those tests that have been standardized on, or designed for, individuals with lower I.Q. scores (MacMillan, 1982). Moreover, while a variety of paper-and-pencil tests have been used with varying degrees of success (e.g. Noce, 1977), these tests rarely take account of the social context in which they are administered. They are essentially static measures which take a passive view of the participant and do not allow for the dynamic abilities that the individual needs in order to interpret the world. Yet, despite these limitations, tests such as the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale are still popular with some authors (e.g. Coleman, 1983). Other researchers

have attempted to overcome some of the problems inherent in these tests by using a school teacher to help pupils complete the questionnaire (Corrie, 1984), by employing Repertory Grids (Barton et al., 1976) or Q-sorts (Hoos, 1977). However, over eighteen years ago, Schurr et al. (1970) questioned the use of what they termed 'obtrusive' measures and, instead, suggested that attention should be switched to the 'self-referrent' statements of special education pupils. They noted that

> Since the mentally retarded are especially 'suspect' as subjects for research demanding the use of obtrusive measures, greater attention might profitably be given to recording and classifying spontaneous self-referrent statements. This might overcome one of the major weaknesses of self-concept scales, that they reflect the thinking and biases of the researcher rather than the natural cognitions and concerns of the subject (Schurr et al., 1970, p. 42).

1.3.2 Methodological weaknesses.

The methodological weaknesses of many studies connected with the labelling of special needs pupils have been extensively discussed elsewhere (e.g. MacMillan, 1982). One flaw, which has been widely reported, is that it is difficult to compare special and mainstream education pupils, as these children differ from each other in a variety of ways. The lack of an adequate control group has meant that many studies which rely on post-labelling comparisons between pupils in regular and special classes (e.g. Mercer, 1971) have had difficulty distinguishing between the actual effects of the label and the behavioural limitations that led to the labelling in the first place.

MacMillan et al. (1974) suggested that, because of these experimental difficulties, comparisons between groups after labelling has occured, could only be made if there had been a random assignment of children to the labelled and unlabelled groups. Without random assignment it is far more

difficult for the researcher to distinguish between the effects of the label and other, uncontrolled variables. However, researchers are often unable to achieve such a high level of control over research that is carried out within a natural environment. Consequently, labelling per se is often confounded with issues such as curriculum differences, teacher-pupil ratios and the effects of possible devaluations of the self prior to labelling (MacMillan et al., 1974).

1.4 The experiences of the labelled individual

One of the most apparent gaps in the body of research into the effects of labelling, has been the lack of studies which have examined labelling specifically from the viewpoint of the labelled person. Yet Sovner and DesNoyers Hurley (1983), Judge (1983) and Reiss and Benson (1984), for instance, have all noted the need for more work to be carried out into the role that affective variables play in psychiatric illnesses in individuals with a mental handicap. In addition, Luftig (1982) and Flynn and Knassen (1986) have commented on the need for greater attention to the ways in which special education pupils perceive themselves. For, as Guskin et al. (1975) commented:

> It is difficult to think of a more significant perspective on labeling than that of the labeled child. Discussions on labeling invariably make implicit or explicit assumptions about the labeled (sic) individual's perceptions (Guskin et al., 1975, p. 196).

One of the few researchers who specifically set out to explore the basis for such assumptions was Robert Edgerton. Edgerton was greatly influenced by Erving Goffman, and it is worth examining some of Goffman's ideas concerning stigma and identity before going on to examine Edgerton's ethnographic research.

1.4.1 The management of a spoiled identity.

In Goffman's (1963) book *Stigma: the Management of a Spoiled Identity*, stigma is defined as the attribute of an individual which is held by others to be 'deeply discrediting' to its possessor. The origins of stigma, then, lie in the attitudes of others towards the stigmatised person. While the individual may be able to anticipate some of the reactions of society towards him or her, and thus control some of the information that passes to other people, in many other ways he or she is powerless.

Goffman represented the stigmatised person as attempting to manipulate the way in which people saw him or her. The stigmatised individual was seen as managing his or her spoiled identity in the same way as a football coach manages a team. The individual is divorced from his or her role, which becomes something to be lived with rather than being lived through; the role is separate from the actor and not a fundamental part of that person's being.

There is a difference, however, between the stigmatised person realising that others view him or her negatively, and the same individual accepting that those views are justified. Goffman's analysis of the attempts that stigmatised individuals make in order to be accorded the respect and regard that they believe they deserve is excellent. Where Goffman is wrong, I believe, is to assume that the stigmatised individual necessarily accepts the lack of regard of others as in some way justified. If, as researchers, we talk solely in terms of the management of identity, then we are at risk of emphasising the ways in which individuals present themselves to society at the expense of examining how such individuals account for their position to themselves. Yet both perspectives are important: the way in which an

individual presents him- or herself to society must be seen within the context of that individual's interpretation of past events.

1.4.2 The 'cloak of competence'.

Edgerton and his associates at the Socio-Behavioural Group of the Mental Retardation Research Center at U.C.L.A. studied the lifestyle of a group of former patients of a large hospital for over twenty five years. Edgerton (1967) described the most central and consistent theme in the lives of these people as the 'cloak of competence'. This involved two related elements: firstly, the need of such individuals to deny to themselves the reality of their condition and, secondly, the closely related requirement that they hide, or convince themselves that they have hidden, the fact that they have been judged to be deficient (Goldschmidt, 1967). Thus Edgerton (1967) claimed that the lives of members of his cohort were 'directed toward the fundamental purpose of denying that they are in fact mentally incompetent' (p. 143).

Edgerton believed that the individuals that he studied used two techniques to preserve this illusion of competency: he described these as denial and passing. In the context of deinstitutionalisation, *denial* was defined as the attribution by an individual of his or her relative incompetence to another factor such as his or her previous incarceration, accompanied by the insistence that this institutionalisation was itself unjustified. *Passing* was closely related to this and represented the individual's attempt to appear to be normal. Goffman (1963) described *passing* as 'the management of undisclosed, discrediting information about self' (p. 57).

Chapter One: The Labelled Individual and Society.

Denial is a well documented response to stress that has traditionally been thought of as involving conscious awareness at some level; Krantzler (1973), for instance, described denial as 'a normal and necessary human reaction to a crisis which is too immediately overwhelming to face head-on. Denial provides for a temporary retreat from reality while our internal forces regroup'. For Breakwell (1986), denial was one of several coping strategies that an individual could use when his or her identity was threatened by external events. Instead of the existence of a threat being acknowledged by the threatened individual, the person denies that any such threat exists. For Edgerton, in such denial the individual was certainly aware of the deception. For example Edgerton and Bercovici (1976) described the members of their cohort as being

> ... typified by their feelings of stigma over being hospitalised and labeled as mentally retarded. They devoted themselves to denying the correctness of this label and to passing as nonretarded. Many of these persons had obvious doubts about their right to claim to be normal and chose to deceive others about their past institutionalisation and their abilites (e.g. to read, write, tell time, drive) (Edgerton and Bercovici, 1976, p.490).

Both denial and passing were represented by Edgerton as involving the conscious deception by the ex-inmate of his or her associates. Individuals had 'obvious doubts' about their 'right to claim to be normal'. Yet while Edgerton described labelled individuals as denying 'the correctness of the label' we cannot assume that these individuals somehow knew that they were inferior. Moreover if we make such an assumption, we may also miss many important points about the ways in which labelled individuals perceive themselves.

The issue of how best to characterise the reactions of individuals to labelling is of central importance to this thesis and is one which merits further discussion. Koegel and Edgerton (1982), for instance, studied a

group of black adults, 60 per cent of whom, while failing to label themselves as 'mentally retarded', applied labels to themselves in ways that were said by the authors to approximate to the concept of mild mental retardation. Many of the study participants saw their problems as residing in only one or two areas, notably the academic ones, while a substantial number of individuals rejected the notion that they were handicapped in any way. This study leaves several crucial questions unanswered. Presumably there were consistencies and variations between the self-labelling process and the formal label of 'mental retardation', yet these were not described. The exact nature of these differences are of crucial importance if we are to understand the exact effect of labelling on an individual. Moreover, Koegel and Edgerton do not, unfortunately, give any reason why only 60 per cent of their sample used a strategy of passing or explain why, if so many went so far as to acknowledge academic limitations, it was rare for an individual to admit to the 'global, pervasive, all-encompassing problems' that Koegel and Edgerton claimed existed. The framework used by these authors was too limited to be able to address these, and other, related issues.

Edgerton's concern with passing and denial centres around issues of competence (Luckin, 1986). A lack of competence, whether revealed by an over-reliance on others, cheating in exams or by seemingly elaborate deceptions were taken as indicating an inward acceptance of the status of 'mental retardate'. Protestations to the contrary were construed as denials, while attempts to cope with the demands of living were seen as evidence of passing.

Yet Edgerton's use of the terms 'denial' and 'passing' was based in both cases, on the assumption that the individual was aware not only of his or

her handicapped status but also of society's negative evaluation of that status. In addition, the labelled individual was taken as accepting that that evaluation was correct and that it applied to him- or to herself (Stager et al., 1983). Edgerton's concept of denial, therefore, assumed that the individual knew that there was something to be denied. Similarly for an individual to be described as passing suggested that he or she accepted the judgement of society and was trying to pass as normal in that society, in much the same way that a forger might try to pass off a counterfeit note as genuine. While this may have been the case for some individuals, the possibility nevertheless existed that others either have not accepted the value of the currency and have been trying to redefine it, or that they may not even have been aware of its value and potency.

1.4.3 Other approaches to the experiences of labelled individuals.

Despite these criticisms of his use of denial and passing, the work of Edgerton and his associates stands out both in terms of the quantity of publications that they have produced and also for the general sensitivity and quality of the observations contained in their writings. Yet other authors, too, have made an important contribution to our understanding of how people with a mental handicap view themselves (e.g. Braginsky and Braginsky, 1971; Henschel, 1971). Without an analytical framework on which to place the accounts of labelled individuals, however, these have all too often been relegated to the status of anecdotal evidence and been used simply to illustrate other material. An example of this use of anecdotal evidence was provided by the work of Jones (e.g. 1971, 1972). He showed that the majority of the special education pupils that he interviewed were embarrassed by their attendance in special education and attempted to

conceal their placement from other pupils. Moreover, a pilot study (Jones, 1972) of 23 special education pupils showed that seventeen pupils lied to their peers about their school work in order to avoid ridicule. Most pupils said that they had enrolled in regular and not special courses. One said:

> I don't like to see more of the [regular] students come in here [to visit the special class] because they're my friends and I don't want them to know that I'm here (Jones, 1972, p. 560).

In addition, sixteen pupils indicated that they disliked special education because of the ridicule that they suffered as a consequence. Seven pupils claimed that their placement had affected their friendships because others saw the special class as inferior. Jones obtained confirmation of these general trends in a more extensive series of interviews. 65 per cent of 269 respondents said that they told no one or only a few people of their special education placement. One pupil told him:

> Some of my friends won't even talk to me because they think that I'm too dumb and a dilentary (sic). I just tell them that I don't give a damn about the other fellow. This is me and I don't care what they think 'cause it's not hurting me, it's hurting them (Jones, 1972, p.561).

Although Jones' studies provide a strong indication of the negative consequences of special class placement, Guskin et al. (1975) and MacMillan (1974, 1982) have questioned the worth of this self-report style of investigation. Guskin raised doubts about its validity, while MacMillan noted that a competitive interpretation of the results was that the social inadequacy of the pupils would have surfaced regardless of the special class placement. However both these criticisms fail to take into account the implications that Jones' research has for other studies that have consistently been unable to show that labelling produced direct, negative effects. MacMillan et al. (1974), for instance, commented that the special class pupils:

> ... are attempting to rationalise their social failures in terms of labels and placement ... providing a rationalization may keep these adolescents from having to devalue the self by not having a reason for their social and occupational failures (MacMillan et al., 1974, p. 262).

Where Jones's research was deficient was not in its lack of either control groups or quantitative techniques, but rather in its failure to give any more than a descriptive account of the ways in which such pupils viewed their placement. However, the fact that special education pupils interpreted the reasons for their social and occupational failures in ways that prevented the devaluation of the self, as predicted, for example by MacMillan, is of great importance. If we accept that this can happen, then we recognise that these adolescents are active agents, capable of both evaluating their environment and also of constructing a framework of their position in society which does not simply reflect social attitudes. We shall not have a proper understanding of the effects of special class placement upon special education pupils, unless we understand this process.

Jahoda et al. (1988) have investigated how twelve Adult Training Centre trainees saw themselves. All 12 knew that they were regarded as different in an inferior sense and all had suffered abuse or rejection from other children when they were younger. Moreover, four of their parents saw their children as having a definite handicap, while another four saw them as being different form other people. Yet despite their awareness of the negative views of others towards them, only three people saw themselves as abnormal. The other participants accepted, to varying degrees, that they had a learning difficulty, but denied that this made them less worthy than other people.

1.5 Individual perceptions of society.

Many of the studies that I have described above can be criticised for not treating the descriptions that labelled individuals give of their lives as valid explanations of their predicament. Instead, greater weight and emphasis has often been given to alternative explanations that correspond more closely with social attitudes towards mental handicap. In many cases the labelled individual has been seen as the passive recipient of these views. Recent trends within social psychology, however, have described the individual as taking a much more active role in the interpretation of his or her social and physical environment (e.g. Harré, 1979). Four theories in particular are of use in aiding our understanding of the effects of labelling on individuals with a mental handicap.

1.5.1 Labelling and the individual.

A) Marginal social identity.

The concept of a marginal social identity was developed by Glynis Breakwell (1978) from theories concerning the organisation of groups and the relationships between group members principally described during the 1970s by Henri Tajfel (eg Tajfel, 1979; Giles and Turner, 1981). The social identity of an individual was said to consist of all those social categories that he or she believed him- or herself to be a member of; each social category carried a number of descriptive elements which the individual could at times apply to him- or herself through a process of self-stereotyping. Tajfel (1978) extended these ideas to cover the social identity of minority groups. He suggested that when group membership was highly salient for an individual then he or she acted in terms of his or her social identity. Thus, by working together, members of an ethnic

minority who shared the same social identity were able to set up their own ideology and culture in opposition to the negative views that the majority held towards them. While each member of a social group shared a categorisation system of values and norms, each individual acted in terms of his or her own, often highly idiosyncratic, interpretation of this system. The individual was therefore seen as an active agent, interpreting information in ways that maintained both his or her categorisation system and a positive social identity.

However, those people who have been labelled as having a mental handicap form a group only in so much as they have experienced common problems. Even allowing for the growth in self- and citizen-advocacy groups, there are no social structures (other than the family) for a labelled individual to fall back on, either for emotional or psychological support (Thomas, 1978). In addition, the social category of 'mental handicap' is assigned to an individual rather than being one that he or she chooses for him- or herself (Mercer, 1970, 1973). An individual who is labelled as having a mental handicap, therefore, does not necessarily adopt the category of mental handicap as an element of his or her social identity, but may modify, redefine, or even reject it completely.

Breakwell (1978) described individuals in this position as having a marginal social identity. She suggested that there were both internal and external criteria of group membership. The external criteria were 'embodied in cultural mores and norms, laws and rules', that is to say they were 'reflections of the objective standards which must be fulfilled in order to gain access to a group'. Attendance at a special school or unit, for instance, involves being labelled as 'in need of special education' by the teaching authorities. By contrast, the internal critieria of group

membership referred to the cognitive components of group membership. According to Breakwell these were 'the standards which the individual believes exists and his or her perceptions of how they relate to him- or herself'.

Where the external criteria are incompatible with the internal criteria, a process of resolution was said to be initiated. Resolution was a continual process and could be involved, for instance, when a special school or unit leaver attempted to make sense of the negative attitudes of others towards him or her. The resolution of such a conflict could be achieved in only a relatively few ways.

First of all, it might be possible for individuals whose identity had been threatened in this way to redefine the internal criteria of their social identity along dimensions that were psychologically less damaging to them. This adjustment of internal criteria would provide mitigating circumstances for the individual's victimisation. Secondly, individuals might try to change their social circumstances and move away from what they considered to be the causes of the stigma that they had suffered. Finally, individuals might try to redefine their external criteria of social membership and thus, in effect, argue that they had been wrongly assigned to the stigmatised group.

Where resolution fails, that is if the external conditions do not change and the individual does not succeed in redefining his or her internal criteria, then according to Breakwell (1978) the individual has only one option: to pretend that the traumatic situation does not exist. For adolescents with a learning disability, this psychological negation of identity can perhaps be seen where the individual denies that he or she has ever been called names by others (although his or her parents say that

their son or daughter has been deeply hurt by such name-calling) or that he or she has heard the term 'mentally handicapped' before (although his or her parents often use it).

Placing the patterns of response of labelled individuals to their predicament within this model of marginal social identity has a number of advantages. Firstly, it does not assume that each individual simply adopts or rejects the attitudes of the majority but, instead, holds that each person is able to actively construct his or her own, valid interpretation of the social context. Secondly, through the process of resolution, marginal social identity provides a mechanism, albeit not a fully developed one, whereby this active interpretation can take place.

B) Coping with a threatened identity.

Perhaps the best known advocate of coping strategies has been Richard Lazarus (e.g. Lazarus, 1966, 1971, 1978). Lazarus attempted to explain the experience of stress through the intervening variable of threat: an individual appraised the situation and if he or she believed him- or herself to be threatened, then he or she could use one of a number of different coping strategies. Breakwell (1986) has provided some examples of potentially threatening positions; these included unemployment, sexually atypical employment and, I would contend, being formally or informally labelled as having a mental handicap or as in need of special education. The coping strategies that are initiated in response to these threatening positions were said to be flexible; some were adaptive, some maladaptive and while some coping strategies could become apparent through direct action, others would be expressed in inaction (Anderson et al, 1982). Lazarus (1978) defined a stressful episode which might induce a coping strategy as

> ... not just a momentary, static stimulus in the environment to which the person gives a single response, say, a thought, act or somatic reaction, as in the analogy of a single, still photo; rather it is a continuous flow of events over time, sometimes a short time as in an argument that quickly ends when one party leaves the room, at other times a long, tortuous, complex, sometimes repetitive process of achieving a new equilibrium in a relationship (Lazarus, 1978, p. 14).

Just as with Breakwell's (1978) concept of resolution, so Lazarus described the relationship between coping strategies and threat as a continuous, evolving process. Moreover, Lazarus suggested that a variety or 'constellation' of coping strategies may all play their part in allowing the individual to mitigate the effects of stress. Lazarus (1978) described the two major functions of coping as follows:

> First, to change the situation for the better if we can, either by changing one's own offending action (focus on self) or by changing the damaging or threatening environment; and second, to manage the somatic and subjective components of stress-related emotions themselves, so that they do not get out of hand and do not damage or destroy morale and social functioning (Lazarus, 1978, pp. 32-33).

One of the main modes of coping described by Lazarus and Launier (1979) was that of the intra-psychic processes. This class of coping strategy ranged from defensive mechanisms such as denial, reaction formation and projection to efforts to obtain detachment or insulation from a threat by achieving a feeling of control over it. The intra-psychic mode of coping included 'the things a person says to himself or herself' (Lazarus, 1978, p.38) that is, the way in which the individual represented his or her position to him or herself. Whatever the nature of the coping strategy, Lazarus (1978) stressed that the best coping strategy was not necessarily a realistic one, for in many circumsthnces there was little or nothing that an individual could do to change his or her relationship with society: under these conditions the individual must live with a high degree of ambiguity.

1.5.2 Representations of labelling.

One of the main themes throughout this chapter has been the need to provide a theoretical structure which would accept the explanations of labelling that labelled individuals give as meaningful. Marginal social identity and coping theories provide a useful description of how an individual may respond to labelling. What these theories cannot do, however, is to provide an interpretative framework through which we can analyse the explanations that people use to explain labelling. In the remainder of this chapter I will very briefly outline two contrasting sets of theories which explore the ways in which individuals use language to explain causes and events.

A) Attribution and attributional theories.

There is no single, comprehensive attribution or attributional theory, rather there are a number of complementary but unlinked principles that are common to many different theories. One of these central principles is that people seek to explain the causes both of their own behaviour and that of other people (Antaki and Brewin, 1982). Attribution theories are concerned with the process by which individuals arrive at these explanations or attributions. Kelley (1972), for instance, claimed that individuals attributed events to the factor that was historically most closely associated with them. He described this as a mental computation that was both logical and analytical.

Attribution theories have also been used to study the perceived causes of academic success and failure. Lunt (1988) used Weiner's (1980, 1985) taxonomy of causes in a study with University students into the perceived causes of exam failure. Weiner's taxonomy has three dimensions: internal-external locus of control, stable-unstable and controllable-uncontrollable.

Lunt found that the students did not simply use single causes, but explained the outcome by connecting a number of causes in a chain. To this extent Lunt distinguished between original causes ('biased teacher' and 'unlucky') which had no incoming links, mediating causes ('rarely studies', 'little intelligence') which had both incoming and outgoing links, and proximal causes ('poor concentration') which had no outgoing links.

Henker and Whalen (1980) studied the attributions made by hyperactive children who had been placed on a drug regimen that intruded noticeably into their daily lives. Henker and Whalen observed that these children did not attribute their difficulties to chance. Instead they seemed to create a rationale for themselves in which the use of medication fitted their conception of the aetiology of their problem. This fit was not entirely consistent and the children's discomfort was shown by their ambivalence about their medication. Henker and Whalen made the assumption that

> ... children are active construers of events, rather than passive responders. Like adults, children generate hypotheses and develop theories about their actions and observations, and these constructs influence self-expectancies and future behaviours (p. 143).

Attributional theories, by contrast, are concerned with the affective and behavioural consequences that follow for an individual if he or she believes various attributions. Consequently, attributional theories have been used for a long time within adult mental health (Antaki and Brewin, 1982). There are two main theories. The Reformulated Theory of Learned Helplessness (Abramson et al., 1978) (or hopelessness theory of depressions, Alloy et al., 1988) suggests that once individuals perceive that they are powerless to affect their environment, they attribute their helplessness to a cause. This cause could be stable or unstable, global or specific, and internal or external. In brief, the theory proposes that

individuals who are depressed perceive bad events as due to external causes which are outside their control (*uncontrollable*), due to something bad about themselves (*internal*), likely to recur in similar situations (*stable*) and to affect many other areas of their lives (*global*). Good events are also seen as uncontrollable but, in contrast to other events, their causes are perceived as external, unstable and specific (Power and Champion, 1986).

Weiner's attributional theory (the taxonomy of which has been described above) is similar to that of Abramson et al., in that both theories stress that an individual's attributions for past successes and failures affect how he or she deals with succeding opportunities. Both Weiner and Abramson et al. suggest that individuals who attribute bad events to internal causes are liable to suffer from lowered self-esteem. Abramson et al. suggest that the stability of an attribution will affect the permanence of depression, while its globality will affect its range and e[illegible]ent.

Attribution and attributional theories have been the subject of a great deal of recent debate within both the social and the clinical areas of psychology. Potter and Wetherell (1987), for instance, have criticised the way in which attribution theories link language to some underlying mental representation and at the same time have tended to ignore linguistic variations which are linked to differences in the context in which that language is produced. Whatever the merits of these, and other related arguments, however, the taxonomy of attributions produced by Weiner and by Abramson et al. provide a useful method of categorising the accounts of different individuals, or of measuring change in the accounts of one individual over time.

B) Discourse analysis.

Moving from the transcript of an interview to the interpretation of that material in terms of various cognitive functions involves a number of assumptions. Firstly, it is often contended that the account of the interviewee may not be an accurate representation of what he or she believes. Secondly, even if the validity of a transcript could be ratified, there is still the difficulty of associating this with the supposed mental entities or internal states such as social representations or attributions that are presumed to lie behind this account.

Potter and Wetherell (1987) believe that these problems arise because both theory and methodology have been over-concerned with mental entities. They suggest that the analysis of discourse should instead simply concentrate on the accounts produced by individuals. This analysis of discourse concerns itself with discourse in its own right; that is with the function of talk and writing and not with any supposed states of mind that lie behind this text.

I do not wish to discuss in any great detail the theoretical background to discourse analysis as presented by Coulthard (1977), Pearce (1977), Stubbs (1983) and Potter and Wetherell (1987) amongst others. Nevertheless, while these techniques have not been specifically used within the present study, some of the criticisms that discourse analysis makes of more traditional approaches to the analysis of language are relevant.

Potter and Wetherell argue that an individual constructs an account not by utilising an internal representation, but by drawing upon a set of 'linguistic repertoires'. The repertoires which are used vary according to context. The account that an individual uses shapes social reality in a specific way, so that the form it takes cannot be understood without also

understanding the function of that account for the individual. Discourse analysis, therefore, involves the search for patterns of variability and consistency in people's accounts and the subsequent generation and testing of hypotheses concerning the function of these patterns.

Chapter Three will consider the methodological implications of different forms of the analysis of language in more detail. It is sufficient here to note the stress that discourse analysis places upon the context in which language occurs. The account that an individual produces is thus examined for coherency not in terms of internal consistency but rather by whether or not each element of that account served a common function.

If we integrate discourse analysis with the insights gained above, then we would expect to find that individuals who have been labelled as having a mental handicap or a special educational need are actively engaged in interpreting the reasons and causes for their labelling. One way of representing this is that being labelled as 'mentally handicapped' represents a threat to these individuals' identity. Labelled individuals resolve or cope with this threat either by leaving that labelling environment or, if this is impossible, by reconstructing the internal or external criteria of their group membership. We can examine an individual's account, therefore, for evidence of the operation of such a coping strategy. We might expect some individuals to argue that they have been wrongly labelled, while others would limit the extent to which they were personally responsible for their labelling. In addition, some individuals might disclaim all knowledge of labelling.

Attribution theories and discourse analysis represent contrasting ways of analysing spoken language. Although this study has primarily relied upon the former, the emphasis that discourse analysis places upon the variability of language, the function of accounts and the context in which

accounts are produced has not been lost. Instead the use of case studies, which is discussed in Chapter Three, has allowed these elements to be incorporated within the study, and has permitted variations in an individual's accounts to be linked to changes in his or her life, including the extent to which labelling continues to represent a threat to his or her identity.

1.6 Summary.

With the growth in community care, the effects of negative social attitudes towards people with a mental handicap have begun to impinge more directly upon stigmatised individuals. One way of studying these influences has been by examining the effects of being labelled as having a 'mental handicap' upon individuals. Labelling can affect an individual in two ways; either directly, once the individual realises that he or she has been labelled, or indirectly, through the attitudes of others. While there is convincing evidence to support the hypothesis of an indirect effect of labelling on academic performance, it is still not clear what the long-term psychological effects of labelling are. Although it has often been assumed that labelling has a negative effect upon the labelled individual's self-concept, this is not, in fact, an inevitable consequence of labelling.

The effects of labelling need to be examined within a perspective in which the individual is seen as an equal partner with social forces in negotiating his or her identity. However, much of the research which has examined the links between labelling and identity has not done this. Often the self has been divided into components such as self-esteem, self-schemas and self-concept. In addition, many techniques, such as questionnaires, have particular problems when used with special education pupils. There are

also specific methodological problems associated with carrying out research in a natural environment which some studies have failed to overcome.

Standing out from this largely quantitative research has been the work of Robert Edgerton who observed, for instance, that the deinstitutionalised individuals he studied relied on the assistance of others to survive in the community. He concluded that these individuals attempted to cover up their lack of competence and the fact that they had been in an institution. Edgerton analysed their descriptions in terms of passing and denial. I have argued that this analysis is too limited to explain fully the effects of labelling upon labelled individuals. Similarly Jones (1970, 1971) studied some of the ways in which special education pupils viewed their lives. Although, like Edgerton, Jones made many interesting points, he lacked an analytical framework on which to base his observations and his work therefore raised more questions than it answered. However, taken together, the work of Edgerton, Jones and Jahoda et al. (1988) suggests that individuals who have been labelled as having a mental handicap are able to construct their own explanations for their labelling in which they do not necessarily view themselves as 'handicapped'.

Recent social psychological perspectives have raised the possibility that labelled individuals do not necessarily internalise the beliefs and attitudes of others. Instead, individuals actively attempt to resolve or cope with the threat to identity that formal and informal labelling involves. If we adopt an analysis based on the coping strategies outlined by Lazarus and Breakwell amongst others, then we allow the labelled individual an active part in constructing his or her identity without ignoring the influence of social factors. The problem remains, however, of moving from the accounts that special education leavers give, to an

understanding of the reality of labelling both for these leavers as a group and for any one individual in particular.

The ways in which these and other methodological challenges have been met in this study will be described in Chapter Three. Chapter Two will review some of the literature connected with special education and in particular the transition from school to adult life.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

In Chapter One I examined some of the ways in which researchers have studied the effects of labelling. I suggested that being placed in special education may represent a threat to an individual's identity. Attending a special needs school may not only affect the practicalities of everyday life, but it may also have many long-term psychological consequences. Recent research (e.g. Corrie, 1984; Corrie and Zaklukiewitz, 1984a) has suggested that special needs pupils may be more socially isolated, less likely to find open employment and adapt less successfully to adult life than their mainstream peers. In addition, the families of pupils with special needs may encounter specific problems which the families of children at mainstream schools do not face.

In this Chapter I will review some of the work that has looked at the success of special education leavers in finding employment and the opinions of parents and leavers about special education, paying particular reference to leavers in the Central Region of Scotland.

2.1 Special education.

While all western countries stress their commitment to the integration of school pupils with special needs within the ordinary school system, special educational provision is in fact expanding. Increasing numbers of children are now being considered to be potential candidates for special education (Barton and Tomlinson, 1984). A report by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) in 1983 estimated that in the United Kingdom between 1.5 and 2.5 per cent of children are placed in special schools. Moreover, according to the CERI report, up to 15 per cent of school children during at least part of their school careers have learning

difficulties which require special help. Similarly the Warnock Report (1978) estimated that about one in six school children at any time, and up to one child in five at some time, will require some form of special education.

2.1.1 Who are these pupils and where should they be taught?

It was not until the 1974 Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland) Act that regional education authorities in Scotland were legally required to provide educational facilities for pupils with special needs. At first, special needs provision was provided on a largely segregated basis. More recently, the 1981 Education (Scotland) Act has encouraged the integration of special needs pupils into ordinary schools.

Since the 1981 Education Acts, special needs education within the United Kingdom has, at least in theory, been based upon the educational needs and learning difficulties of an individual school pupil, rather than upon the degree of the individual's disability or deficit. The differences between these criteria may seem small, but they in fact represent very different ways of conceptualising special needs. If we talk in terms of a learning difficulty rather than an individual deficit, then we are acknowledging that the individual simply has not learnt to do a certain task, rather than implying that he or she is unable to do that task (Whelan and Speake, 1979). Indeed O'Haggan and Swanson (1984) suggested that this process of redefinition should be taken a step further and that the concept of need (which they claimed was still implicitly based on a deficit model) should be replaced by one of 'educational objectives' which planned a learning programme for each individual.

Alongside these changes in terminology has come the increasing integration of pupils with special needs into ordinary education, a movement guided by both moral and educational premises (Danby, 1987). The moral principles of integration, for instance, formed an essential part of the Fish Report (1985):

> **The aims of education for children and young people with disabilites and significant difficulties are the same as those for all children and young people.** They should have opportunities to achieve those aims, to associate with their contemporaries, whether similarly disabled or not, and have access to the whole range of opportunities in education, training, leisure and community activities available to all. Disabilities and significant difficulties do not diminish the right to equal access to, and participation in, society. (Emphasis in original; p.4)

The integration lobby argues not only that we should have integration because it is morally right, but also because it offers a better standard of education (Danby, 1987). Fish (1985) summarised the criticisms that many have made of special schools when he noted that special schools 'may provide an artificial social situation, a restricted range of learning experiences, and few opportunities to experience living and learning amongst others in the community' (p.68). Moreover, decisions about who should be placed in special education are frequently made at an early age, before children are either socially or emotionally ready to learn. Once pupils have been assigned to special education they may find it almost impossible to return to regular classes, when and if normal development occurs.

A vast amount of research has been directed towards proving or disproving the educational assumption that special needs pupils learn more in special education. These efficacy studies are largely American and have tried to compare the academic performance of children with similar I.Q.s in special

and in normal schools. The results of these studies have often been unsatisfactory mainly because, even if the I.Q. levels of children in the different groups had been controlled for, it was likely that other factors such as social class, motivation and social adaptation influenced the results. In addition, there were many differences between ordinary and special education which experimenters often failed to control for, such as different curricula, teacher attitudes and staff ratios (MacMillan, 1982). Moreover, as Danby (1987) has pointed out, the American system of mainstreaming has many differences from the policy of integration in British schools and we should therefore be wary of generalising results from one country to another.

Preen (1976) has commented that the provision of special education need not simply be a case of either segregated or integrated schooling, but that it may be possible to combine the beneficial features of each. American resource classes and British special classes and units are an attempt to do just this, by providing special education classes that are partly integrated into the mainstream curriculum. In many ways, however, these combinations of segregation and integration represent the worst rather than the best of both worlds. For instance, while movement from special to remedial education may be easier for a pupil in a special unit than in a special school, an individual who makes such a transition may well be victimised in the remedial class because his or her initial placement at the special unit is well known.

I have already examined some of the psychological implications of labelling and it is sufficient to note here that many of these consequences are reduced or eliminated if pupils with special needs are maintained within ordinary education. Yet, the act of integration on its own is not

sufficient to ensure that individuals are not the subject of verbal abuse. Thus Stobbart (1986) quotes Johnson et al. (1985) who noted that 'physical proximity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the luction of prejudice'. Stobbart's answer to the question that forms the title of his article *Is integrating the mentally handicapped psychologically defensible?* is that it could be,

> But not without stipulating conditions which would make the process a structured, active and cooperative one. Psychologists should not be party to sloppy theorising which leads to wishful, laissez-faire policies and even to the uncritical support of abolishing special schools (Stobbart, 1986, p.3).

The decision about where to place a school pupil who has a special educational need has for the last five years been made as part of the statementing procedure. This takes into consideration many factors, including the needs of the pupil and parental attitudes, and attempts to match these with the available educational resources. Yet, despite statementing and the arguments put forward in favour of integration, special educational provision is likely to include special schools for the foreseeable future (Fish, 1985).

2.1.2 Special education within Central Region.

Statutory responsibility, under both the 1980 and the 1981 Education Acts, for the provision of educational and assessment services for children in Scotland who are aged from 5 to 16 years old and who are in need of special education, rests upon the administrative regions. A 1978 Central Region Social Work Department report estimated that within Central Region there were at least 350 male and 214 female school children (representing 1 and 0.6 per cent of the population respectively) with a mental handicap.

Because of the sampling technique that was used to collect these figures, they probably represent an under-estimate.

Table 2.1 is taken from a 1982 Central Region Social Work Department document and details the special education provision that existed at that time. The names of those schools that have been involved in this study have been altered.

Table 2.1 Central Region Education Department establishments for children with learning difficulties at 31.12.81.

School	Age Range	Type	Roll
Rossvail	All ages	Profound	30
Hillpark	All ages	Severe	37
Monroe Heights	All ages	Mild	140
Whins of Milton	Primary (4 yrs. and over)	Mild	36
Kildean	All ages	Severe and profound	24
Fairfield	All ages	Severe and profound	16
Davies House	Primary	Mild	21
Summerdale special unit	Secondary	Mild	Unknown
Bo'Ness special unit	Secondary	Mild	8
Balfron High special unit	Secondary	Mild	3
Royal Scottish National Hospital	All ages	All types	102

From. Services to Mentally Handicapped People. Central Region Social Work report, 1982.

2.2 Adolescence and school leaving.

The transition from school to working life involves both symbolic and practical changes for all teenagers: school leavers may have to cope, not only with the practical problems of trying to find a job, but also with the symbolic release from the dependent status of childhood (Goffman, 1964; Walker, 1982; May and Hughes, 1984). In addition to changing group

affiliations, the school leaver will have to deal with the upheavals of sexual maturation and 'a widening of spatial, temporal and social interests' (Palmonari et al, 1984). It is not surprising, therefore, that adolescence has traditionally been viewed as a period of conflict and contradictions, paradoxes and deviance.

For young people with a mental handicap there may also be special problems associated with low achievement, and with personal and social development (Corrie and Zaklukiewitz, 1984b). Zetlin and Turner (1985) suggest that although adolescence is generally a period of gradual change, for young people with a mental handicap 'adolescence may, in fact, be a time of increased turmoil and stress as they struggle to determine their relationship to society and the roles and lifestyles they will assume' (p.571). Zetlin and Turner added that the parents of children with a mental handicap 'are more likely to encourage dependency, obedience, and child-like behavior than independence, self-direction, assumption of responsibility and sexual awareness' (p. 571). The transition from school to working life is therefore likely to present particular stresses and worries for children with special needs and their parents over and above those stresses that they experience both before and after this period (Whelan and Speake, 1979). Goffman (1964) illustrated some of these potential difficulties. He pointed out that some highly stigmatised children manage to progress through their childhood without facing the pressures of a stigmatised identity, and with their self-esteem intact. The process of leaving school, however, is likely to bring a rude awakening, as the special education leaver at last has to confront the realities of his or her stigmatised position.

Zetlin and Turner (1985) are among the few researchers to have studied adolescence from the perspective of former special education pupils themselves. They used participant-observation in a retrospective study of 46 individuals. Adolescence was found to be a period of increased awareness for the majority of their group: 84 per cent said that they had become more aware of their 'differentness' and the effects of their social identity on their life during this period, while 56 per cent said that they had had to come to terms with their handicap. Zetlin and Turner reported that the special education leavers that they interviewed 'began to identify themselves for the first time as slow learners, and they felt inadequate, as though they were "nothing"' (p. 574). Both the parents and their now grown-up children agreed that adolescence had been more problematic and had created more difficulties than either childhood or the later adult years had done.

May and Hughes (1984) agree with most writers in this area when they emphasise the importance of the period immediately after leaving school for the future development of special education leavers:

> What is involved is nothing less than a reassessment of their handicapped status. For these children school-leaving offers the possibility of escape not just from childhood but from handicap itself. Failure to make good an escape at this time is, however, to invite a double penalty since to be re-assigned to the category of mental handicap is also to be confined to a child-like status, judged incompetent and irresponsible, held in a subordinate and dependent position, and excluded from the mainstream of social life (May and Hughes, 1984, p. 24).

2.2.1 <u>Social isolation.</u>

One particular difficulty for special education leavers that several authors have highlighted is social isolation. The large catchment areas which special schools draw their pupils from, not only separate pupils from

potential friends near their homes but also make it difficult for leavers to stay in touch with friends that they have made at school. Jahoda (personal communication) found that the majority of a group of adults who were moving into independent housing, from a large hospital for people with a mental handicap, looked back on their attendance at a special school or Junior Training Centre as a time when their segregation and isolation from others began. Support for this conclusion was provided by Anderson et al. (1982) who found that social isolation was by far the most common stress that a group of disabled school leavers experienced. Nearly 40 per cent of their group rated social isolation as a definite or marked problem and almost invariably those individuals who did so had attended a special school. Anderson et al. went on to observe that

> One of the main drawbacks to attending special school, even if it is a day one, is the consequent lack of opportunity to make friends in one's own locality who can act as confidents and give support in initiating new social contacts at clubs and so on (Anderson et al., 1982, p. 228).

Corrie (1984) found that in a group of 42 school leavers with a mild learning disability in Scotland, only 50 per cent said that they had 'lots' of friends outside the school while 21 per cent said that they had 'few' friends outside school. Most of these special education leavers said that they had more friends in their special schools or units than they had at home, and 30 per cent of them felt that they would be unable to keep in touch with their friends when they left school. As Corrie gathered his material indirectly through questionnaires, which the pupils completed with their teachers, the reliability of his figures can be questioned. Yet Corrie and Zaklukiewitz (1984b) make a valid point when they comment:

> The sense of social isolation often experienced by the handicapped may be heightened during the transition from school to adult life as these [hostile] attitudes begin to be encountered more directly, and perhaps render the problems of

> developing self-confidence and personal identity more acute. Leaving school may also increase social isolation through the loss of friends and difficulty in establishing new relationships (Corrie and Zaklukiewitz, 1984b, p. 12).

2.2.2 Further education for students with special needs.

The Education (Scotland) Act 1981 entitled young people with special educational needs to stay on at school until their nineteenth birthday. May and Hughes (1984), however, showed that in Tayside few special needs pupils took advantage of this opportunity. In their sample only ten of sixty-five pupils at special schools and units for pupils with a mild learning disability remained at school for a full year or more after they were sixteen.

There are a number of possible reasons why pupils are reluctant to stay at school after reaching sixteen: at present few special units or schools make specific provision for those who wish to stay on and those pupils who do so simply repeat their previous year's work. Moreover, social pressures often make both parents and potential leavers receptive to the idea of leaving school as soon as possible - to stay on would make the individual stand out from the majority of his or her peers.

It has been suggested that this extra year, if it is well planned, can be a useful element in helping special education pupils make a successful transition to adult life (Fish, 1985). However, May and Hughes (1984) found no evidence that extra schooling enhanced the job prospects of the special education pupils in their study. They interviewed sixteen pupils who stayed on at school after the minimum leaving age. Of these, seven became unemployed when they left and another four went straight to an Adult Training Centre. May and Hughes concluded that

> It was then by and large the least able and less promising pupils for whom the future was most bleak who were likely to remain on at school, not ... in any great hope that their prospects would thereby significantly improve, but principally in recognition of a need for continuing care and control (May and Hughes, 1984, pp. 7-8).

When pupils do leave school, whether or not they have stayed on for an extra period, their future is by no means assured. The Warnock Report (1978), for instance, showed that in terms of employment and educational progress, those school leavers with special needs generally achieve less than those without, and also achieve less than they are capable of (Corrie and Zaklukiewitz, 1984b). One of the reasons suggested for this by the Warnock Report was that further education resources for special needs students after the age of sixteen were inadequate. In the ten years since the Warnock Report, the number of Further Education courses designed specifically for students with special needs has increased greatly, although the distribution of such courses nationally is still patchy (Cross, 1986). Cook (1985) gives details of the three most common types of course:

i) Link courses, which allow special education pupils to attend college for one or two days a week in their final school years;

ii) Bridging courses, which are usually full-time, although not necessarily for a full academic year, and are meant to bridge the gap between school and ordinary further education courses or employment; and

iii) Extension courses, which involve full-time study for one or two years immediately after leaving school and usually concentrate on independent living, vocational and other skills.

Although educational provision for pupils with special needs has increased in recent years, some teachers and education authorities still

only rather grudgingly admit the value of a longer period of education (Fish, 1985). Yet many authors (e.g. Cook, 1986) argue that education for pupils with special needs should not necessarily end at nineteen, let alone at sixteen. A comparison with the provision made for students with special needs in other countries is revealing. In the U.S.A., for instance, Public Law 94-142 (the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act*, 1984) mandates a free and appropriate education until the age of twenty one; and two states, Michigan and Iowa, have extended this to the age of twenty six (Gerber, 1986). In the Netherlands, learning disability is viewed as a specific educational problem, and not as a condition which has vocational or recreational implications. Consequently there is a five per cent quota for the employment of individuals with a handicap in business and in industry. In Denmark there is an elaborate system of educational and social welfare programmes and an extensive network of adult education classes as well as vocational rehabilitation agencies (Gerber, 1986). In Sweden 'those who are mentally handicapped are likely to remain in school until at least 21 years of age' (OECD, 1983). A discussion on the further education opportunities available for special education leavers in Central Region is included in Section 5.2.1.

2.2.3 Patterns of employment.

Many authors (e.g. Hutchinson, 1982; Tizard and Anderson, 1983) have identified employment as being particularly important for teenagers with a handicap. Employment not only provides an income and a measure of independence (Corrie, 1984), but it also aids the development of identity and status. The introduction to a 1983 report by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (C.E.R.I.) summed up many of these issues:

> The case is not wholly or usually even primarily a financial one; more fundamental is the quest for self-esteem, an acceptable place in society, personal fulfillment and integration within the community - and for all of these, a regular job is seen to be the threshold of personal achievement ... low incomes not only affect the material standard of living but often the quality of life ... Dependence upon parents, other relatives, support organisations or institutions is likely to be increased; mobility can simply be too expensive to achieve and social life is virtually ruled out (p. 12).

Unemployment rates for special education leavers have almost invariably been found to be higher than for mainstream leavers. This has been true even when unemployment rates of the whole population were lower than they are now (e.g. Hamasi et al., 1985). For instance, Tuckey et al. (1973) conducted interviews with over one thousand teenagers with a handicap in 1968-69 and found very high employment levels by comparison with present-day standards. Of the 788 'Educationally Sub-Normal' leavers (58 per cent of the total population) that he obtained information on, 80 per cent had worked in open employment and only 11 per cent had been unemployed for over six months. Yet Tuckey et al. described the unemployment levels of the school leavers with a handicap as giving 'considerable cause for concern' by comparison with the overall employment levels of that time. The disparity between overall employment rates and those of adolescents with a handicap has continued over the past fifteen years. For instance, a survey by the National Children's Bureau in 1977 found that 19.1 per cent of school leavers with a handicap were unemployed compared to only 4.4 per cent of the school leaver population as a whole.

While people with a handicap found it difficult enough to gain employment in the past, they found it far more difficult during the surge in unemployment that occured in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This dramatic increase was documented by Hurst (1982) who reported that, while in 1974

there were 1,800 vacancies for every 100 unemployed school leavers, in 1982 there were only 2.3 vacancies per 100. Similarly a study by Social and Community Planning Research (1986) found that 40 per cent of youngsters leaving school without qualifications were unemployed one year later compared to only 28 per cent of school leavers who had even a few low grade passes. As more emphasis has been placed on paper qualifications in the new technological industries and as old labour-intensive industries have declined, so school leavers with a mental handicap have faced greater problems in trying to find employment. The present level of unemployment (18.3 per cent in Falkirk at the time of the study in April, 1985) means that employment opportunities for any young person without qualifications, other than short-term YTS placements, are rare.

The recent employment situation for special education leavers in Scotland has been studied by May and Hughes (1984) and by Corrie (1984). May and Hughes found that in Tayside, of the 63 special education leavers for whom they had data available, only nine (14 per cent) had spent any time in open employment over a 22 month period. At the end of the study only three (5 per cent) were holding down jobs. The authors described how young people leaving special education 'typically experienced post-school life as a series of short-term placements on a variety of mostly government sponsored schemes, punctuated by successive periods of unemployment'. Eight (13 per cent) of the leavers that they studied had been unemployed since leaving school, another ten (16 per cent) had entered ATCs during this time, whilst others had gone to an institution. After 22 months only three of the thirteen in ATCs or institutions had moved on.

Corrie (1984) studied 46 school leavers with a mild mental handicap in central Scotland, and his results confirmed the trend found by May and

Hughes in Tayside. Twenty months after leaving school only six per cent of his sample were in open employment, while thirty seven per cent were unemployed, twenty four per cent were on Youth Opportunity Programme (YOP) schemes and nine per cent were at ATCs. At some point during the study, forty one of the school leavers (89 per cent) had been unemployed for at least a month; twenty nine per cent had been unemployed for between one and three months; forty four per cent for between four and ten months, and twenty two per cent for between eleven and twenty months.

Some authors (e.g. Walker, 1982) have commented that young people with any form of handicap are at a constant disadvantage in the employment market, whereas other teenagers are only at a disadvantage for certain jobs. Moreover, special education leavers are often obliged to take jobs at a low level, which require little or no training and which tend to be most affected by increases in unemployment (e.g. Hutchinson, 1982; Walker, 1982; Hasazi et al., 1985). Thus, even where individuals with a handicap are able to find employment, their position may be more precarious and less well rewarded than that of non-handicapped people. Richardson (1978), in a study of Aberdeen special school and unit leavers, found that most of them had less skilled jobs and their jobs required less personal skills than a comparison group of nonhandicapped young people who were matched on age, sex, occupation of head of household and type of housing at age 8-10. Moreover, on average, the special education leavers, where they were working at all, earned only two thirds of the money of the matched group. Walker (1982) observed that the jobs that special education leavers were able to find placed them on 'relatively dead-end earning paths in contrast to the upwardly mobile paths available to more advantaged workers' (p. 9).

Chapter Two: Review of Literature.

According to May and Hughes (1984), the special education leaver is confronted with a dilemma: he or she either faces the prospect of lengthy periods of unemployment interspersed with occasional spells of work, or accepts help in the form of attendance at an ATC or a special course at a college. Without help, many special education leavers will remain at the disadvantaged end of the work spectrum. If they accept such help, however, then leavers may also be forced to accept the status of a 'mentally handicapped' person, and may be encouraged to believe that it is only with such aid that they can function properly.

While the overall employment prospects for special education leavers are not encouraging, there are a number of factors which appear to influence an individual's chances of finding, and then keeping, a job. However, because many of the studies concerned with these issues were conducted before the surge in unemployment of the late 1970s and early 1980s, it is not clear whether or not all of the factors have maintained their relevance. Let us briefly consider these factors:

A) Age. O'Callaghan and Toomey (1983) and Schalock and Harper (1978) claimed that older special education leavers were likely to have more success in finding employment. However, as the older members of O'Callaghan and Toomey's study initially began looking for work when employment rates were substantially higher than they were when the younger members of their study left school, the results of their study may well be confounded.

B) IQ. There is conflicting evidence regarding whether or not the IQ of a special education leaver affects his or her employment prospects. Schalock and Harper found no relationship between IQ scores and employment success, whereas O'Callaghan and Toomey found a positive relationship and Henschel (1972) found that lower IQ scores indicated lower levels of vocational

independence. May and Hughes (1984) also found that of their 15 most able subjects, six found work whilst only one was forced, temporarily, to go to an ATC. Of the 13 least able participants in their study only one found work and five attended some form of institution.

C) Physical handicap. If an individual has a physical handicap, or a medical disorder, then it is less likely that he or she will find employment (O'Callaghan and Toomey, 1983).

D) Previous work training. Hasazi et al. (1985) found that acquiring work experience while still at school significantly increased subsequent employment success.

E) Sex. Virtually all studies have found that male special education leavers are more likely to be employed than female leavers. This gender difference cannot be accounted for simply by the different marriage rates of the two groups.

Richardson (1978) has detailed a large number of methodological weaknesses in many studies that have attempted to identify factors in employment success. Firstly, many of these studies are retrospective and do not follow the former special education pupils through the process of leaving school and subsequently attempting to come to terms with their handicapped status. Moreover, the criteria that were used to place the child in special education are rarely specified, so that different studies cannot properly be compared. Other factors that vary from study to study include the length of time after leaving school at which employment figures were taken (this is important because, as indicated above, there is some evidence that employment rates increase with age), the incidence of physical handicaps within the different groups and the percentage of school leavers that are followed-up.

The possibility that many special education leavers would be unable to find work led the Warnock Report to suggest that services should be planned for these leavers on the basis of 'significant living without work'. Many writers (e.g. Tizard and Anderson, 1983) have objected to this concept, claiming that it represented a dilution of the individual's right to work. Taylor (1982a) suggested that we should only accept the idea of 'significant living without work' for individuals with a handicap when the non-handicapped also accept activities and occupations other than paid employment as attracting equivalent status and income. Massie (1982) argued that the Warnock report took a superficial approach to this issue and that we should vigorously resist the notion that disabled individuals should accept a life outside the sphere of economic activity. He commented that

> There is a grave danger that some teachers will decide that it is unrealistic to expect an individual ever to obtain employment and they will adjust the teaching programme accordingly with the possibility of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Disabled people have as much right to work as fit people (Massie, 1982, p. 27).

2.2.4 Social adjustment.

The ability to earn a living is not the only criterion by which a successful transition from school to adult life may be judged. In addition, the ability to lead an independent life is also important (Younghusband et al., 1970), although more difficult for researchers to determine as there are potentially many different factors which need to be considered. Ultimately, as Tizard and Anderson (1983) have noted, what is taken to constitute a worthwhile and meaningful life is a subjective and personal judgement. Offensbacher and Cooper (1984), for instance, used meta-analytical techniques to aggregate 43 research studies concerning the effects of special educational placement on the social adjustment of school

children. The results obtained by these studies were influenced by a number of factors, one of which was the category of measurement used. They found that

> ... those tests using social adjustment ratings made by an adult other than the teacher appeared more likely to find better social adjustment for MR [mentally retarded] students in regular or resource class while those tests using teacher evaluations or regular class peer ratings tended to find superior social adjustment in special class (Offensbacher and Cooper, 1984, p. 11).

Similarly Edgerton and Bercovici (1976) found that their predictions of successful adaptation which they had made six to seven years before were correct less than half the time and that even the most confident of predictions could be wrong. One of the reasons for their failure was that they did not know what those labelled as 'mentally retarded' would put forward as their criteria of normal community adjustment. For the members of their study sample, competence appeared to be less important than confidence, and independence less vital than a subjective sense of well-being, although both competence and independence were taken as the raters' criteria of successful adjustment. The authors accepted that what may in fact be needed in assessing levels of successful adaptation is an approach which studies the way in which individuals see themselves. They commented that 'It could be argued that a basic criteria of a normal way of life is the capacity to define myself as normal and to believe that others, for the most part do likewise' (p. 513).

2.3 The family.

In the first two sections of this chapter I have been concerned with the impact of special education upon the special education pupil. However, the whole family is affected to a varying extent if a member of the family

attends special education, and their response to that situation will, in turn, affect how the special education pupils responds to his or her labelling (Crnic et al., 1983). In the remainder of this chapter, therefore, I will briefly examine some of the research which has studied the reactions of parents to special education and the relationship between special education leavers and their families.

2.3.1 Parental responses.

For comparatively few parents the knowledge that their son or daughter has special educational needs follows either immediately or shortly after the son or daughter's birth. The majority of children will not be recognised as having special educational needs until after their early teenage years. Crnic et al. (1983) have observed that researchers often assume 'a deleterious or pathological outcome' in the families of children with a mental handicap (p. 132). They suggested that this was in fact a misconception and that, as Faerstein (1986) has detailed, the reactions of parents, both when they first learn that their child has a handicap and afterwards, are not necessarily those of shock, grief and denial that are typically assumed by professionals. For instance, the many parents in Faerstein's sample 'described feeling relief on the confirmation of their suspicions, not defensive reactions' (p. 9).

Hannam (1980), who is himself the father of a handicapped child, believed that it was inevitable that parents of a child with a severe handicap would occasionally have some ambivalent feelings towards their son or daughter. Hannam commented that 'many, if not all parents will wish at some time that the child had died' (p. 61) and he believed that parents should have some form of counselling available to them to help them come to terms with these

feelings. Weight is added to this suggestion by the observation by Faerstein (1986) amongst others (e.g. Taylor, 1982b) that many of the mothers in her sample displayed inappropriate guilt as they tried to find some reason for the disability and that over half felt in some way responsible for their child's condition.

2.3.2 Problems encountered by families.

The management of behaviour problems is most frequently cited by researchers as causing the greatest concern to parents and as being the factor most likely to lead to an application for institutionalisation (Mittler et al., 1983). Baldwin (1985) also found that, while the effect of disablement on the family's standard of living was unlikely to be the issue that most parents identified as being the most important, financial assistance (or the lack of it) was still an important factor in allowing parents to cope more easily and to live well. Families developed coping strategies in order to reduce the financial effects of the handicap. Some fathers, for example, increased their hours of work in response to their wives' inability to go out to work. In other cases where there was less financial pressure, men abandoned their commitment to promotion and assumed a much greater involvement with the family.

By and large, however, it is mothers who bear the brunt of the deficiencies in services. Involvement of fathers in direct care is limited and the value of welfare agencies (other than schools) may range from the marginally useful to the positively unhelpful (Ayer and Alaszewski, 1984). At times the cumulative effect of behaviour difficulties and financial stress, as well as increased social isolation, can have drastic consequences. Hannam (1980), for instance, surveyed fourteen families and

found that two of the mothers had had nervous breakdowns and that one of the father's stay in a psychiatric hospital was attributed by the family to the child's behaviour.

The ability of parents to cope with the problems created by their child's handicap seems to be linked to three factors. First of all, it is related to the severity of the child's physical or mental handicap, secondly to his or her behaviour problems, and thirdly, it is related to what have been described by Friedrich et al. (1985) as a variety of parental coping resources. Friedrich et al. found that the coping ability of the parents of 158 children with a mental handicap aged from three to nineteen was linked, not only to the social and financial support that parents received, but also to factors such as maternal depression and locus of control. The relationship between parental coping resources and the behaviour problems of their children is therefore bidirectional, with the former contributing to the latter and vice-versa.

2.3.3 Parents and professionals.

The general aim within the United Kingdom is for professionals to treat parents as equal partners in the education of their children. This was a central issue of the Warnock Report (1978):

> We have insisted throughout this report that the successful education of children with special educational needs is dependent upon the full involvement of their parents; indeed unless the parents are seen as equal parners in the educational process the purpose of our report will be frustrated. But the parents with whom we are at present concerned (mainly, though not exclusively, those with severely handicapped children) have burdens to bear of which other persons have no conception. It is therfore an essential part of our thesis that parents must be advised, encouraged and supported so that they can in turn effectively help their children (p. 150).

Some writers (e.g. Mittler et al., 1983) have been sceptical about the extent to which this partnership is ever achieved. Rodgers (1986), for instance, reviewed a Centre for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE) Handbook which noted that the majority of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in England and Wales failed to carry out both the spirit and the letter of the 1980 Education Act. Firstly, many LEAs provided parents with too little information, or provided it in a piecemeal way at each stage of assessment, statement and appeal, thus keeping parents at a disadvantage. Secondly, some LEA material discouraged parents from taking up their rights under the Act. Clearly, parents have to be determined in order to take full advantage of those services that are provided. Mittler et al. (1983) cited Fox (1974) who described how 'a facility for brashness, over-dramatisation and a refusal to be intimidated by authority or status have become necessary for obtaining the best from our services' (p. 130).

The special school or unit is typically the focus for the provision of support to parents of children with special needs (Heron and Myers, 1983). Yet parents' attitudes towards special education are likely to vary, both over time and from parent to parent, with some defending special schools and others advocating integration. Booth et al. (1983) quoted Ince et al. (1983) who reported that parental attitudes were not fixed but changed with time and that they depended very closely upon what had been happening to their children's education. However, Walker (1982) found that parents of children with a mild mental handicap were more dissatisfied with the support available, both to themselves and to their children, than were parents of physically or sensorily handicapped children. In particular, parents emphasised the need for improvements in the teaching of basic literacy, suggesting that teachers should have more patience with slow

learners and that there should be more discipline in schools and smaller classes. An important element in the criticisms of these parents was the lack of support that they found once their children had left school. It is particularly unfortunate that parents are deprived of help and support at this crucial time and are unable to discuss their son's or daughter's immediate or long-term needs with people who know their child and who are also well informed about local services and provisions (Mittler et al., 1983; Ward, 1982).

2.3.4 Family influences on the special education leaver.

Parental attitudes are obviously of fundamental importance in the development of the belief system of the child. Not only will the parents' evaluation of their child's abilities determine the amount of independence that they allow to him or her, but the attitudes of parents will also influence the development of their child's view of him or herself (see Section 1.2.2). Coleman (1985) argued that familial socialisation is related to the labelled child's self-concept through the variable of parental expectations. Typically, higher socio-economic status (SES) families expected more of their children than lower SES families, and those high SES children in special classes were more likely to have a negative self-concept. Special education pupils, therefore, may well be caught within a mesh of self-fulfilling hypotheses. Thus Algozzine and Mercer (1980) commented that the parents of a child with a handicap attributed his or her success to luck and his or her failure to a lack of ability or effort. These parents had low expectations for their child's success and high expectations for their failure.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature.

Cerreto (1981) argued that we should not take too narrow a view of the family but study the influences of parents on their children within 'an historical and ecological perspective'. Vinik et al. (1985) and Zetlin and Turner (1985) have been amongst the few researchers to do this. Vinik et al. used participant observation to study 29 individuals with a mild mental handicap who had already left home, over an eighteen month period. Parental involvement was rated over two broad areas: resource (where parents provided instrumental and/or socio-emotional support) and regulation (where parents attempted to control their son's or daughter's activities and affairs). Vinik et al. were able to discern three broad types of parental involvement with their sons and daughters.

A) *Supportive relationships* between parents and children were close and warm, and assistance was freely given whenever required. This was the largest group, and conflict between parents and children was rare although contact was regularly maintained. Over the years 'parents appeared to have appraised their child's handicap realistically and actively fostered growth and development' (Vinik et al., 1985, p. 413). Individuals in this group were the most likely to be competitively employed.

B) *Dependent relationships* were just as warm and accepting as supportive relationships, but involved much higher levels of both support and regulation. There were few areas of life in which the parents were not involved and

> most of the mentally retarded individuals in this group had been highly protected since childhood. These parents often minimised the nature of their child's handicap by emphasising specific problems such as perceptual disturbances or language delay, but they failed to encourage, or even to see the possibility of growth in their children (Vinik et al., 1985, p. 415).

Chapter Two: Review of Literature.

While many parents may wish to continue to look after their children for as long as possible, to do so, even with love and affection, can at times, be a source of problems. Where this dilemma remains unresolved, parents and children may continue to be overly dependent on each other. Wertheimer (1981) commented that the extent to which 'parents are able to "let go" of the handicapped person and allow them greater independence depends on a number of factors including how far they see the mentally handicapped person as existing without their help' (p. 14). Thus the extent to which people with a mental handicap are able to become independent depends not only on their potential, and the limits which their handicap might impose, but also on how far parents encourage them to become less dependent. Schatz (1983) noted in this respect that while the normal development for adolescents is a process of gradual detachment from the family:

> Handicapped people are either not in a position to do this, or the environment does not allow them to. They are deprived of the perspective of creating their own family ... the family of origin remains for them largely the sole source of interaction and communication which, in turn, secures financial, mental and social welfare (Schatz, 1983, p. 197).

C) Conflict-ridden relationships were essentially tense and mutually unsatisfying for both parents and their children. The participants in this group were on average younger than in the other two groups and the authors speculated that the aggressive nature of their relationships with their parents might be the result of adolescent trauma. Children expected unlimited support yet insisted on lifestyles of their own choosing. At the same time, their parents sought to diminish aid and contact while maintaining a significant amount of influence and control. Both parents and children thus had their own reasons for continuing what they both reported to be conflict-ridden relationships.

Wizik et al. interpreted their data as 'suggestive of a causal link between family context and the mentally retarded adult's adaptation to an independent lifestyle' (p. 418). They maintained that individuals who adapted most successfully to life in the community came from homes in which their parents were supportive and worked consistently to maximise the individual's self-confidence and social adequacy.

One of the problems that parents face is accurately summed up by Davidson (1977) who observed that 'giving help is a fine art, it involves knowing when to support and when to withdraw' (p. 111). As researchers in this field, we should therefore be careful about the strictures that we lay down when, on the one hand, we criticise parents for over-protecting their children and, on the other, require that they should give support and encouragement.

2.4 Summary and conclusions.

Local Education Authorities have been required to provide educational facilities for school pupils with special needs since 1974. Debate concerning the most suitable form of special needs education involves moral, educational and psychological issues. While a more integrated learning environment such as that found in a special unit may provide more opportunities for social interaction, these interactions are not necessarily positive.

Adolescence and the process of leaving school is a difficult time for most teenagers, but for special education leavers it poses particular challenges. Research suggests that special education leavers suffer more from social isolation and are less likely to find open employment than are leavers from mainstream education. In addition, while there is general

recognition of the importance of education for special needs pupils after the age of sixteen, few pupils with learning difficulties stay on at school and, of those pupils who do, many are simply waiting for a placement in an ATC to become available. Further educational provision has recently improved greatly, although the level and type of provision is still inadequate.

The greater technological demands of modern industry and the current high levels of unemployment have meant that those teenagers who leave school without qualifications are at an increasing disadvantage in the employment market. May and Hughes (1984) found that at the end of their study only 5 per cent of special education leavers were holding down a job in open employment, while Corrie (1984) found that only 6 per cent of his sample were doing so. The success of special education leavers in finding employment is likely to be influenced by a number of factors including age, IQ, physical handicap, work experience and sex.

The success of the transition from school to adult life can be judged in a number of ways. In addition to unemployment, individuals' success in living independently and the level of demand made on social services are both important. One of the problems in attempting to make use of such measures, however, is the subjectivity of any definition of successful adaptation.

The problems that families of children with a handicap are likely to experience change during adolescence and school-leaving (Tizard and Anderson, 1983). Ward (1982) suggested that the problems confronting parents may increase for two reasons: firstly, a lack of daytime facilities and, secondly, the sudden withdrawal of the family support services that

had previously been available. She quoted Bicknell (1981), who described the prospect facing parents as

> ... an empty void with the problems of unemployment, ill understood sexual desire, perhaps increasing behaviour disorder and in relationship to their own increasing age and progressive weaknesses (Ward, 1982, p.63).

Weddell and Roberts (1982) have pointed out that there is an increasing demand for research which identifies problems within special education, evaluates existing alternatives and suggests possible solutions to these problems. Such research clearly has an immediate relevance to the lives of special education pupils (Bradley and Hegarty, 1981), and is obviously of great value, but other writers have identified a need for an additional type of research. Barton and Tomlinson (1981), for instance, complained of a lack of theory in special educational research. They noted that

> there is a continuing need for micro-level studies of the way in which those considered to be special or handicapped actually do live in the social world, how they are treated and labelled and how they perceive and accommodate to their treatment (Barton and Tomlinson, 1981, p. 11).

One of the most consistent themes to emerge from the first two chapters has concerned the need for research to supplement the hard facts and the political arithmetic of research in special education, with qualitative methods which will develop our understanding of its complex realities (e.g. Corrie and Zaklukiewitz, 1984b). Not only do we need research that is concerned with the everyday difficulties faced by special education leavers, but we also need research that investigates, for example, the social psychological consequences of labelling. Bearing these issues in mind, the objective of this research has been to explore six different, though related, areas:

i) the opinions of a sample of both leavers and their parents concerning special education, the extent to which both groups would prefer a

greater degree of integration, and the positive and negative aspects of special education that they pick out;

ii) the employment history of special education leavers and in particular whether the effective choice for many leavers is between unemployment and an ATC;

iii) the extent of the social isolation and informal labelling experienced by special education leavers;

iv) whether special education leavers actively interpret the reasons for their formal and informal labelling or passively adopt the views of others;

v) whether the reasons that special education leavers give for their labelling is changed by the process of leaving school; and

vi) the relationship between parents' attitudes towards their children's educational and social difficulties and their children's views of themselves.

CHAPTER THREE: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH.

In the first two chapters I suggested that if we are to understand the effects of labelling on special education leavers we need a research design which is able to examine the perspective of the labelled individual. A purely quantitative approach would be unable to provide this sensitivity and therefore needs to be supplemented by qualitative methods. This chapter aims to do three things. First of all, I will briefly discuss some of the features of a qualitative approach to labelling and outline some of the reasons why I have adopted such an approach. Secondly, I will consider some of the ways in which this study has maintained a scientific approach to the collection of data. And finally I will discuss the qualitative analysis of this data.

3.1 The need for qualitative research in special education.

In the past some researchers have treated people with a mental handicap as objects to be manipulated or as the subjects of experiments without attempting to understand or to describe the experiences of these individuals. Campbell (1984) criticised this type of research, in which researchers were more concerned with the internal validity and reliability of experiments than with their external validity. Campbell suggested that we need post-positivistic methods of research if we are to avoid the mistakes of a generation of Educational Psychologists who, he claimed, were

> ... guilty of assuming a non-interactive, acausal observational process in which all of our questionnaires and arrangements could describe without disturbing, and in which the people being described as well as the describers would be unmotivated to bias the meter readings (Campbell, 1984, p. 214).

Arguments in favour of qualitative research, therefore, do not revolve around a simple preference for one type of data or analysis over another.

More fundamentally, qualitative research is typically the method chosen by a researcher who wishes to understand the phenomenological experience of the individuals that he or she is working with, or, in Campbell's terms, 'to calibrate the meter readings'. Thus Goode (1984) argued that an 'etic' study (using quantitative data) could not provide us with the information that we needed in order to make sense of the lives of people with a mental handicap. Such a study could only give us an outsider's perspective on a culture, one that was extrinsic to the participants' concern. Edgerton and Langness (1978) joined Goode in arguing that we need 'emic' research in which the researcher adopts the style of an anthropologist who studies a tribe's culture by attempting to take on the perspective of an individual within that culture.

This argument has been taken up by Corrie and Zaklukiewitz (1984a, 1984b) who pointed out that there are both philosophical and technical reasons for using a qualitative style of research. The philosophical argument for a qualitative approach to special education is based on the assumption that individuals consciously interpret their social world and that research should focus on these interpretations. The second argument that Corrie and Zaklukiewitz put forward is concerned with the technical aspects of designing experiments. They observed that educational research tended to take its methods from the physical sciences and relies heavily on quantitative and psychometric techniques. These quantitative procedures often view events from the outside, through a filter of empirical concern, and can only provide superficial data based on the analysis of arbitarily chosen variables. By contrast, qualitative methods allow the researcher to move closer to the perspective of special education pupils and give a greater depth of analysis.

3.2 The collection of data.

3.2.1 The ipsative-normative technique.

One of the problems of qualitative research is that the intensive and detailed nature of data collection often means that only a relatively few individuals are actually studied. This inevitably creates problems of generalisation: simply stated, there is no way of knowing whether or not the experiences of the participants in the study are representative of the population as a whole. Lazarus (1978) and Honess and Edwards (1984) have therefore stressed the need for ipsative-normative data, i.e. data which is obtained from both large numbers of individuals (perhaps through the use of questionnaires or standardised interviews) and from smaller scale, detailed investigation of a few individuals which may be repeated over a period of time. The use of an ipsative-normative design allows the benefits accruing from a detailed study of individuals to be married to the extensive analysis of group trends. The latter indicates which themes are of general importance and facilitates the generalisation of findings from the ipsative data.

3.2.2 Interviewing special education leavers.

It has sometimes been suggested that the testimony of individuals, and in particular adolescents, with a mental handicap is likely to be inaccurate and affected by the style of interviewing that is used. Tully and Cahill (1984), for instance, showed that some individuals with a mental handicap were prone to the effects of suggestion. In their study, participants were asked to recall a particular incident which had occured a week before. The greatest number of errors were made when the interviewer gave a variety of alternative choices for the participant to choose from. Dent (1986)

provided support for this possibility when she indicated that open-ended questions of a general nature which involved less suggestion produced the most accurate recall with children with a mild learning disability aged from eight to eleven. Free recall, by comparison, generally produced the best results with children of average intelligence. Dent's tentative conclusion was that 'there was no reason to suppose that mildly handicapped children (IQ 50 to 70) will necessarily be poorer witnesses than children of normal intelligence' (p. 16). Similarly Fitzgerald and Young (1985) have provided evidence which suggests that even young children with a severe mental handicap exhibit self-regulative behaviour and can 'think for themselves'.

Tully and Cahill (1984) and Dent (1986) were essentially concerned with the factual realities of the accounts of individuals with a mental handicap. The central issue in the present study, however, has been the ways in which participants represent their experiences to themselves and I have therefore been more concerned with understanding leavers' interpretations of events, than with establishing the veracity of their accounts. Nevertheless, the techniques that are used in the interviews must be appropriate to the intellectual level of the interviewees, and thus the methods that other researchers have used such as the Repertory Grids or Personality Inventory used by Honess and Edwards (1984), the questionnaires of Breakwell (1978), or the essays used by Hewstone et al. (1982) have not been a practical proposition here.

Corrie and Zaklukiewitz (1984a) supported the use of the open-ended interviewing techniques suggested by Dent (1986) and Tully and Cahill (1984). Corrie and Zaklukiewitz felt that this style of interviewing allowed the interviewee to go beyond the original intentions of the

researcher into areas that the participant had chosen. The researcher had certain areas that he would like to cover, but how, and in what order, this was done was not pre-selected or defined. Similarly Cattermole and Jahoda (1985) described the participants in their research as 'partners in defining the issues to be covered in the study'.

Atkinson (1988) favours the use of open-ended questions. She believes that they avoid the dangers of acquiescence and over-reporting associated with Yes/No answers, and eliminate the tendency of some participants to choose the second option in either/or questions. There are dangers, however, in restricting the interview format to open-ended questions. Henker and Whalen (1980) suggested that at times this type of question was likely to evoke an irrelevant anecdote or a 'don't know' or an 'ask my mother' answer. Equally, highly structured or forced choice formats run the risk of imposing the investigator's construct system upon the interviewee and often produced reflexive or socially desirable answers. The solution that Henker and Whalen proposed involved the development of semi-structured interviews or a funnel procedure. Their interviews began with open-ended questions and then became more highly structured and narrowed the interviewee's answers down to specific items.

When the researcher does not use a structured interview protocol but allows the interviewee some scope in defining the issues to be covered, it is highly likely that as Henker and Whalen have suggested, there will be 'problems with missing data, since individual differences in developmental level, concentration span, co-operation, and openness preclude obtaining answers to all questions from all intervewees' (p. 146). Where this is the case, the data analysis procedure must be flexible enough to overcome these problems without obscuring the richness and idiosyncratic nature of the

participant's responses. Indeed Potter and Wetherell (1987) have described this variability of accounts as a desirable feature of interviews and one which the interview format should positively encourage. They suggested that this could be achieved by approaching the same issue more than once and in a variety of ways. A detailed interview schedule should therefore be constructed which sets up the questions to be asked and probes and follow-ups to specific answers. Where the participant has been interviewed before on the same issues, a note should be available to the interviewer of the interviewee's previous answers so that any contradictions can be explored. Moreover, Potter and Wetherell argued that as the interviewer's questions formed part of the context of the interview they should therefore be included when the data are presented.

3.2.3 Participant-observation in special education.

Webb et al. (1966) have argued that the principle objection to the use of interviews as a research method is that they are often used on their own without support from contrasting research techniques. They pointed out that interviews should in fact be supplemented by different methods which test the same variables, but have different methodological strengths. More recently Honess and Edwards (1984) claimed that one of the main means of validating qualitative data is through cross-validation from different sources of information. One of the methods that has been widely used with individuals with a mental handicap, both on its own and to complement more formal interviews, has been participant-observation (e.g. Edgerton, 1967, 1984; Koegel and Edgerton, 1982; May and Hughes, 1984; Winik et al., 1985). Participant-observation is characterised by a desire to achieve an empathic understanding with the participant and to gain insight into a person's life

by trying to appreciate the world from his or her point of view. Offer et al. (1981) have described the empathic approach as 'vicarious introspection'. Researchers who achieve such an empathetic understanding of the participant's life acquire a valuable perspective for, as Goode (1984) pointed out,

> Those who achieve intimacy with deeply imperfect persons do accept them and their viewpoints about basic human concerns. Such intimacy leads to a recognition of the client's subjective experiences of life, even when this is discontinuous with, or even denies, our own experience and common-knowledge (Goode, 1984, p. 246).

The popularity of participant-observation with people with a mental handicap has been attributed by Edgerton and Langness (1978) to the high degree of reactivity of systematic observation which was criticised by Campbell (1984) as I pointed out above. Edgerton and Langness argued that, as the observer must inevitably establish a relationship with the participant, this relationship should be one that makes the meaning of the situation more accessible to the researcher. In this respect the authors quoted Madge (1953) who described the primary task of the participant-observer as

> to enter into the life of the community being studied. If this task is achieved, there will be two consequences: his subjects will learn to take him for granted and thus to behave almost as if he was not there, and he will learn to think almost as they think (Edgerton and Langness, 1978, p. 340).

The subjectivity that is an inevitable part of research can therefore prove to be an invaluable tool in the acquisition of meaningful information about the lives of participants. The researcher becomes part of the environmental context that he or she is studying. The relationship that is established between the participant and the researcher is of a completely different kind to that which exists in traditional laboratory research and

is an invaluable part of the researcher's armoury (Markova, 1985). However, the use of this personal knowledge must be systematically controlled to ensure the elimination of as much personal bias as possible (Campbell, 1984).

Edgerton (1984) stressed the importance, in this style of research, of observing the everyday life of the participant as often and under as many different circumstances as possible. Simply asking an individual about his or her life was not enough, for not only may he or she respond in a particular way for many different reasons, but interviewing without prior participant-observation also imposes the questioner's sense of what is important on the interviewee. Thus Edgerton and Bercovici (1976) found that what seemed to them to dominate the lives of their study sample was not work or stigma but recreation, while Edgerton, Bollinger and Herr (1984) found that the central theme in the lives of 15 of the same individuals was 'hope', an unshakeable optimism that life would be rewarding.

Corrie and Zaklukiewitz (1984a) recognised that using a participant-observation approach in schools was 'by no means unproblematic' and they recommended a greater emphasis upon interviewing procedures. At the same time, however, it is still possible to adopt the empathic style advocated by Cattermole and Jahoda (1985) where the onus is on the participant as the expert and the researcher as the novice. If an empathic approach is to be a viable proposition then there must be a great deal of participant-observer contact prior to the interview. The interview itself should be relaxed and informal and taken up where previous contacts with the participant left off. The proposals by Corrie and Zaklukiewitz (1984a) that two interviewers could be used, and by Atkinson (1988) that significant others should be

involved in the interview, are therefore entirely at odds with this empathic, participant-based approach.

If the insights that participant-observation affords are not to be lost they must be carried over not only into the more formal interviews, but also into the analysis of data. This can partly be achieved by the researcher recording the impressions that he or she has gathered in field notes, but in addition the analysis of data must itself make use of this developed empathy.

3.3 The analysis of data.

Corrie and Zaklukiewitz (1984a) specify several methodological practices that the qualitative researcher must adopt. Firstly, he or she must become familiar with the nature and the scope of the material being studied. This is followed by sustained data collection, during which the researcher constantly reviews the direction and focus of the study. Finally, the analysis of the data should be carried out through case studies. Corrie and Zaklukiewitz described this continual interplay between conceptualisation and observation at all stages of research as 'progressive focusing'.

3.3.1 The case study approach.

Case studies have become increasingly influential within social and educational psychology as a means of analysing and presenting data. Honess and Edwards (1987) attribute this rise in popularity to the ability of case studies to provide a means of analytical rather than simply statistical inference. They argue that case studies allow a more systematic interpretation of qualitative research than many other methods, because they facilitate a detailed examination of the dynamic between the

individual and society which can be integrated with more extensive sampling. Similarly Bromley (1985) has defined the scientific case study as

> ... a systematic enquiry into a particular event or set of realted events which aims to define the nature and the scope of the issues in question. The aim is to collect enough relevant evidence and to marshall a sufficiently cogent argument so that competent investigators are led to prefer THAT interpretation of events rather than any other (emphasis in original) (Bromley, 1985, p. 9)

Bromley (1985, 1986) believes that case studies are one of the most fundamental means of analysis available to psychologists. He advocates a quasi-judicial approach to case studies which allows them to become exercises in problem solving whereby the data are linked to the conclusion(s) through a rational, logical structure of inductive reasoning. As its name suggests, the antecedents of the quasi-judicial case study lie in the establishment of case-law in jurisprudence. The logic that is used is not the formal, deductive logic of closed, axiomatic systems, but the natural or informal logic of open, real world arguments. Thus the validity of the argument put forward in the case study does not depend on every single link of the argument as in a chain, but rather on an inter-connected web of evidence. Honess and Edwards (1984) supported this view. They suggested that the triangulation of evidence from different sources and perspectives and at different times from researchers, adolescents and parents is an invaluable stage in building up the network of this argument. Bromley (1985, 1986) proposed that close examination of a succession of cases can lead to a point of 'theoretical saturation' where the addition of new cases does not increase our understanding.

Because the detailed nature of the case study necessitates the presentation and analysis of a few rather than many cases, the case study methodology has often been criticised for its lack of representativeness

(Honess and Edwards, 1987). However, as Campbell (1984) has argued, case studies are not alone in this deficiency and the representativeness of a particular sample cannot be defined solely in statistical terms. Thus arguments for the external validity of a sample or subset of a population need to go beyond statistical inference either to explicit theory (to explicate the reasons for any particular quantitative findings) or more usually to a reliance on an implicit common sense, that is 'situation-specific wisdom' (Campbell, 1984). This, too, is how case studies establish their representativeness. Indeed the explanatory principles of a theory that is used to explain results may best be illustrated by an atypical case. In addition, where an ipsative-normative design is used, the representativeness of a series of case studies can accurately be established within the particular parameters and confines of the population from which it is drawn. Outside this population we are, once again, left with a reliance either on theory or on situation-specific wisdom.

3.3.2 The analysis of the transcribed interview.

The analysis and presentation of results must reflect the depth and quality of the information that has been gathered. Content analysis (e.g. Allen-Meares, 1984) on its own is unable to reflect the variations and consistencies of accounts, both for the same person over the course of up to two years, and from individual to individual. More specifically, content analysis tends to collapse individual differences in favour of collective continuities and pays no attention to the apparent contradictions of individual accounts. Whilst there are indeed certain patterns that are common to many accounts, there are also subtle variations and discrepancies between these same accounts. However, the combination of content analysis

with case studies allows the consistencies within a group to be examined without losing sensitivity to individual variations.

The quasi-judicial case study, then, is one way of presenting an individualised qualitative analysis of the interaction between the labelled individual and his or her social and physical environment. In order to present a plausible hypothesis of the reasons that special education leavers give for their formal and informal labelling, the participants' accounts must be placed in context. The analysis of a case study should thus take the form of an argument from the context in which the interview is carried out (e.g. whether the leaver is in an Adult Training Centre or is in open employment) to a conclusion in terms of the function of the account for the leaver.

Although this study does not make explicit use of Discourse Analysis, the analytical techniques that Potter and Wetherell (1987) describe have much in common with the methods used by other qualitative analysts. These techniques offer a valid means of moving from a transcript to an analysis of the function of the account for the interviewee within a case study. Potter and Wetherell (1987) detail several processes through which the researcher can connect the form of an account with its function.

1) Coding. The coding of the transcript is a quite distinct stage from the analysis of tha data. Potter and Wetherell noted that the goal of coding 'is not to find results but to squeeze an unwieldy body of discourse into managable chunks. It is an analytical preliminary preparing the way for a much more intensive study of the material' (p. 167). The categories used in coding are obviously related to the research questions of interest, but wherever possible the coding should be as inclusive as is practical; and one item may be included in as many as three or four different categories.

2) Analysis. This is essentially an evolutionary process in which the researcher reads and re-reads the material looking for patterns in the data, and trying to understand the function of these patterns. The researcher forms hypotheses concerning these patterns and searches for evidence that bears on these hypotheses.

3) Validation. Potter and Wetherell describe four analytical techniques which could be used to validate the findings of this kind of research.

a) The analytical claims that are made of the text should be coherent with no loose ends. If a regular pattern is discovered in the text then we must look for and examine exceptions to this pattern; if the interviewee recognises the existence of these exceptions and makes some attempt to explain them, then the explanatory scheme is supported.

b) The participant's orientation is important because we should be concerned with what the participants see as consistent and different in their accounts.

c) If the participant is aware of problems and contradictions in his or her account, then in attempting to correct these difficulties it is likely that he or she will create new problems.

d) The fourth criterion of validity, and in many ways the most powerful, is fruitfulness. This refers to the scope of an analytic scheme to make sense of new kinds of discourse and to generate novel explanations.

3.4 Summary.

If we are to understand the effects of labelling upon special education leavers we need to use a qualitative rather than a quantitative style of research which allows us to adopt the perspective of the labelled

individual. Barton and Tomlinson (1984) have stressed the importance of this type of phenomenological perspective:

> These perspectives stress the way in which social reality is a creation of social participants, and that social categories and assumptions are not given or natural, but are a product of conscious communication and action between people. The application of phenomenological perspectives to special education is now proving particularly valuable, as researchers are now able to "take as problematic" the processes of categorising, labelling, assessing and treating the "handicapped" and the special (Barton and Tomlinson, 1984, p. 3).

One of the drawbacks of qualitative research is the difficulty of generalising results. This is at least partly because of the intensive nature of qualitative research in which often only a relatively few individuals are studied. This study has attempted to overcome this problem by using an ipsative-normative design. Information was gathered from participants using semi-structured interviews and participant-observation and will be presented through the use of an attributional analysis of the perceived causes of labelling, and case studies.

CHAPTER FOUR: PILOT STUDY.

ADULT TRAINING CENTER TRAINEES' EXPERIENCES OF LABELLING.

We have seen in Chapter One how previous studies of labelling have tended to represent the labelled individual as a passive victim who simply internalizes the negative views of others. It is possible, however, to take a more dynamic view of the process of labelling, in which individuals with a mental handicap actively interpret labelling in ways that allow them to maintain a positive self-image. School leaving provides a particularly appropriate time to study the psychological consequences of labelling for, as Chapter Two showed, the move from school to adult life involves both a practical and a symbolic transition. While some special education leavers are able to leave their stigmatized identity behind them, many other special education leavers simply exchange one stigmatizing environment for another, such as an Adult Training Centre (ATC). May and Hughes (1984) have suggested that school leavers who fail to make a break from a stigmatising environment at this time may be unable to do so later. The psychological consequences for those special education leavers who move from the stigmatizing environment of a special school to that of an ATC may therefore be great.

The main aim of the pilot study has been to examine the reasons given by ATC trainees for their labelling. All of the participants in this study had left a special school within the previous two years and much of their accounts concerned the reasons for their attendance at an ATC. Thus the pilot study also represented a retrospective account of this transition from the perspective of ATC trainees. The pilot study consisted of a twenty month longitudinal study of seven trainees carried out from April 1985 to December 1986. The time-scale of the pilot study thus overlapped with that

of the main study, which ran from June 1985 until February 1987, although each phase of the pilot study (eg first trainee interview, first parental interview, follow-up trainee interview) was carried out before the equivalent phase of the main study.

4.1 METHOD.

4.1.1 Participants.

Potential participants in this study were selected from a survey of 130 ATC trainees in Central Region (representing over half of the total population of trainees) carried out by Cattermole and Jahoda at Stirling University over the winter of 1984-85 (personal communication). This survey was concerned to identify those trainees who, according to the criteria set by their ATC, had the potential to develop the self-help skills necessary for them to be able to live in the minimal staff support housing offered by a local Housing Association. Twenty trainees between the ages of sixteen and nineteen from three of the four ATCs in Central Region were judged by their centres to be capable of living independently. Four trainees at one ATC were excluded for the practical reason that their ATC was too far away to allow me the regular access to it that was necessary to develop an empathic relationship. Of the sixteen remaining trainees at two centres, three were at that time participating in the study being carried out by other researchers and were excluded because it was felt that this might have influenced their perception of labelling. Eight (four male and four female) of the thirteen trainees who remained were randomly selected by the toss of a coin and permission to approach these trainees was gained from their ATC manager.

After introducing myself to each trainee I explained that I was a researcher at Stirling University and was interested in finding out about their experiences both at school and at the centre. I emphasized to each trainee that it was his or her decision whether or not to help me. All of the trainees agreed to be interviewed although one trainee subsequently withdrew during his first interview and information about him has not been included here.

The mean age of the remaining seven trainees in this study at the time of their first interview was 18 years and 7 months (SD 9 months; range 17:6-19:11). Of these seven trainees, four (Ann, Bridget, Jeff and Richard) had left Monroe Heights School (a large special school for children with mild learning difficulties, cf Section 2.1.2) at the age of sixteen. One male trainee (Colin) had left Monroe Heights to attend a Rudolf Steiner school for two years, and the two other female trainees (Sharon and Angela) had attended special schools in Central Region for children with severe learning difficulties. The four trainees who had left Monroe Heights special school at the age of sixteen (Jeff, Richard, Ann and Bridget) had spent an average of 7 years and 4 months at Monroe Heights (SD 2:1 years; range 3:5-9:6 years), which is almost two years longer than the average length of stay of 16 year old special school leavers (see Section 5.1.4).

4.1.2 Procedure

Before interviewing these seven trainees, four tape-recorded interviews were carried out with older ATC trainees. These interviews provided practice in interviewing techniques and also helped to outline areas that might be of concern to a younger age group in the ATCs.

Chapter Four: Pilot Study.

A) The first stages of the Pilot Study involved the establishment of a friendly relationship between myself and the trainees. I regularly visited the two centres which the trainees attended and spent at least a day with each trainee, trying to do some of the work that they did, and also mixing on a more informal basis, having lunch and playing pool or darts together. Where possible I also tried to involve myself in each trainee's out-of-centre activities, for instance playing football with Jeff and going to a football match with Richard. However, the four female trainees all led quite restricted social lives which I was either unable to involve myself in at all, or into which I could only introduce myself on a very gradual basis over the course of the study.

B) Interviews. Roughly two weeks after first meeting the trainees I began the first series of semi-structured interviews which formed the major part of the pilot study. Each trainee was initially interviewed either two or three times, depending upon the nature of the relationship that I had been able to build with the trainee at that point and the circumstances of the interview. If trainees were unduly nervous in an interview or if I was unable to deal with all the topics that I wanted to cover in two interviews, then I interviewed the trainees for a third time. All formal interviews with trainees were carried out at their ATCs (cf Section 3.2.2).

In addition to the major aim of the pilot study of examining the reasons that leavers gave for labelling, the interviews in the pilot study served two main purposes: first of all they refined and improved my interviewing skills; and secondly the pilot study introduced me to some of the needs and concerns of special education leavers, such as the strong desire amongst some leavers for greater personal independence.

The first interview typically involved a discussion of non-threatening issues such as information about the trainee's family, his or her experience of special education and hopes for the future such as whether he or she wished to leave the ATC. Only in the second, and if necessary a third, interview did I specifically introduce issues that were connected with formal and informal labelling (cf Section 1.1.1). All of these interviews were tape-recorded, except for those with Ane who did not wish to be tape-recorded. Throughout the interviews I told each trainee that I knew nothing about what it was like to go to an ATC and I stressed that I wished to learn from an expert what it was *really* like to go to a special school or an ATC.

At the end of these interviews I asked each trainee if he or she was willing for me to interview their parents and their instructors, and they all gave me permission to do so. When I approached the trainees' parents, however, the parents of Sharon, Angela and Bridget refused to be interviewed. Where interviews with parents were carried out, they covered a number of topics including whether or not their son or daughter had been the victim of name-calling or other verbal abuse connected with his or her attendance at an ATC or special school. The interviews with the trainees' parents and instructors gave me a more complete picture of the participant's strengths and weaknesses and of his or her life.

4.1.3 Analysis of trainee interviews.

Each of the tape-recorded trainee interviews was fully transcribed. The interviews with Ane and with the parents and instructors of the trainees were not tape-recorded, although notes were taken during these interviews and these were made up into field notes as soon as possible after the

interview had finished. The analysis of these interviews was carried out in three distinct but complementary ways and concentrated on the trainees' views of independence and labelling. These three different methods of analysis were: Interview Ratings; Case Studies; and Trainees' and Instructors' Assessments of Trainees' Abilities.

A) Interview ratings.

i) Independence. All the material and information that was available for each trainee (ie the transcripts and field notes for each trainee, instructor and parental interview) were read by the interviewer and by another, independent rater. The trainee was rated as belonging to one of three broad, pre-established categories according to his or her desire to leave the ATC. The three categories that were used were: a) trainee has no desire to leave the ATC; b) trainee wishes to leave but only in the long term; and c) trainee wishes to leave the ATC immediately.

ii) Informal Labelling. Trainees were rated according to whether they said that they had ever been called names such as 'slow' or 'mentally handicapped' by others (including family, neighbours and peers). The trainees' responses were compared with those of their parents.

iii) Reasons given for labelling. The third series of ratings that were made of the trainees' interviews concerned the reasons that trainees gave for their formal (and if relevant, informal) labelling (cf Section 1.5.2 A). Ratings were made according to whether elements of the leavers' accounts fell into any or all of the following categories of attributions:

i) An *Internal* attribution occured when a leaver attributed labelling to factors which potentially lay within his or her control. For example a trainees might say that he or she went to a special school because 'I was slow';

ii) *External* factors involved the extent to which people or circumstances outside the control of the individual were blamed for labelling. For instance Colin said 'it goes round the place, people think 'cos you're in, and it spreads round. I ken half of them are mentally handicapped, but when you're in like, people who are alright like, people shouldn't have to like, they just calls you that forever' (passage 4.6);

iii) An attribution of labelling to *stable* or *permanent* factors was one which suggested that the problem was likely to persist whether or not the individual moved from one environment to another. For instance Angela (passage 4.2) said 'I'm left handed anyway. It's only me that's left handed at home anyway, everyone else is right handed'.

iv) An *Unstable* or temporary attribution was based on the difficulties which led to the individual being labelled would not persist if the leaver moved to a different environment. For instance Gavin (passage 6.4) said 'so hopefully they can teach me all that [reading and writing] in college, they've got a computer which can teach how to spell, on the computer'.

v) *Specific* attributions limited the area in which a leaver recognised that he or she has a difficulty. An example of this was provided by Gavin (passage 6.4) 'the two most important things that I need is writing and spelling. That's all. I'm good at my sums, I'm good at maths and things like that'.

vi) A *Global* attribution of handicap referred to instances where an individual said that he or she had difficulties in all areas. An example of this was provided by Colin's step-father who said that Colin was lazy and indolent.

Raters were also given an opportunity to note any causes for labelling which trainees described and which were not covered by the six categories of attributions.

Although the categories of internal-external, global-specific and stable-unstable have been used extensively within psychology (eg Abramson et al., 1978; Alloy, Abramson, Metalsky and Hartlage, 1988), the way that these categories have been used within the pilot study differs from the normal attributional analysis. Weiner (1980, 1985), for instance, distinguished first of all between external and internal attributions, then divided each of these into global and specific sub-categories and then further sub-categorised these into stable and unstable attributions. I have made use of these categories but not the process of attributional analysis because the task of analysing the function and inter-relationships of these attributions has been left to the Case Studies.

B) Case studies.

The use of Interview ratings allows comparisons between different trainees to be made, but does not permit a more fine-grained analysis of the perceived causes of labelling. In particular the broad ratings of the reasons that each trainee gave for his or her labelling does not attempt to describe the functions that these explanations served for the trainee. Thus these ratings do not take into consideration those aspects of the trainee's life that might affect his or her ability to deal with labelling, such as parental attitudes, or the level of social support that is available.

To overcome these deficiencies, the interviews of each of the seven trainees have been analysed through the use of case studies. Within each case study I have looked at one specific theme - the reasons that each trainee gave for his or her informal labelling. Answers that were related

to this theme came not from one specific question or even series of questions but from a variety of sources. For instance such answers arose in the trainee's explanation of the following: why he or she attended a special rather than a mainstream school; why he or she now attended an ATC; the individual's conception of his or herself as handicapped or slow or in some way different from or similar to others etc.

C) Assessment of trainees' general abilities.

It can be argued that an analysis which is limited to trainees' views of their own abilities does not differentiate between those trainees with a realistic appraisal of their strengths and weaknesses, and those trainees who have an unrealistic conception of their own abilities. Therefore during each trainee's second interview (cf Section 4.1.2 A) he or she was asked to complete a simple self-assessment questionnaire concerning fourteen different general abilities such as communication, planning and decision-making. The trainees' assessment could then be compared with his or her instructor's assessment of the trainee's level of abilities. The abilities that were included in the questionnaire were compiled after reference to Whelan and Speake's (1979) Scale for Assessing Coping Skills and an unpublished scale used by Jahoda (1983).

The questionnaire that was used in this study did not attempt to provide a comprehensive assessment of a trainee's abilities. Instead it allowed a comparison between the trainee's view of his or her abilities and his or her instructor's view. A copy of the trainee self-assessment form and the instructor assessment form are included in Appendix One. Trainees who completed the trainee self-assessment forms were asked to give themselves from one to five stars for each of fourteen different abilities. For each different ability an example of a one-star and a five-star ability was

given, and the trainee was provided with a visual scale in the shape of a pyramid whose base was five stars (*****) and whose tip was one star (*) to help them produce a rating. Before beginning to complete the questionnaire each trainee was asked, as an example, to rate his or her ability to swim. The wording of the question was as follows:

> "How good are you at swimming? If you are a very good swimmer, then give yourself five stars (pointing to chart), but if you are a very bad swimmer, then give yourself one star".

If the trainee was still unsure, then he or she was prompted:

> "I am a very bad swimmer, indeed sometimes when I go swimming I sink! How many stars would you give me?"

All of the seven trainees apart from Angela were willing to complete the questionnaire. Each item was read out and examples of one and five star abilities were accompanied, if necessary, by pointing at the chart.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE FIRST INTERVIEWS.

4.2.1 Interview ratings.

The broad pre-established categories that were used (see Section 4.1.3) facilitated the ratings for the two raters to the extent that there was 100% agreement between the independent rater and the interviewer for each of the three ratings that were made.

i) Independence.

Table 4.1 Ratings of Trainees' Desire to Leave ATC.

Trainee	No desire to leave ATC	Leave ATC in the long term	Leave ATC immediately
Ann		x	
Angela	x		
Bridget		x	
Colin			x
Jeff	x		
Richard			x
Sharon	x		

Although it proved relatively easy to rate trainees' desire to leave the ATC into one of these three broad categories (Table 4.1), these ratings did not match up so well with these trainees' subsequent movements. During the course of the study Colin and Bridget both left the ATC and their family homes. Colin moved to England to live with his father, and Bridget married her fiance and moved into a council house near her parents' home.

ii) Informal Labelling. Table 4.2 shows that three trainees (Angela, Colin and Sharon) were rated as acknowledging that they had been called names on at least one occasion by neighbours or by relatives. Of the four trainees who were rated as saying that they had never been called names, Ane was contradicted in this by her mother. The parents of Jeff and Richard confirmed that to the best of their knowledge their sons had not been called names. I was unable to interview Bridget's parents to check her responses with respect to informal labelling.

Table 4.2 Trainees' Reports of Informal Labelling.

	Trainee said that he or she had been called names			Trainee said that he or she had never been called names		
Trainee	Supported	Contradicted	Unconfirmed	Supported	Contradicted	Unconfirmed
Ane					x	
Angela			x			
Bridget						x
Colin	x					
Jeff				x		
Richard				x		
Sharon			x			

iii) Reasons for Labelling. As Table 4.3 shows, three trainees (Ane, Bridget and Jeff) did not give any reasons for their labelling, i.e. their presence at a special school or at an ATC. None of these three trainees had reported being the subjects of informal labelling. Two trainees (Colin and

Richard) were rated as explaining labelling through external factors and not making any other attributions. Angela and Sharon, both of whom had said that they had experienced informal labelling, were rated as explaining labelling through the use of an internal attribution. In addition Sharon made one other attribution and Angela two other attributions.

Table 4.3 <u>Trainees' Attributions of the Causes of Labelling.</u>

Trainee	Makes No Attribution	External	Internal	Stable	Specific	Unstable	Global
Ann	x						
Angela		x	x	x			
Bridget	x						
Colin		x					
Jeff	x						
Richard		x					
Sharon		x	x				

4.2.2 <u>Case studies.</u>

Although the ratings of the interviews presented above illustrate that trainees differed both in their experiences of labelling and their representations of it, such simple ratings do not allow us to explore the significance of these differences for the individuals concerned. It is only through individual examination of the different aspects of these accounts that we can come to understand the functions that they served for the labelled individual.

Each Case Study consists of a brief introduction to the trainee's history before entering the ATC, followed by a description of the ways in which each trainee accounted for his or her informal and formal labelling. The Case Studies are organised in terms of the number of attributions that trainees were rated as making and which were shown in Table 4.3.

Chapter Four: Pilot Study.

A) Trainees making no attributions for their labelling

Bridget. Date of Birth 22:11:66.

Bridget was the youngest of four sisters. At the time of the first interview she lived at home with her mother, her parents having been divorced when she was eight years old. Bridget first attended special education when she was seven and moved to Monroe Heights school when she was twelve. Immediately after leaving school Bridget started at the ATC. When I interviewed her, Bridget planned to marry her fiance, John, and to leave the centre. They had applied for a council flat and hoped to be able to move in after they had married. I was unable to speak to Bridget's mother who declined to be interviewed.

First Interview 24:3:85 and 4:4:85. No interview with parents.

A) Informal Labelling. Bridget said that she had never been called names, either now that she was at the centre or before when had been at school.

B) Formal Labelling. Bridget told me that she did not know why she had gone to Monroe Heights or to the centre. She said that she wanted to move out of the centre and to be more like her sisters who were all married with young children. Bridget told me that if she did move out of home and live with John, then she would need help 'with the money'. However Bridget said that she did not know what the term 'mentally handicapped' meant and that she did not think that she was slow in any way.

C) Summary. It was more difficult for me to become friendly with Bridget than with the other trainees as she was very shy and spent all her free time with her fiance. Unlike those other trainees who denied knowledge of labelling, Bridget knew that she was in a position to leave home and to live independently. Perhaps because of this Bridget was more prepared to admit to potential difficulties when she came to live independently than

the other trainees that I interviewed. Nevertheless, she did not give any reason for her formal labelling.

Jeff. Date of Birth 20:8:66.

Jeff was the eldest son of four children. His father was a salesman and his mother was a secretary. Jeff attended a local primary school until the age of seven when his parents were informed by the Regional Education Authority that it had been decided that he should continue his education at Monroe Heights school.

Jeff left Monroe Heights school at the age of sixteen and went immediately into an ATC. His main social interests were sporting and he was an accomplished footballer and athlete. During the course of the study he became British Special Olympic highjump champion and recently represented Great Britain in an international Special Olympics competition. Whilst Jeff was seen by his instructors and teachers as a very enthusiastic student, they also described him as rather immature, lacking in confidence and verbally withdrawn.

First Interviews 6:4:85 and 1:5:85. Parental Interview 4:6:85.

A) Informal Labelling. Jeff told me that he did not have any local friends and that he just stayed at home and watched TV. Jeff's parents said that he used to have some friends whom he played football with, but as he had grown older he saw less of his friends as they had developed other interests. Jeff told me that he had never been called names by others, either when he had been at Monroe Heights school or now that he was at the ATC. His parents confirmed this.

B) Formal Labelling. Jeff told me that he did not know why he had gone to Monroe Heights school. He said that he would have prefered to have gone

there than to have gone to any other school. I asked Jeff whether he knew what the term 'mentally handicapped' meant and he told me that he did not. Jeff also said that neither he nor anyone that he knew was slow or mentally handicapped.

C) Summary. Jeff said that he did not know what the terms 'mentally handicapped' or 'slow' meant. Both Jeff and his parents said that he had never been called names. It is possible, therefore, that Jeff was unaware of the significance of attending Monroe Heights school or the ATC. However Jeff was generally reluctant to discuss these issues and instead emphasised the positive aspects of going to the centre, such as how much he liked it there, and the amount of football and other sports that he was able to play there. For Jeff these seemed to be the most important aspects of going to the ATC.

Ane. Date of Birth 31:1:67.

Ane was the youngest of three children. She suffered from Kippel-Fiel's syndrome and was also obese. Ane attended Monroe Heights school from the age of seven and on leaving school went straight to an ATC.

First interviews 5:3:85 and 22:3:85. Parental interview 2:5:85.

A) Informal labelling. Ane did not wish to be tape-recorded, because she said that she did not like the sound of her own voice. She told me that she had never been called 'slow' or 'handicapped' or any other names, did not know what those words meant, and that she was perfectly happy to continue going to the centre.

Ane's mother and one of her instructors (with whom she had a close relationship) both told me that Ane was very concerned about her appearance. They said that Ane felt that everyone was looking at her and trying to make fun of her. Ane's mother believed to some extent that this

was true and said that she had recently told off a woman that she thought was 'gawping' too much at Ane. Ane's mother said that because Ane had not gone to a local school but to Monroe Heights she did not have any local friends.

B) Formal labelling. Ane told me that she did not know why she had gone to Monroe Heights school and would not have prefered to have gone to another school. She said that there was no difference between attending that ATC and doing any other job. Ane's responses to my questions on labelling were very brief, typically being either 'yes', 'no' or 'don't know'.

C) Summary. According to her mother and her instructor Ane was frequently the subject of verbal abuse from people who lived nearby, and sometimes asked her mother why she was 'different' from other people. During our interviews, however, Ane denied all knowledge of these issues. Ane's apparent reluctance to discuss labelling during our interviews may represent a failure on the part of the interviewer to establish an adequate relationship with Ane that would enable her to feel secure enough to explore these issues.

B) Trainees making one attribution for their labelling.

Colin. Date of Birth 15:9:67.

Colin was the eldest child in his family. He was first placed in a special school when he was seven. Shortly after this his natural parents divorced and he moved with his mother and his sister to Scotland where his mother remarried and he started attending Monroe Heights. Colin's mother and step-father felt that Monroe Heights gave Colin far too much freedom, and that as he had grown older he had begun to cause more and more trouble.

Eventually the school authorities and Colin's parents agreed that he should be withdrawn from the school before he was expelled.

After leaving Monroe Heights school, Colin attended a Rudolf Steiner school near Aberdeen for two years. Colin's step-father described the school as 'the best thing that ever happened to him'. It had taught him to behave properly, 'like a right proper gentleman'. When he returned home at sixteen, however, his relationship with the rest of his family began to deteriorate culminating in a violent argument in which Colin hit his pregnant mother. She then threatened to stab him with a carving knife if he ever did this again, in order, in her words 'to put him out of his misery'. Colin's step-father attributed Colin's mental handicap partly to his epilepsy but mainly to his 'laziness'.

First interviews 24:3:85 and 4:4:85. Parental interview 6:5:85.

A) Informal labelling. Colin told me that he had some friends at the training centre and that he also had a girlfriend. He said that he frequently went out at night because he found the rules imposed at home intolerable. Colin told me that he had been called names and he blamed this on his attendance at the centre as passage 4.1 shows:

[4.1] I; People on the outside, when they see this place they tend to think, you know, handicapped.
Colin; Aye.
I; What do you think about that?
Colin; I just think, it's, it's because you get people, it goes round the place, people think cos' you're in, and it spreads round. I ken half of them are mentally handicapped, but when you're in like, people like who are alright like, people shouldn't have to like, they just calls you that forever.
I; Has anyone ever called you mentally handicapped?
Colin; Only one, I was down the corner with a laddie and he's always calling people that, there's only one.
I; What do you feel about that?
Colin; It just gets up tight on you and you need someone to talk to.
I; Who do you talk to?
Colin; Charlie [Colin's instructor].
I; Do you feel that you are handicapped at all?

Colin; No.

In passage 4.1 Colin recognised that people who came to the centre were stigmatised and that 'half of them are mentally handicapped'. However, he said that he himself was not handicapped, but rather that he was called names because of his association with others who were, 'they just calls you that forever' (*external* attribution).

B) Formal labelling. Colin was unable to give a reason for his placement in either special education or the ATC other than the attribution shown in passage 4.1 that stigma remained with you 'forever'. Colin told me that he had disliked both of the special schools that he had attended and that he had found the school near Aberdeen very strict. He said that he would now like to leave the centre, to find a job as a joiner and to live on his own.

C) Summary. Colin clearly attributed his informal labelling to his attendance at the centre and at special school, rather than to any personal problems that he may have had. Although passage 4.1 suggests that Colin attributed his formal labelling to a self-fulfilling hypothesis, this represents only a partial explanation as Colin was unable to explain why he was first sent to a special school or to the ATC.

Richard. date of Birth 19:5:66.

Richard lived with his parents and his older brother. His father was retired and his mother worked as a nursing auxilliary. Richard spent some time at the local village school before being transferred when he was seven to Monroe Heights school. After leaving Monroe Heights Richard went straight to the ATC. Richard's mother doubted that he would be able to live independently although she recognised that he was not severely mentally handicapped.

Chapter Four: Pilot Study.

First interviews 22:4:85 and 29:4:85. Parental interview 30:5:85.

A) Informal labelling. Richard's parents agreed with him that he had not been called names. He had the most active social life of any of the trainees included in the study as he was an active supporter of the local junior league football club. He travelled on the team bus to away matches and rarely missed a home game. He appeared to have been accepted by the other supporters and by the players as an equal.

B) Formal labelling. Richard told me that he thought that some of the people who attended the training centre were handicapped, but he did not think that he was handicapped in any way. He said that he would very much like to leave the centre and to find a job outside, but (as passage 4.2 shows) he felt that this was outside his control (*external* attribution):

[4.2] I; Would you like to do what your brother does instead of working here?
Richard; Aye, if they'd give us a chance I'd do it.
I; What at?
Richard; Anything, just anything.
I; Is there anything from stopping you?
Richard; No.
I; So why do you think you're coming here?
Richard; Don't know.

C) Summary. As passage 4.2 shows Richard was unable to provide a complete explanation for his presence at the centre which at least partly explains his uneasiness when answering questions concerning labelling.

C) Trainees making two or more attributions for their labelling.

Sharon. Date of Birth 6:5:65.

Sharon was the oldest of the trainees interviewed in the pilot study. She had attended Hillpark (a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties) rather than Monroe Heights school. Sharon had a minor speech

impediment and was slightly deaf. Her mother did not wish to be interviewed.

First interviews 11:4:85 and 19:4:85. No Parental interview.

A) Informal labelling. Sharon told me that she enjoyed living at home and liked being with her mother (her natural father had died while she was at school). Although she was the eldest child in her family, Sharon wanted to stay at home with her mother and did not want to leave or to marry as her two younger sisters had done. Sharon told me that she had often been called names, as passage 4.3 illustrates:

[4.3] I; Has anyone ever called you 'handicapped'?
Sharon; Yes, they tell me I'm handicapped.
I; How does that make you feel?
Sharon; Rotten, they make a fool out of me. They call me dotty, call me dotty because I'm handicapped. They make a fool out of me. My elbow's bad.
I; Who was it who called you handicapped?
Sharon; My mum.
I; What do you think she means by that?
[4.3a] Sharon; I think my arm's one of the things that's handicapped with me.
I; Do you think it's right to say things like that?
Sharon; No.
I; Do you think that you are?
Sharon; [Nods]
I; You do? In what way?
Sharon; With my arm.
I; In any other way?
Sharon; [No answer]
I; Do you find it difficult to do things, how about reading and writing?
Sharon; I can do writing.

Later on in the interview, Sharon told me that she had also been called a 'dingo' by some of the children in her neighbourhood and that they had threatened to stab her and to rape her. She told me that she had just tried to ignore their comments.

B) Formal labelling. Passage 4.3 indicates that Sharon was attempting to differentiate being 'handicapped' from being 'dotty'. Sharon later

elaborated on her statement in 4.3a ('I think my arm's one of the things that's handicapped with me') by telling me that she had broken her arm and that she could not bend it properly (*internal* attribution). Sharon described her handicaps as physical although according to her instructor her physical handicaps were minimal. In a later part of our interview Sharon attributed her damaged arm to a childhood accident (*external* attribution).

[4.4] I Why do you think that you come here, do you have a problem learning stuff and that?
Sharon; 'Cos I'm handicapped. My mum tells me ((about)) it. I'm handicapped, I am.
I; In what way?
Sharon; Er, I had an accident when I was born, I was crippled. My hands, my hands aren't able to go straight.
I; And that's why you ...
Sharon; Could be.
I; Because of your arm. In any other ways at all, any other ways that you have problems?
Sharon; As a wee lassie I had to go with a (( )) clear about my head, but that's the only, down the road there ((a wee lassie)) and my mum ((pulled me)) and my aunt and I went down the hill and my mum was sitting in the house and then I used to go way down the park and come back for your tea, but don't worry nae more. And I went down the park and I fell and I bumped my head.
I; So did you have to go to the hospital?
Sharon; ((Five)) stitches in. They stitched me up ((I don't know, I)) just wanted it to get better. To take the stitches out.
I; Did you just fall over, did you trip over?
Sharon; No, I just went down the way.
I; Just slipped?
Sharon; Broke my head open on it.
I; How long ago was that?
Sharon; Ages ago.

Sharon seemed to believe that she was somehow 'different' from her sisters and other people, but represented this as a physical problem. A difficulty therefore arose for Sharon when she was asked why she came to the centre rather than having a job elsewhere, and it was at this point that she produced two contradictory accounts: on the one hand Sharon maintained that she wanted to go to the training centre and would prefer to

be there rather than anywhere else, but on the other hand there was nothing to stop her being a nurse like her sister and she would like to do that as well. At the same time, however, Sharon was still aware of the problems of being labelled mentally handicapped. Sharon, was the only one of the trainees that I interviewed who produced a first hand account of a friend who had been sent to a large hospital for people with a mental handicap.

[4.5] I; So you cheated then?
Sharon; But she got put away, Wendy Shaw. Do you know Wendy Shaw, she's tall, she's a big girl.
I; No, where did she go?
Sharon; She's at that Larbert place*. The, loony place. She'd been shouting and bawling ... Because her mum didnae want her, her mum didnae want anything to do with her.
I; That's horrible.
Sharon; She's scared about her wee brother. He's put in the ... her brother get's ((petted)). She's left out. Then she ((never)) saw her ma and her pa again.
I; When was she put away?
Sharon; I don't know, she just (( )) tomorrow. Her dad never telled ... He never telled me, I went, I was looking for her, and she's not in, she's away, she got put away.
I; And was this while she was still at school?
Sharon; She left school, she went to the centre.
I; And it was while she was at the centre?
Sharon; She used to be there, not now. She'll stay there for good. I just went for her and she wasn't there. Her mum telled me that she was put away.

The fate of Wendy Shaw, then, is related to her parents not loving or wanting her anymore and to Wendy's behaviour. It is represented as an act that is carried out in secret and which is irreversible. That Wendy could be treated in this way carries an implied threat for Sharon herself.

C) Summary. Sharon, then, said that she was handicapped but limited this to a physical limitation. However, if her problems were simply restricted to physical difficulties, then Sharon also had to explain why she attended an ATC for people with a mental handicap. She did this by saying that she

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* Larbert Hospital, the Royal Scottish National Hospital (RSNH) for people with a mental handicap.

wanted to go to the centre, that she would not be able to find a job outside and that she prefered coming to the centre rather than having a job. At the same time, however, Sharon maintained that there would be nothing to stop her doing her sister's job and that she would also like to be a nurse. Sharon was able to limit the threat posed by her attendance at the centre or at a special school by not recognising these as explicitly stigmatising experiences. Although Sharon said that she had been called names this was linked directly to a physical handicap which was in turn attributed to a childhood accident. Labelling was therefore described as a consequences of a physical rather than a mental handicap.

Angela. Date of Birth 5:7:66.

Angela had two older and a younger brother. She was referred to a special primary school when she was five and from there progressed to a special school for pupils with a severe mental handicap. Immediately after leaving school, Angela started attending an ATC and when I first interviewed her she had been at the centre for eighteen months. Angela's parents did not wish to be interviewed.

First Interview15:3:85 and 2:4:85. No Parental interview.

A) Informal labelling. When I asked her whether she had ever been called 'mentally handicapped' or 'slow', Angela replied that she was slow, thereby making the question redundant (see passage 4.7). Angela's parents, according to her instructor, believed that she was mentally handicapped and made this clear to her.

B) Formal labelling. Angela told me that she was slow (*internal* attribution) and linked this with the fact that she was left handed (*stable* attribution) as passage 4.6 below shows:

[4.6] I; What was school like?
Angela; Alright, I canna read because I'm slow, I'm left handed anyway.

Angela went on to tell me that she was the only one in her family who was left handed and that she was the only one who could not read and write. Angela therefore firmly linked being 'slow' with being unable to read and write, while she said that she was unable to read and write because she was left handed, as passage 4.7 further illustrates:

[4.7] I; Has anyone ever called you 'handicapped' or 'slow'?
Angela; I am slow.
I; How do you feel about that?
Angela; It's alright, I'm left handed anyway. It's only me that's left handed at home, everyone else is right handed.
I; And everyone else can write OK?
Angela; Yes, that's right.
I; Can you read and write?
Angela; No, I'm left handed.
I; Do you think people treat you differently because of this?
Angela; No.

Angela also told me that she liked going to the training centre and that if she did not attend the training centre she would just sit about the house and become bored. She added that she would like to find a job outside the centre but that she would not be able to work in a shop because she could not count and 'it's hard to get a job anyway'. Angela also told me that the reason that she had gone to the training centre in the first place had been because 'there wasn't any jobs at that time anyway, so I just went here' (*external* attribution).

C) Summary. Although Angela considered herself to be slow she did not define this in terms of an organic or psychological deficit. Instead Angela attributed being slow to circumstances that were both non-stigmatising and outside her control (i.e. being left handed). Her presence at the ATC was attributed to her academic difficulties and to the high unemployment rate. Angela could not alter the fact that she was left handed, which she

identified as the source of her problems and she was therefore able to provide herself with a mechanism through which she could account for any future difficulties without having to recognise an all-encompassing personal deficit.

4.2.3 Assessment of general abilities.

The third method of analysis that was used in this study consisted of the assessments of trainee's ability levels that were made both by the trainees themselves and by their instructors (see Section 4.1.3 C). The trainee self-assessments and the instructor's assessments of the trainee's abilities consisted of fourteen different subtests. On each subtest the trainee's ability was rated as varying from one star (very bad at that ability) to five stars (very good at that ability). The total number of points or stars that a trainee could gain in each of the two assessments could thus range from fourteen to seventy. The totals for each of the two assessments for the seven trainees is given in Table 4.4. One trainee (Angela) was unwilling to complete the self-assessment.

Table 4.4 Trainee and Instructor Assessments of the Trainee's General Ability Levels.

Trainee	Trainee Self-Assessment Totals	Instructor Assessment Totals	Trainee-Instructor Correlations
Ann	40	46	.499
Angela	-	42	-
Bridget	37	55	.348
Colin	37	56	.794 **
Jeff	39	42	.370
Richard	38	39	.643 *
Sharon	32	50	.254

* signifies a significant correlation coefficient at $p < .05$
** signifies a significant correlation coefficient at $p < .01$

All of the six trainees who completed the self-assessment questionnaires awarded themselves fewer stars or points than they were awarded by their instructor. On average the discrepancy between the two assessment totals was 10.8. A sign test (Robson, 1973) comparison between the two groups of trainee self-assessments and instructor assessments over the fourteen different subtests showed that there was a significant difference between the instructors' assessments of trainee's abilities and the trainees' assessments of their own abilities (L=15, T=57; $p<0.02$). This suggests either that the trainees and their instructors interpreted the assessment in two different ways, or that the trainees held a more pessimistic view of their own abilities than their instructors did.

Even where the total scores for the two assessments are similar for an individual, this does not necessarily mean that instructors and trainees shared the same views of the trainee's relative strengths and weaknesses. Using the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient two-tailed test (Greene and D'Oliveira, 1982) the fourteen ratings that the instructors and the trainees made were compared for each trainee (see Table 4.4). For only two of the trainees (Richard and Colin) was there a significant correlation between the instructors' and the trainees' assessments. However, for Colin the total produced by his instructor's assessment was much higher (nineteen points) than that of Colin's self-assessment, while for Richard there was only a one point difference between the trainee's and the instructor's assessments. Thus although the relationship between the different abilities were similar for Richard and Colin's self-assessment and instructor assessments (i.e. relatively higher or lower in one test than in the others), Colin typically rated himself as being either one or two points less able than his instructor rated him as being. Interestingly Colin and

Richard both made use of an external attribution to explain their labelling. The only other trainee to do so was Angela who was unwilling to complete the self-assessment form.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FIRST INTERVIEWS.

4.3.1 Leaving the ATC.

Although there was 100 per cent agreement between the two raters concerning their ratings of the trainees' desire to leave the ATC, the high degree of inter-rater reliability was not matched by the events of the next two years. Two trainees did indeed leave their ATC during the course of this study, but only one of these (Colin) had been rated as expressing a desire to leave in the immediate future. Bridget, who also left the centre, had only been rated as expressing a desire to leave in the long term.

The major reason for the discrepancy between the ratings and what actually occured seems to have been due to the inability of many trainees to exercise control over their own lives. The results from the pilot study are similar to those of Edgerton and Bercovici (1976) who found that their predictions of how successfully deinstitutionalised patients would adapt to a life outside the institution were correct less than half the time. Two of the reasons that Edgerton and Bercovici give for this discrepancy were, firstly, that many people with a mental handicap have only a tenuous control over their life circumstances and, secondly, that the professionals and the subject's assessment of what constituted a successful adaptation did not necessarily coincide.

4.3.2 Criticisms of a Case Study Approach.

It could be argued that the explanations that trainees gave for their

formal and informal labelling were essentially meaningless because they were based upon the trainees' inflated evaluations of their abilities. If this criticism was true and trainees believed that they were more able than they really were, then we would expect the trainees' self-assessments to be much higher than their instructors' assessments of them. However a sign test comparison of the two assessments (Section 4.2.3) suggested that as a group trainees tended to significantly underestimate their abilites. There were, indeed, only two cases (Colin and Richard) where the correlation between the scores of trainees and instructors were significantly similar, although in both cases the trainees' self-assessment was still lower than their instructors' assessment. Both of these trainees wished to leave their centres in the near future and both trainees attributed their labelling to external factors alone.

There are, however, some difficulties involved in interpreting the results of the assessments by trainees and instructors:

i) the Spearman test only compares the patterns of scoring on the different elements of the assessment questionnaires and not the level of scoring. A perfect correlation could be obtained, for instance, if a trainee rated himself as scoring 1 on each element of the questionnaire, and if his instructor assessed him as scoring 5 on each element; and

ii) the sign test reported in Section 4.2.3 showed that there was a significant difference between the instructors' assessment of the trainee and the trainee's self-assessment. One interpretation of this result is that it reflects the trainees' devalued opinion of themselves. The trainees may be thought to have internalised a negative social stereotype of people with a mental handicap and therefore have come to see themselves as being more incompetent than they really are. This interpretation would be

justified if we took the instructors' assessments of trainees as an objective measurement of the trainees' abilities. From the interviews that were carried out with instructors, however, it appeared that instructors were assessing trainees not as members of the general population but as ATC trainees with a mental handicap. Consequently the generally high assessments that instructors produced of trainees' abilities reflects the fact that these trainees were at the higher end of the ability range in their ATCs.

The assessments that the trainees produced of their own ability levels, on the other hand, seem to be based not simply on their perception of their own abilites in comparison to other ATC trainees, but also in comparison to the general population. The significant difference between the trainees' and their instructors' assessments, therefore, seems to have been a product of the questionnaire bearing a different *meaning* for the two groups. In particular it appeared that the instructors compared the trainees against other trainees, while the trainees compared themselves against the general population.

The initial reason for using these questionnaires (see Section 4.1.3) was to allow us to 'differentiate between those trainees with a realistic appraisal of their strengths and weaknesses, and those trainees who have an unrealistic conception of their own abilities'. The difficulties of establishing an adequate and objective comparison for the trainees' assessment of their own abilities meant that this goal remained unfulfilled throughout this study. Yet the need to differentiate between trainees with a realistic and with an unrealistic appraisal of their own abilities was based on the assumption that the accounts of those trainees with an unrealistic appraisal would be meaningless. During the course of this pilot

study, however, it became increasingly apparent that what is important is not whether or not the expectations of trainees were realistic, but how labelled individuals coped with formal and informal labelling. Thus, the extent to which a labelled individual's perception of his or her own abilities accorded with an objective assessment is irrelevant. Instead the chief concern of this study has become the ways in which a labelled individual views such labelling.

4.3.3 Labelling.

The results of this pilot study show that while it is possible to elicit meaningful descriptions from ATC trainees of their experiences of labelling, these experiences are often quite different from each other. For instance, not all of the seven trainees had been the subject of informal labelling and while at least one trainee had a well developed social network outside the ATC, the only social contact that several other trainees enjoyed outside the ATC were amongst their own family.

While the trainees' experiences of labelling are specific to each individual, their explanations of why they are called names or placed in a special school or ATC show both some common characteristics and some differences. Three trainees, for instance, did not acknowledge that their placements involved a social stigma, while the other four trainees acknowledged this stigma but gave differing explanations of why they had been called names or placed in a special school or an ATC. None of the seven trainees believed that he or she was 'mentally handicapped' or 'retarded', 'intellectually subnormal' or 'deficient'. Instead, the accounts of these trainees showed an active interpretation of their personal history and social circumstances. The trainees in this pilot study

attempted to make sense of their social and physical environments and did not passively adopt the stigmatising views of others.

In Chapter One we saw that many studies into the effects of labelling on individuals with a mental handicap tended to represent these individuals as the passive victims of labelling. Edgerton (1967) for instance, described the individuals that he worked with as interpreting their labelling through the dual processes of *denial* and *passing* (cf Section 1.4.2). The trainees in this pilot study could be described as using both denial and passing in as much as none of the participants produced a comprehensive explanation of labelling, while the accounts that they did produce often contained inconsistencies. The presence of these inconsistencies and gaps in their accounts, however, does not prove that these trainees somehow knew that they were different. Instead, it indicates that the participants were unable to fully express or articulate their feelings.

Although Colin, Sharon and Angela were aware that others saw them as 'mentally handicapped', they did not produce an account in which they represented their problems as all-embracing. Colin blamed at least some of his problems on the views of others, while Sharon and Angela recognised that they had a disability in that there were certain things that they could not do. Yet although these trainees were aware that other people saw them as having a mental handicap, they specifically rejected this view. Instead, they produced reasons for their being labelled as mentally handicapped that at least partially supported their claim that they were just like other people. Thus Sharon and Angela stressed that although they recognised that they had encountered some difficulties, such as in reading and writing, there were reasons for this which were both outside their control and which did not involve an intellectual deficit.

The trainees in this study did not passively internalise a negative social stereotype of themselves but instead actively interpreted their experiences. We can see this active process at work even with those three trainees who do not give any reason for their formal labelling, and who in Edgerton's terms would most clearly be seen as using denial and passing (that is Bridget, Ane and Colin). These trainees emphasized some points while ignoring others which were not consistent with a positive view of themselves. Jeff, for instance, emphasized his ability at sport and those aspects of attending the ATC which were similar to an ordinary job; Bridget said that she looked forward to being married and having a baby and that she hoped to leave home and the ATC; while Ane discussed her informal labelling with her mother and instructor.

The single strongest theme to emerge from these interviews was that each of these trainees considered him- or herself to be essentially the same as everyone else. Thus the greatest discrepancy to appear when we view these accounts is between the popular conception of people with a mental handicap as somehow different or inferior and these trainees' views of themselves as ordinary people.

4.3.4 Summary.

The seven trainees who were interviewed in the pilot study produced explanations for their labelling that were consistent with each other in some respects and yet also showed subtle individual variations. These variations were related to personal factors such as the attitudes of a trainee's family and the amount of informal labelling that he or she had experienced. In addition, situational factors played an important role. Trainees worked within the stigmatising environment of an ATC which was

very different to that which they may have experienced even at a special school. For instance, while all children have to go to school, only a very few adults attend a training centre, and while most school pupils leave school at sixteen there were trainees who were in their sixties.

There is no reason to assume that any of the trainees in this pilot study had accepted that they had a global, all-encompasing deficit. The fact that some trainees did not acknowledge the social reality of attending an ATC seemed to stem either from a partial ignorance of the views of others or from the trainee's inability to adequately vocalise and justify an instinctive feeling of equality within the confines of the interview. The four other trainees partially explained their presence at an ATC in terms of factors that were outside their control. For instance, Sharon and Angela attributed their personal difficulties to a childhood accident and being left-handed respectively.

If, as we have discussed above, the explanations that trainees give for their labelling represent adaptive and active responses to that labelling, then there are at least two ways in which these responses could be more fully examined. Firstly, the series of interviews with these seven trainees in the pilot study could be extended over a two year time period. This would allow the variations and consistencies within an individual's account and its relationship with environmental changes to be examined. Secondly, other special education leavers could be interviewed both before and after they have left school to examine the effects of the transition from special education on the explanations that leavers provide for their labelling. If labelled individuals actively interpret the reasons for their labelling, then we would expect changes in these explanations when an individual leaves an environment in which they have been labelled.

In this thesis I have decided to explore both of these possibilities. In the remainder of this Chapter, I will examine the explanations for labelling that six of these seven trainees gave in interviews that were carried out over an eighteen month to two year period. In Chapter Six I will carry out a longitudinal study involving special education leavers.

4.4 RESULTS FROM FOLLOW UP AND FINAL INTERVIEWS.

4.4.1 Movements of participants.

Roughly four months after the initial series of interviews had been carried out, one of the two ATCs that I had been studying closed for renovations. The two trainees that I had interviewed and who had been at that training centre (Sharon and Richard) were moved to a new training centre which had been designed to cater specifically for the 16-24 age range. Although I was able to keep in contact with those two participants, I unfortunately lost contact with one of the other trainees during the course of the study. After an argument with his parents Colin went to live with his natural father in England where I was unable to interview him again. Moreover, three months after I first interviewed her, Bridget married her boyfriend and left the centre. At that time she was not prepared to continue with the interviews, although I was able to interview her again at the end of the study.

4.4.2 Procedure.

Follow-up interviews were carried out with trainees at six monthly intervals. These follow-up interviews were not as detailed as the first series of interviews, and concentrated on changes in the participant's status and on his or her feelings about the centre. In addition to these

interviews I was able to establish a much better relationship with both Ane and Angela who were members of a Community Action Group (CAG) that I started at their Centre. This group brought undergraduates from the University to visit the ATC once a week to teach reading and writing skills in a relaxed atmosphere to up to a dozen trainees on a one-to-one basis. I also visited the ATCs once a month to meet the trainees that I did not meet through CAG, and where possible also saw participants outside the centre, for instance at football matches and at a Youth Club.

The final series of interviews was carried out from November 1986 to January 1987. As far as possible these interviews replicated the first series of interviews both in terms of the material that was covered and also the wording of the questions themselves. I also re-interviewed the trainees' parents (if I had initially been given permission to do so), and their instructors.

4.4.3 Analysis of follow-up and final interviews.

A brief account of the Follow-up interviews can be found in the case study section of the results presented below. The follow-up interviews were not otherwise analysed. The assessment of general abilities by trainees and their instructors was not repeated because of the difficulties that had been associated with its interpretation and which were outlined in section 4.3.2. Apart from this omission the analysis of the results from the final interviews is the same as the analysis of the results for the first series of interviews which was set out in Section 4.1.3.

4.5 RESULTS OF THE FOLLOW UP AND FINAL INTERVIEWS.

4.5.1 Interview ratings.

i) Independence. The ratings of trainees' desire to leave their ATC is shown in Table 4.5 and it was the only series of ratings in the pilot study in which there was not 100% agreement between the two raters. This disagreement was resolved when it was realised that Sharon had given a contradictory account of her desire to leave her ATC. This contradiction is explored in more detail in the case study section of the results.

In contrast to the first series of interviews we can see that in the final series of interviews the trainees, as a group, were less inclined to want to leave the training centre. In part this could be attributed to the fact that two trainees had already left the ATC, but in addition three of the trainees who remained had changed their minds. Richard was rated in the first interviews as wanting to leave his ATC immediately and in the final interviews as wanting to leave in the long term. In the final interviews Ane expressed no desire to leave the training centre although in the first series of interviews she had wanted to leave the ATC in the long term. As we have already noted in the final interviews Sharon gave a contradictory account. She said both that she wanted to stay on at the centre and that she wanted to leave in the long term.

Table 4.5 Ratings of trainees' desire to leave ATC.

Trainee	No desire to leave ATC	Leave ATC in the long term	Leave ATC immediately
Ane	x		
Angela	x		
Jeff	x		
Richard		x	
Sharon *	x	x	

* Sharon gave a contradictory account of her desire to leave the ATC.

ii) Informal labelling. The trainees' acknowledgement of informal labelling (Tables 4.2 and 4.6) was the same in the final interviews as it had been in the first.

Table 4.6 Trainees' acknowledgement of informal labelling.

	Trainee said that he or she had been called names			Trainee said that he or she had never been called names		
Trainee	Supported	Contradicted	Unconfirmed	Supported	Contradicted	Unconfirmed
Ane					x	
Angela			x			
Bridget						x
Jeff				x		
Richard				x		
Sharon			x			

iii) Reasons for labelling. While there were no changes in trainees' positions regarding informal labelling, there were several changes in the explanations that trainees gave for their formal labelling (see Table 4.7). Richard who had previously been rated as attributing his labelling to external factors is now rated as attributing his labelling to internal factors. The explanations that Sharon and Angela gave for their labelling continue to cite mainly internal factors but at the same time have become more detailed. Angela now cites an unstable factor as well as a stable one, while Sharon limited her 'slowness' to specific areas.

Table 4.7 Trainees attributions of the causes of labelling.

Trainee	Did not make an attribution	External	Internal	Stable	Specific	Unstable	Global
Ane	x						
Angela		x	x	x		x	
Bridget	x						
Jeff	x						
Richard			x				
Sharon		x	x		x		

4.5.2 Case studies.

A) Trainees who left the study before the final interviews.

Colin.

I was unable to fully complete the first series of interviews with Colin as he temporarily left the centre due to family difficulties. After returning briefly to the centre, Colin then left Scotland to live with his natural father in England. This meant that no further interviews could be carried out with either Colin or his family.

Conclusion. One of the main features of Colin's account was that in many ways it was the opposite of his parent's description of him. Colin rejected their view in which he was seen as 'lazy' and thus to a large extent personally responsible both for being mentally handicapped and for his attendance at the training centre. Colin also failed to mention the sole mitigating factor that his parents provided, i.e. that his epilepsy had contributed to his mental handicap. One reason that Colin made no mention of his epiliepsy may have been that to do so would have involved him tacitly admitting that others believed he was mentally handicapped. Similarly Colin did not adopt the other element of his step-father's explanation, that he was lazy, because to do so would have involved him accepting that he was in some way responsible for his attendance at the training centre. Instead of explaining his labelling in terms of a personal liability Colin therefore attributed it to external factors.

B) Trainees making no attributions for their labelling.

Jeff.

Follow-up interviews 31:10:85, 2:4:86 and 18.7.86.

During the two years that I knew Jeff, sport, and athletics in

particular, became more and more important to him. At the ATC his athletics training had to be restricted to one afternoon per week, as it was thought to interfere with the rest of his work. Instead Jeff was encouraged to train after work and at the weekends.

Jeff told me that when he and his mother had been shown around the ATC, it had been his decision to attend. He said that he wanted to stay on in the centre and that he did not think that he would ever want to leave it. Jeff described his work in the centre as a job and said that he was paid for working there by his mother (who kept his Severe Disablement Allowance) and by the training centre.

Final interviews 30:1:87 and 2:2:87. Parental interview 3:2:87.

In the final interviews Jeff spoke in a far more fluent and confident manner than he had done when I first interviewed him. He was still reluctant, however, to discuss any issues which bore on labelling. When, as part of the normative study, I interviewed Alan (one of Jeff's workmates at the centre who had also been at Monroe Heights with him) he told me that Jeff often avoided discussing this issue even with his friends.

[4.8] I; Derek and Jeff were there [at Monroe Heights] too, so ...
Alan; Jeff denies it.
I; Denies it?
Alan; Aye, that he never went to Monroe Heights.
I; Is that what he says?
Alan; Aye.
I; Why does he do that?
Alan; Well, he's embarassed. Jeff likes to tell stories. He likes to tell wee pork pies, that he doesn't remember things. He says "I wasn't there, at Monroe Heights". I say to myself "Why is he doing that?" Derek doesn't deny it, he was there ... Jeff denies it, he won't tell the truth. I get upset about it, because you need to pull your finger out.

A & B) Informal and formal labelling. In these final interviews Jeff's position on labelling was the same as it had been when I first interviewed him. Jeff said that he had never been called names and that his only

friends were at the centre. While Jeff had become much more forthcoming on other matters, he was still very reluctant to discuss labelling as passage 4.9 illustrates.

[4.9] I; Do you have any problems coming here, people calling you names and that?
Jeff; No.
I; Some people say that people who come here are slow or handicapped in some way. Have you ever been called that?
Jeff; [No answer. Looks down.]
I; Do you think that you are slow or handicapped at all?
Jeff; [No answer.]
I; Is there anyone here who you think is?
Jeff; No.

C) Conclusion. Jeff's position remained unchanged over this two year period. He denied that he had ever been called names by others (which his parents supported) and said that he was glad that he went to Monroe Heights school although he did not know why he had left his first school to go there. Jeff also minimized the difference between working at the centre and the sort of work that his brothers and sisters did by describing his work at the centre as a 'job' that he was paid for doing. The major focus of Jeff's life was sport.

Jeff's account was far more subtle than a blanket disclaimer of all knowledge of labelling. Jeff presented a selective interpretation of his life in which he emphasized the non-stigmatizing aspects of his life while he either down-played or did not acknowledge the more stigmatizing areas. Several features of Jeff's account illustrate this active process:

1) Jeff maintained that he enjoyed going to Monroe Heights and to the training centre and thus reduced the necessity to provide an explanation for his attendance there. For instance if Jeff had said that he had not enjoyed attending Monroe Heights school then he would also have had to explain why he had not left and why he had gone to that particular

school and not to another one;

2) Jeff did not acknowledge the social significance of Monroe Heights school, i.e. that it was a special school;

3) He was generally reluctant to discuss labelling, either not answering questions on this issue or changing the conversation;

4) Alan was annoyed when Jeff said that he had not gone to Monroe Heights; and

5) Jeff emphasized the non-stigmatizing aspects of his presence at the ATC, such as his sporting achievements and the similarities of his work at the ATC to an ordinary job.

Bridget.

Follow-up interviews.

Bridget and John married in August 1985 and she then left the centre. When I contacted her again Bridget indicated that she did not wish to continue with the interviews.

Final interview 2:2:87. No parental interview.

I approached Bridget again at the end of the study and she agreed to be interviewed for a final time. By then she had a small baby and was helped to look after him by her family and the social work department.

A) Informal labelling. Bridget again told me that she had never been called names while she had been at either the school or at the centre.

B) Formal labelling. Bridget told me that she did not want to return to the centre although she had enjoyed her time there. She did not think that wives with young children should have to work and said that she did not know why she had been sent either to the ATC or to the special school.

C) Summary. Although she had left the ATC, Bridget's position with regard to labelling remains essentially unchanged since her time at the ATC. She

said that she had never been called names and did not give a reason for her attendance at either a special school or an ATC. While Bridget said that she enjoyed her time at the centre she did not wish to return there or to look for any sort of work.

Ane.

Follow-up interviews 31:10:85; 12:3:86 and 18:7:86.

During the period covered by these follow-up interviews Ane moved from one group to another in the ATC. She told me that she much preferred her new group as the work that she was given was much more stimulating than before and included working on the telephone switchboard and running the Centre's 'tuck-shop'. Ane's instructor told me that she believed that the extra responsibility that Ane had been given had been beneficial.

Final interviews. 30:1:87. Parental interview 4:2:87.

A) and B) Informal and formal labelling. Whenever I asked Ane about any aspect of Labelling she simply shrugged her shoulders or said 'don't know'. She told me that she enjoyed coming to the centre and would like to carry on doing so. It had been her decision to come to the centre although she had not thought that she would enjoy it when she first started. Ane would not say why this was so.

C) Conclusion. Of all the trainees that I interviewed, Ane had been given the most responsibility and had the most demanding work. Yet Ane was the participant with whom I found it most difficult to establish a rapport. Ane's accounts did not change between the first and the final interviews, although it is difficult to reach a definite conclusion as the interviews could not be tape-recorded and because Ane volunteered very little information. According to her mother and to her instructors Ane was

troubled by her appearance and by her attendance at the ATC. During her interviews, however, Ann consistently avoided these areas.

C) Trainee making one attribution for his labelling.

Richard.

Follow-up interviews 3:10:85 and 10:3:86.

A few months after the first interviews Richard moved to a new centre, Brucedyke. The instructors there thought that he was immature and told him that he should adopt a more realistic attitude to his work and to his own abilities. Richard was still involved with the local football club and played football at Brucedyke. He told me that he enjoyed attending his new centre.

Final interviews 11:11:86 and 13:11:86; Parental interview 16:12:86.

A) Informal labelling. Richard maintained that he had never been called names and his mother once again confirmed that she knew of no instances of name calling.

B) Formal labelling. Richard told me that he would like to leave the ATC and to find a job but that he felt that this would be very difficult. He said that he did not know why other people had jobs while he had to come to the training centre. Richard told me that some of the people who came to the centre (those in wheelchairs) were handicapped. Richard said that he had gone to Monroe Heights rather than staying on at an ordinary school "because of my reading and writing" (*internal* attribution).

C) Conclusion. Apart from the acknowledgement in the final interview that he had gone to Monroe Heights school because of his problems in reading and writing, Richard did not provide any explanations for his formal labelling. Instead, he stressed his equality with others by emphasising first of all

his support for the local football team, secondly that he had a girlfriend and finally his desire for a job. The inconsistency between the equality which he claimed and his presence in a stigmatising environment was partially resolved by his refusal to accept such a disparity and by the fact that he did not appear to have been subjected to any name-calling. Yet Richard's general refusal to concede either that he had any problems in living or that he had experienced any difficulties in his work was not without its drawbacks and was, for instance, interpreted by his instructors as a sign of immaturity. Richard may therefore have experienced pressure to recognise the existence of an impairment and indeed he was prepared to do this in the final interviews while he had not been in the First interviews. Similarly in the final interviews Richard did not blame external factors for his presence in the unit as he had done in the first interviews.

D) Trainee making three attributions for her labelling.

Sharon.

Follow-up interviews 3:10:85 and 13:3:86.

Shortly after the first series of interviews had ended, Sharon moved to Brucedyke ATC. The follow-up interviews included a discussion of Sharon's experiences at Hillpark school which she said she had enjoyed a great deal. Sharon recognised that she had had academic problems, in that 'I cannae spell, I can read but I cannae spell'. She also told me that she liked the centre, but that when she had to leave when she was 26, she would like to either go back to her old centre or try to get a job as a nurse (like her sister). She recognised that it would be difficult for her to get a job and that while this would allow her to be able to take care of her mother, it

would also mean that she would lose her 'book' (the Severe Disablement Allowance). On the other hand Sharon said that she still liked coming to the centre and would not consider leaving until she was 26.

Final interviews 13:11:86 and 4:12:86. No parental interview.

The final interviews took place shortly after my own marriage and I brought photographs of the wedding into the centre. Sharon told me in the final interview that her boyfriend, Simon, wanted them to become engaged, and that while she would like this, their parents were opposed. She said that she was afraid of being left behind.

A) Informal labelling. Sharon's only regular social activity was a weekly visit with Elanor, a friend from near her home, to a Youth Club run by the Scottish Society for the Mentally Handicapped (SSMH). Both she and Elanor had been called names by some of the other people around their home:

[4.10] I; How about at home, do you find it easy to make friends there?
Sharon; Nah, they call me "Bass" and do that [slaps wrist].
I; That's not very nice, why do they do that?
Sharon; Because I'm handicapped. I've got to get the minibus, the yellow minibus. You should get your ears pierced.
I; Yes, Eddie has. Why do they call you names?
Sharon; I don't know, they call my pal "Bam-bam". Her name is Elanor or Lorna. She no likes it. She just leaves them, she just ignores it. I tell her straight to just ignore them and walk by. And she does it. She does a wee bit more, but she spits on the ground. I tell her off. She spit on Robert last night, but I get her ((own)) for it.

Just as she had done in the first series of interviews, therefore, Sharon agreed that she had been the butt of some particularly cruel name-calling. In the instance that Sharon refered to in passage 4.10 the name-calling was connected to the distinctive yellow minibus which the Regional Social Work Department provided for transport to the centres.

B) Formal labelling. In the first interview Sharon had said that her crippled arm, and her poor hearing were two of the ways in which she was handicapped (passages 4.3, 4.3a and 4.4). Sharon had also explained that

she had been injured in an accident. In the final interview Sharon recognised that she had academic problems (*internal* attribution) but minimised their importance and limited them to spelling and not reading (*specific* attribution). She also used a slightly different *external* attribution in the final interview than she had done previously, as a comparison of passages 4.4 and 4.11 shows.

[4.11] I; You say that you're handicapped, in what way?
Sharon; I think I fell, ((a while back)) ago, my mum fell.
I; And what happened?
Sharon; I was handicapped, I was born like this, all my life.
I; You were born like that - in what ways though?
Sharon; I broke my arm and my elbow won't go straight. And that's what's wrong with me - my arm's not straight.
I; What happened when you fell?
Sharon; I don't know, I think my mum was doing her wash, I think she fell down the stairs. I think she hit me on the floor.
I; This is when she was pregnant? So she fell down the stairs?
Sharon; I think so. My other two sisters are perfect, but I'm not. You see I'm deaf in one ear. I'm going to the hospital again to check up. I'm to stay a wee while - the doctor checks them to see if I'm alright or no.

I also asked Sharon about Wendy (Passage 4.5), and she once again said that she had been sent to Larbert Hospital because 'Her mum and dad no want her anymore'. I used this as an introduction to discuss the issue of handicap in general:

[4.12] I; Some people think that those people who go to Larbert Hospital or who come here are mentally handicapped. Has anybody said that about you?
Sharon; My parents will talk about it. But, I ((don't reckon)) my daughter is handicapped. But I'm no handicapped, I don't care, I'm no handicapped, I'm no. But ((I've nae love)) from my mum or dad ...
I: Your mum and dad, do they think you're handicapped?
Sharon; Yes.
I; And what do you think?
Sharon; I just ignore it.

Sharon used essentially the same attributions in the first and in the last interviews. In both interviews, Sharon made a distinction between being 'handicapped' in the sense of having a broken arm and having a

hearing problem, and being 'mentally handicapped' which was what her mother called her. This distinction is evident in Passage 4.3, and is repeated eighteen months later in Passage 4.12. Sharon admited that she was handicapped, in that she had a hearing difficulty and a problem with her arm, but rejected the global implications of being "mentally handicapped". These specific physical, sensory and academic problems are, instead, explained by reference to a series of childhood accidents.

C) Conclusion. Sharon's accounts contained six important features which appeared consistently over a period of almost two years and which served the purpose of removing the responsibility for being in a stigmatizing environment from Sharon.

1) Sharon linked informal labelling to her physical handicaps, to her attendance at the ATC and in the final interview to the use of the conspicuous yellow minibus.
2) Sharon rejected a global definition of handicap as describing her difficulties, limited the extent of her academic difficulties and did not afford them much importance.
3) Any difficulties that Sharon experienced were said to be the result of a physical or sensory disability (*internal* attribution). It was only in this sense that Sharon was prepared to recognize a personal disability.
4) Sharon linked her physical and sensory handicaps with a series of childhood accidents (*external* attributions). She said that if it was not for these, then she would be "perfect" like her sisters.
5) Sharon avoided answering some questions by saying "don't know", changing the topic of conversation or simply by not responding. And
6) Wendy was sent to Larbert Hospital because her parents did not love her anymore. It was the reactions of others, therefore, that were

responsible for Wendy's hospitalisation. Similarly Sharon's father, before he died and her mother sometimes reacted to her with what she interpreted as a lack of love on their part.

These six features of her accounts served a common purpose for Sharon; namely to describe the reasons for her formal and informal labelling in such a way that the extent to which she could be held to be personally responsible was limited. By doing this, however, new difficulties in her accounts were created. For example throughout these interviews Sharon was unable to give a complete explanation for her attendance at an ATC and at a special school. To explain this Sharon drew on two different explanations. Firstly, Sharon emphasized that she enjoyed coming to the centre and would not be able to find a job elsewhere; and secondly, she said that there was nothing else to stop her from being a nurse like her sister. Sharon was able to resolve this contradiction by saying that if she left the centre then she would also loose her 'book' and that this would prevent her from looking after her mother. The fact that Sharon recognised the contradiction in her account and provided an additional level of explanation as a consequence provides support for our initial interpretation of Sharon's account as serving the purpose of limiting the extent to which she could be held responsible for her placements in special education and at the training centre.

E) Trainee making four attributions for her labelling.

Angela.

Follow-up interviews 30:10:85 and 31:7:86.

I was able to keep in contact with Angela and to develop our friendship as she was one of the trainees who attended the voluntary group that I

started at the ATC. During this period Angela came into the centre with her left arm bandaged. She told me that she would have to have an operation on her hand because one of the bones was broken. Although I did not directly question Angela about issues of labelling during these follow-up interviews, she mentioned to me that it was this disability, which she claimed to have had for some time, which prevented her from being able to write.

Final interviews 20:11:86 and 27:11:86. No parental interview.

Angela told me that she had several friends at the centre but was not able to see them outside the centre as they did not live close enough to her. She had no friends at home.

A) Informal labelling. Angela said that she had been called 'handicapped' by people both at school and at the ATC. She told me that this happened a lot and that she just tried to ignore it, and 'just say it back to them'. Angela said that the people who were calling her names were 'just showing off'.

B) Formal labelling. Angela, while agreeing that she was called names and that she was slow, nevertheless denied that she was handicapped. Angela did agree that some of the people who come to the centre were handicapped, and that her school also contained many handicapped children, as Passage 4.13 shows.

[4.13] I; Did you have many friends there [at school]?
Angela; No.
I; You must have been quite lonely.
Angela; They were all handicapped.
I; In what way?
Angela; I don't know, a lot of folk, they were like Rebecca in here, she's handicapped, Rebecca Brewster, she's handicapped, she cannae see.
I; Is there anybody else here who's ...?
Angela; Duncan, he's always shouting "out", "out", "out". Duncan and Simon [members of the special education class] ... They cannae talk.

Angela differentiated herself from those individuals who had severe handicaps: they were "handicapped" while she was just slow. Angela told me that she was slow (*internal* attribution) because she could not read or write, and because she was poor at counting and telling the time. She said that she was unable to do these things because she was left handed (*external* and *stable* attribution) and because her arm had been broken and she needed to have an operation on it (*external* and *unstable* attribution).

Angela also said that she needed to have an operation on her jaw which was all 'twisted'. As her voice could sometimes be difficult to understand I asked Angela whether this problem meant that she had difficulty speaking but she said that it did not. Angela had been seeing a speech therapist for three months before the final series of interviews began. Just as Angela had linked her attendance at the ATC to a physical disability (her broken left arm) rather than a mental handicap, so she now associated her visit to a speech therapist to a physical problem with her mouth and not to a more stigmatizing difficulty in speaking.

Angela told me that she enjoyed coming to the ATC and that if she did not come then she would be just sitting around at home as it was difficult to find a job. Angela said that she would not like to do this and would not be able to do so as she could not read or count.

C) Conclusion. Angela's means of accounting for her labelling remained essentially unchanged over this two year period. In the first series of interviews Angela had only implied that she had been called names and had not made this explicit. In the final interviews with Angela she maintained that she was not mentally handicapped but 'slow' and defined her 'slowness' in more or less the same way that she had done two years before (ie that

she was left handed) although she embelished this by noting that her left arm required an operation.

Angela's account of labelling is a partial one for there were many issues that she was unable to explain, for instance what the difference between left and right handed people was or why she did not want to have a job outside the ATC. While there were gaps in her account and questions that remained unanswered, Angela nevertheless attempted to provide a non-stigmatizing account for her formal and informal labelling.

4.6 DISCUSSION.

4.6.1 Active interpretations of labelling.

The main aim of the pilot study has been to examine the reasons that ATC trainees give for their labelling. It is clear from the case study sections of the results (sections 4.2.2 and 4.5.2) that the seven ATC trainees in this study explained the reasons for their labelling in a variety of different ways. These explanations represented active interpretations of the origins of labelling. For instance, they involved the selective use of material, with the non-stigmatizing elements of attendance at an ATC being emphasized and the more threatening aspects modified, discounted or ignored. These accounts served to reduce the extent to which a trainee could be held personally responsible for his or her formal labelling. Moreover, the single strongest theme to emerge from this study was that of 'equality'; thus each trainee considered him- or herself to be of equal value and merit with the rest of society.

Three participants (Jeff, Ane and Bridget) sought to avoid discussing labelling either by answering questions with a single 'yes', 'no' or 'don't know', by not answering some questions at all or by changing the subject of

the conversation. All three of these participants said that they had not been called names, that they enjoyed their schools and that they were glad they had not gone to a different school. None of them acknowledged the social significance of attending an ATC. Their accounts as a whole were not arbitarily arrived at, but were instead consistent with their attempts to avoid a discussion of labelling. If, for instance, Ane had said that she did not like going to Monroe Heights school, then she would also have had to explain whether she did not like it there because she was called names.

Jeff, Ane and Bridget were engaged in denying the existence of a social stigma attatched to them because they attended a special school or an ATC, although inwardly they may have been aware of this stigma. We cannot assume, however, that any of these trainees had accepted that the negative implications of this social stigma were justified, and that these trainees therefore realised that they were somehow inferior. We must not confuse a denial of awareness of the existence of a social stigma with a denial of the acceptance of that stigma.

The four other participants in this study (Richard, Colin, Sharon and Angela) all provided partial explanations for their attendance at an ATC. Three of these trainees said that they had been informally labelled, while the parents of the fourth trainee confirmed that to the best of their knowledge he had not been called names because of his attendance at the ATC or at a special school. All of these trainees were aware that many people thought that individuals who went to training centres were 'mentally handicapped', but each of the trainees rejected the notion that this applied to him- or herself. Angela and Sharon stressed that although they were unable to do certain tasks, this was due to factors that were outside their control and which did not inherently involve a mental impairment.

Angela attributed being 'slow' to the fact that she was left handed, while Sharon agreed that she was physically handicapped because she had broken her arm as a child. Richard and Colin attributed their attendance at an ATC to external circumstances, that is the hostile views of other people towards them

There were gaps and inconsistencies in the accounts of all of these trainees. However we must be careful not to interpret the appearance of only partial explanations for labelling in terms of an inner acceptance by these trainees that their devalued social status was in some way justified.

4.6.2 Longitudinal consistency and variation in accounts.

Trainees' accounts of the reasons for their labelling changed very little between their first and last interviews. The fact that most of the explanations that trainees gave for their labelling remained largely consistent over a period of eighteen months suggests that these explanations held some meaning for the trainees concerned.

What variation that there was, consisted partly of the elaboration of explanations that had been used in the first interviews. Thus Sharon gave a more detailed explanation in her final interview of how she had been crippled as the result of a childhood accident. Such an elaboration of a previously held position reflects the continuously evolving nature of coping strategies that has been remarked upon by Lazarus (1978) and by Breakwell (1986). However, such variation may to some extent result from the repeated-interview method used in the pilot study. Between the first and final interviews, the interviewer was able to establish a better relationship with participants and this might have allowed them to confide more fully in him.

The variation that occured in the accounts of Richard, however, reflected more than a simple elaboration of an initial opinion. Richard adopted a completely different position in his final interview than he had in his first. In the first interview Richard attributed labelling to external factors and told me that he was at the training centre because he had not been given a chance to work outside. Richard also said that he would like to leave the centre as soon as possible. Eighteen months later, however, Richard told me that he had gone to Monroe Heights school because he had had problems reading and writing, and that he wanted to leave the centre only in the long-term. A change in Richard's explanation for his labelling was thus accompanied by a change in the extent to which he wanted to leave the centre. One reason for this may have been that if Richard had said in the Final interview that he still wanted to leave the centre immediately, then he also would have had to explain why he had not already been able to leave the centre. These two features of Richard's account, first of all his explanation for labelling and secondly his desire to leave the centre, are thus consistent with each other in both interviews. The fact that a change in Richard's explanation of the causes of his labelling is accompanied by an alteration in his desire to leave the ATC adds weight to our interpretation of Richard's account in terms of mitigating the extent to which he could be held personally responsible for his presence in the centre.

4.6.3 The relationship between a trainee's perceptions of labelling and his or her desire to leave the ATC.

There are at least two possible relationships between an individual's desire either to stay in or to leave a stigmatising environment such as an

ATC, and the explanations that he or she gives for his or her presence in such a stigmatising environment. First of all, these explanations may bear no connection to the life that the individual wishes to lead. As such we would expect that if we were to interview a trainee over a number of years, then we would not expect to find a relationship between the explanations that an individual gave for his or her labelling and whether or not he or she had remained in the ATC.

Secondly, the explanations that an individual gives for his or her labelling may be connected to his or her plans for the future. Thus the ways in which an individual believes that he or she is similar to others may have implications for his or her desire to leave the stigmatising environment. The initial stages of this pilot study provided some evidence to support this notion as the two trainees who attributed labelling to external factors alone were also rated as wanting to leave their ATC in the near future. For the five other trainees there seemed to be only a vague relationship between the ways in which an individual interpreted labelling and his or her desire to leave the ATC.

The power of a trainee to effect the changes that he or she may have wanted, however, was limited. Thus although a trainee could genuinely express a deep desire to leave the ATC, he or she was unlikely to be given such an opportunity over the two year time scale of this study. The longer a trainee maintained a desire to leave the centre without actually being able to do so, then the more difficult it would become for such a trainee to hold this desire.

One of the initial concerns of this study was with the relationship between a trainee's desire for independence and his or her beliefs about the causes of his or her labelling. During the course of the study it

became apparent that no matter how strong a trainee's desire to leave the ATC, it would be very difficult to do so because of the trainee's relative lack of power to determine his or her future. At the same time the explanations that trainees gave for their labelling became more detailed than I had initially envisaged and it became apparent that none of the trainees adopted a wholly negative view of themselves. Thus the central concerns of the study moved from an examination of the relationship between trainees' explanations of labelling and desire for independence, to a more detailed investigation of those explanations.

4.6.4 Implications for future research.

This pilot study has shown that it is possible to elicit meaningful accounts from trainees as to the nature and causes of their labelling. The method that has been chosen to examine these accounts has been a combination of attributional analysis and case studies. The attributional analysis has the benefit of allowing comparisons to be made both between individual trainees, who have had different experiences of formal and informal labelling and who work in different ATCs, and between the same trainee at different periods of time. An attributional analysis, however, can be criticised (eg Potter and Wetherell, 1987) for imposing the researchers' view of the organisation and function of language upon the account and for suppressing variability in favour of continuities.

The combination of case studies and attributional analysis sought to overcome these difficulties by facilitating a more detailed examination of the functions for each trainee of adopting different explanatory positions. Whereas attributional analysis imposes a structured method of analysis upon the results, the case study techniques that have been used here have sought

to extract meaning from the accounts themselves. The extent to which this has been successful will to a large extent have depended upon the logic and power of the explanatory argument used within each case study. In this respect, however, a qualitative analysis is no different to a quantitative one where the movement from hypothesis to interpretation is through the statistical analysis of quantitative data.

There are, nevertheless, various criticisms that could be made of the analytical techniques that have been used in the pilot study. First of all it could be objected that the variations in the accounts are either the result of individual differences in IQ and verbal ability or the result of trainees having unrealistic conceptions of their general abilities. The use of instructor and trainee questionnaires represented an attempt to overcome these objections, but were difficult to interpret. However the purpose of this study has not been to investigate the precise reasons for these individual variations but merely to note their presence and to examine the functions of these different explanations for the individuals concerned. Thus neither the latter part of the pilot study nor the main study has employed these assessments.

A second objection that could be made to this study is that it serves no practical purpose, and is simply of limited theoretical value. Chapter Seven will deal in more detail with the practical implications of the study as a whole, but as I have shown in Chapters One and Two the ways in which labelling directly affects special education leavers has previously not been studied in any great detail. Moreover, those studies that exist have largely been based on the assumption that labelled individuals passively accept their devalued status. Yet it has become increasingly important that we understand the effects of labelling as the present-day emphasis on

community care has provided the opportunity for many individuals with a mental handicap to make a transition from residential, educational or occupational segregation to 'life in the community' (Cullen, 1988). Because of the paucity of research in this area little is known either of how those individuals who make such a transition, view it or how professionals can best support them at this time.

This pilot study has shown that it is possible to elicit descriptions from ATC trainees of their experiences of labelling. The next stage of this study will be to extend this investigation to special education leavers, and to study the transition from a special school or unit to the start of adult life 'in the community'. The main study will consist of two complementary parts. Chapter Five will describe a survey of special education leavers in the Central Region of Scotland between 1983 and 1986. It will examine their employment status, views of special education and experiences of informal labelling. Chapter Six will give the details of a longitudinal study of eleven special education leavers and will include interviews with parents, teachers and the leavers themselves both before the teenagers leave school and again twelve to eighteen months after they have done so. The main emphasis within this longitudinal study will again be on the reasons that these leavers give for their labelling with the expectation that if this is an active interpretation, then the accounts that individuals give will change as they move from one environment to another.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE NORMATIVE STUDY.

A SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION LEAVERS IN CENTRAL REGION.

5.1 Introduction.

The principal aim of this study was to examine the explanations that special education leavers gave for their formal and informal labelling. In Chapter Four we saw that the seven trainees in the pilot study actively interpreted the reasons for their labelling and did not passively accept an all-encompassing view of themselves as mentally handicapped. The explanations that these trainees gave were consistent over the eighteen months in which they participated in this study.

The pilot study, however, provided only a limited representation of how special education leavers respond to labelling. We have no way of knowing, for instance, what proportion of special education leavers went on to an Adult Training Centre. If, as May and Hughes (1984) have suggested, there are serious psychological consequences for special education leavers who are unable to break away from a stigmatising environment when they leave school, then the responses of the seven participants in the pilot study who worked in an Adult Training Centre may, in fact, not be typical of special education leavers as a whole.

In order to examine these two issues of the employment history of special education leavers and the effects of different occupational placements upon the explanations that leavers gave for their labelling, the main study has been divided into two sections: a normative study and an ipsative study. The normative study, which is described in this Chapter, consisted of a survey of the 96 leavers over a four year period from a special school in Central Region and the 14 leavers over a three year period from a special unit in Central Region. This survey examined three separate areas:

i) the employment status of leavers;

ii) the incidence of informal labelling; and

iii) the opinions of parents and leavers concerning special education.

By studying these three areas, the survey allows us to examine whether the results presented in the rest of this thesis are representative of special education leavers within Central Region as a whole. Moreover, it is possible that such a survey can, in itself, provide support for the hypothesis that special education leavers actively interpret the labels attached to them and do not simply reflect the views of others.

5.1.1 The employment status of school leavers.

Interviews in the normative study were carried out between November 1985 and early May 1986. Wherever possible both the leaver and one of his or her parents were interviewed. For the sake of consistency, each interviewee was asked what the employment status of the leaver had been, or was likely to be, on the 31st March, 1986. This date was selected as it was one when the interviewee could reasonably accurately foretell what the leaver would be doing or, where interviews were carried out after the 31st March, remember what the leaver had been doing. If the interview occured before the end of January 1986, I re-established contact with the family at the end of March to confirm the leaver's employment status at that time. An interviewee was also asked about the leaver's employment record since he or she had left school. This provided a more extensive record of the employment alternatives for leavers (although not necessarily a more accurate one as the interviewees could not always provide a complete history).

5.1.2 The reporting of informal labelling.

Special education leavers vary in the extent to which they are able to make a transition to non-stigmatising working environments. Some leavers go straight to a segregated environment, such as an Adult Training Centre, which perpetuates their formal labelling while other leavers may find an ordinary job or join a YTS programme. If special education leavers actively interpret labelling, then we would expect to find differences between leavers in such different working environments in their reports of labelling. We can speculate that leavers who have successfully made a transition to a less stigmatising working environment may be more able to acknowledge their previous experiences of informal labelling than those leavers who continue to work within a segregated or partially segregated working environment and for whom labelling still represents a threat.

Prediction One. Leavers in integrated working environments are more likely to say that they have been called names, or to be supported by their parents if they say that they have not experienced informal labelling, than leavers who work in a segregated or partially segregated environment (NB, this prediction is based on the assumption that all special education leavers are equally likely to have been called names at school).

5.1.3 Parental and leaver opinions of special education.

In the previous Chapter we saw that there may be a complex relationship between the reasons that individuals give for labelling and their opinions of special education. In particular, trainees who maintained that there was no difference between a special school and a mainstream school and who said that they had not been called names, also tended to have a positive opinion of their special school and to say that they were glad that they had not

gone to a different school. These trainees emphasised other, more positive aspects of their lives. Jeff, for instance, said that he liked his special school because he was able to go canoeing and to play football. Other trainees, such as Colin, said that they disliked school and the ATC, and gave reasons for their attendance in terms that did not recognise any personal difficulties but which attributed their labelling to external factors. In both of the above cases the individual's opinion and his or her attitude towards labelling were consistent: while Jeff said that he had not been called names, Colin agreed that he had been; while Jeff gave reasons why he liked Monroe Heights, Colin explained that he attended the ATC because of the attitudes of others towards him.

On the basis of the pilot study one might expect to find a relationship between a special education leaver's opinions of special education and his or her attitudes towards labelling. Thus those individuals who said that they had been informally labelled would be more likely to have a negative opinion of special education than those leavers who said that they had not been called names. The existence of such a relationship would say nothing about cause-and-effect: thus experiences of name-calling may make individuals more negative towards special education, while individuals who are able to account for labelling may also be more willing to discuss the negative aspects of special education.

Prediction Two. Leavers who say that they had been called names will be more likely to have a negative opinion of special education and less likely to have a neutral or positive opinion of special education than leavers who say that they had never been called names. Leavers who say that they have been called names are also more likely to wish to have gone to another, more integrated school.

If special education leavers actively interpret labelling, then we can speculate that those individuals who have managed to make a transition to a less stigmatising working environment may be more likely to attribute their attendance at a special school or unit to factors which they have left behind them. Thus individuals in segregated environments such as an ATC can be expected to be more likely to avoid discussing labelling by expressing positive views about special education, while individuals in integrated environments (where labelling is not such a threat) may attribute their labelling to external factors.

Prediction Three. Leavers in integrated environments are more likely to express negative views towards their education and to wish to have attended a different, more integrated school, than leavers in segregated or partially segregated environments.

5.2 METHOD.

5.2.1 Special education leavers in Central Region.

Within Central Region there are five special schools for secondary pupils, four special units attached to High Schools and the school in the Royal Scottish National Hospital (RSNH) (see Table 2.1). The main study has been concerned, however, with leavers from only one special school and one special unit. The special school that was included in this study was Monroe Heights School, as this was the only special school within Central Region to cater for pupils with a mild learning disability. Moreover, just one of the four special units, the one at Summerdale Academy, had pupils who were entitled to leave school during 1985 and therefore this has been the only special unit to be included in this study.

Chapter Five; Normative Study.

Between the 1st May 1982 and the 31st December 1985, 78 male and 49 female pupils left Monroe Heights school. Of these leavers, 54 male and 42 female pupils left because they were over the age of sixteen, while 24 male and 7 female school pupils were transferred to other schools before reaching the age of sixteen. Only the 96 pupils who left Monroe Heights after the age of sixteen have been involved in the normative study. Of these 96 leavers, three pupils who were eligible to leave before the end of 1985, in fact stayed on at school. Table 5.1 shows the numbers of leavers in each year.

Table 5.1 Numbers of leavers from Monroe Heights.

Date of last attendance	Male	Female
1st May 1982 to 31st Dec 1982	15	19
1st Jan 1983 to 31st Dec 1983	13	10
1st Jan 1984 to 31st Dec 1984	10	4
1st Jan 1985 to 31st Dec 1985	16 *	9 #
Total number of leavers	54	42

* indicates the inclusion of a leaver eligible to leave during 1985 who stayed on until 1986.
# indicates the inclusion of two leavers eligible to leave during 1985 who stayed on until 1886.

The names and addresses of all leavers from Monroe Heights special school since May 1982 were acquired from the school register together with the leavers' dates of birth, the dates of their first and last attendance at Monroe Heights and the dates of their removal from the register.

The special unit at Summerdale was only able to make records available to me for pupils who had left school during or after the summer of 1983. The number of leavers from Summerdale Special Unit is shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Numbers of leavers from Summerdale Special Unit.

Date of last attendance	Male	Female
1st May 1983 to 31st Dec 1983	2	1
1st May 1984 to 31st Dec 1984	5	1
1st May 1985 to 31st Dec 1985	4 *	1
Total number of leavers	11	3

* indicates the inclusion of a leaver eligible to leave during 1985 who stayed on until 1986.

5.2.2 Methods of contacting parents and leavers.

There were three different methods by which the 96 leavers from Monroe Heights and the 14 leavers from Summerdale were approached to be interviewed.

A) 1985 School Leavers. During the spring of 1985 the parents of the 30 pupils who were eligible to leave Monroe Heights school or Summerdale Special Unit that year were sent a letter asking for their permission to include their children in a study that was being carried out (a copy of this letter is included in Appendix Three).

B) ATC Trainees. Twelve leavers who left school before May 1985 went on to an ATC. The initial contact with these leavers was made at his or her centre. Because ATC trainees could be contacted directly, rather than through their parents, trainees are slightly over-represented in the interview groups compared to the population of school leavers as a whole.

C) Leavers from 1982 to 1985 who did not go to an ATC. Where a special education leaver had not gone on to an ATC, a letter was sent to his or her parents at the last address that was entered in the school register (a copy of this letter is included in Appendix Four). This letter included a brief description of my work and asked parents to fill in and return a simple

form stating either that they agreed or that they did not agree to their son or daughter being interviewed. The parents of nineteen leavers replied agreeing to their son or daughter being included in the study, while the parents of four leavers replied stating that they did not wish to be included in the study. Interviews with these families were carried out during November and December 1985. No further contact was made with those parents who had replied stating that they did not agree to be interviewed. Forty five sets of parents did not reply.

During the spring and early summer of 1986 an attempt was made to contact those 45 sets of parents who had not replied to the original letter. Instead of sending another letter, I either phoned or visited the address given in the school register. The mothers of two special school leavers were prepared to answer questions over the telephone but refused to let me carry out a further interview.

Five of the special school leavers had attended Monroe Heights because they had a physical handicap. These pupils had been taught in a separate class from the other school pupils and their experiences differed markedly from those of the other leavers. This study is not concerned with leavers with a physical handicap and thus the results from these interviews have not been included in this chapter unless otherwise indicated.

The three methods of contacting leavers and their parents described above enabled at least a basic level of contact (enough to find out the employment history of the leaver) to be made with 80 leavers with a mental handicap and 5 leavers with a physical handicap. Eight (15 per cent) of the 54 male special school leavers and ten (24 per cent) of the 42 female leavers could not be interviewed because they had moved house. The only information that could be obtained about these leavers was that which was

contained in the school register. Table 5.3 summarizes my success in contacting special education leavers.

Table 5.3 Contact with special education leavers.

Contact with leavers	Monroe Heights Male	Monroe Heights Female	Summerdale Male	Summerdale Female
Moved out of area	8 (14.8%)	10 (23.8%)	1 (9.1%)	-
Interview refused	3 (5.5%)	2 (4.8%)	1 (9.1%)	-
Leaver physically handicapped	3 (5.5%)	2 (4.8%)	-	-
Leavers contacted	40 (74.1%)	28 (66.6%)	9 (81.8%)	3 (100%)
Total leavers	54 (100%)	42 (100%)	11 (100%)	3 (100%)

5.2.3 Information collected during Interviews.

During the course of carrying out these interviews it soon became apparent that parents varied widely in the extent to which they were prepared to answer my questions. Many parents were extremely co-operative and friendly, while others were less so. It was, therefore, not possible to discuss all of the issues with all of the parents. Because of these variations in interview length and content, the information that has been obtained from interviews has been divided into three categories:

1) Employment history. The basic criterion for contact with a leaver or with a parent to be defined as an 'interview' was that such a contact could provide information about the leaver's employment history from the time that he or she left school until the 31st March, 1986.

2) Parental and leaver opinions of special education. In the interviews that were carried out with the parents of 47 special school leavers and the parents of 7 special unit leavers, parents were asked for their opinions of special education and whether they would have preferred their son or daughter to have received a more integrated education. In addition, 19 male

leavers (32.6 per cent of the total number of leavers) and 14 female leavers (34.9 per cent) were interviewed without their parents being present and were able to provide their own opinions of special education.

3) Reports of informal labelling. Where I was able to ask parents and leavers for their opinions of special education, I also asked if the leaver had ever been called names because of his or her attendance at a special school or unit. It was possible, therefore, to collect information on the incidence of informal labelling either from parents or from their children. By combining these two sources, it was possible to estimate the frequency of name-calling for 35 male and 25 female leavers.

Table 5.4 illustrates the numbers of leavers on whom it was possible to collect these three different types of information.

Table 5.4 Numbers of leavers on whom information was collected.

	Special education leaver			
	Male		Female	
Employment history of leavers	49	(79.0%)	31	(72.1%)
Parents' opinions of special education	33	(53.2%)	21	(48.8%)
Leavers' opinions of special education	19	(30.6%)	14	(32.51%)
Informal labelling	35	(56.5%)	25	(58.1%)
No interview carried out	13	(21.0%)	12	(27.9%)
Total number of leavers (excluding those with a physical handicap)	62		43	

5.2.4 Possible sources of bias within interviews.

Due to the difficulties in contacting parents it is possible that there are systematic differences between leavers on whom it was, or was not, possible to gather information. Even where information was collected, interviewees differed in the extent to which they were prepared to co-

operate with me. Some of the factors that might have influenced the co-operativeness of interviewees, and which might therefore have acted as systematic sources of bias in the study, included:

1) Social class. Parents from Social Classes I, II and III were more likely to have a telephone which made it easier to arrange interviews with them.

2) Parents' previous experiences with officials. If a parent's previous experiences of official and semi-official bodies had been negative, then this might have increased his or her reluctance to talk to me. Some parents assumed that I was connected to the DHSS or the education authorities while others, who were possibly more familiar with the purposes of research, were less suspicious of my motives in contacting them.

3) Sex differences. It is possible that parents of female leavers adopted a more defensive attitude towards a male interviewer than did the parents of male leavers. There may also be a sex difference between leavers in the type of work that the leaver goes on to do, and the amount of informal labelling that the leaver receives after leaving school. Increased informal labelling and a more segregated employment history were likely to heighten parental sensitivity and to lower the extent to which parents were prepared to co-operate with the interviewer.

4) Length of time within special education. Leavers varied in the total amount of time that they had spent at Summerdale or at Monroe Heights. It is possible that leavers who spent more time within special education had had more experiences of labelling and that this would, in turn, increase both their own and their parents' reluctance to discuss these issues with me.

For the school leavers whom I was unable to contact it is impossible to establish either their parents' social class or previous experiences with

officials. The school records, however, provided information about the sex of the leaver and the length of time that he or she had spent at either Monroe Heights or Summerdale. In order to see whether or not there were sex differences or differences in the amount of time spent in special education between leavers a 3 (type of interview) x 2 (sex) analysis of variance was carried out. Three different interview groups were distinguished. These three groups consisted of:

i) 25 leavers whom I was unable to interview;

ii) 26 leavers on whom I was only able to gather information relating to their employment history; and

iii) the 54 leavers on whom I was able to establish both their employment history and their parents opinions of special education.

Table 5.5 illustrates the mean length of attendance of male and female leavers within special education as shown by the school records of Monroe Heights and Summerdale Accademy.

Table 5.5 Length of Time Spent within Special Education by Male and Female Leavers by Interview groups.

Interview Group	Sex	Mean Length of Attendance
No Interview	Male (n = 13)	4 Years and 1 month
	Female (n = 12)	4 Years and 11 months
Employment History	Male (n = 15)	4 Years and 9 months
	Female (n = 11)	4 Years and 2 months
Parental Opinion	Male (n = 33)	5 Years and 1 month
	Female (n = 21)	5 Years and 6 months

The figures in Table 5.5, however, tell only part of the story of these leavers' careers in special education. For instance, at least three of the nine male special unit leavers had spent a period of time in different school for children with special needs before entering the special unit.

The same is true for many of the special school leavers. Thus the figures presented in Table 5.5 are under-estimates of the total amount of time spent by the special education leavers in special education.

The ANOVA that was carried out used length of time at Monroe Heights or at Summerdale as the dependent variable with sex and type of interview as the independent variables. No significant between-group differences were found for either sex (F = 0.33, d.f. = 1, 2) or for interview groups (F = 2.18, d.f., = 2, 2). Similarly there was no sex x interview group interaction effect (F = 6.52, d.f. = 2, 99).

5.2.5 Analysis of results.

As I have explained above, the major aims of the normative study were, firstly, to allow an examination of the extent to which the results of the pilot and ipsative studies were representative of special education leavers within Central Region as a whole and, secondly, to see if this survey could provide support for the hypothesis that special education leavers actively interpret labelling. Three major issues have therefore been studied: the employment histories of leavers; leavers' and parents' reporting of informal labelling; and the opinions of leavers and their parents concerning special education.

A) The employment status of leavers.

The employment opportunities that were available to special education leavers have been divided into three categories according to the extent to which leavers were segregated from their contemporaries. These three categories were: segregated; partially segregated; and integrated. Although in many ways this is a rough categorisation, it is the one which the Central Region Careers Officer with a special responsibility for school

leavers with special needs used as her working guide when planning future provision for school leavers (personal communication).

The segregated group consisted of individuals whose work either explicitly labelled them as 'mentally handicapped' or which completely segregated them from other non-handicapped members of the community. These leavers attended Adult Training Centres, lived in communities or received the Severe Disablement Allowance while living at home. The partially segregated group consisted of leavers who worked in sheltered workshops or full-time college courses for special needs students. These placements still involved leavers being segregated from their non-handicapped peers but did so within more 'normal' settings. The final category, that of integrated working environments were those which included, not simply special education leavers, but all school leavers. Examples of integrated working environments included working on the Youth Training Scheme, in open employment or being unemployed, but available for work and receiving supplementary benefit (being 'on the bru'). A fuller description of these employment opportunities is provided in Section 5.3.1.

B) The incidence of informal labelling.

The combination of leaver and parental interviews provided a more reliable estimate of the incidence of informal labelling than could be achieved by examining the interviews with either parents or leavers on their own. There were at least two reasons for this.

First of all, informal labelling was not only a sensitive issue for both leavers and their parents but was also one which both groups might have been reluctant to share with a comparative stranger. Secondly, it could be difficult to assess the accuracy of reporting within interviews. Parents, for instance, might often not be aware that their

children were called names, particularly if this name calling took place at school.

As neither the parental nor the leaver interviews could be assumed to be wholly reliable, a combination of these interviews provided a more accurate estimate of the incidence of informal labelling. If the leaver was not interviewed, or if he or she claimed not to have been the subject of informal labelling, then the interview with his or her parents was consulted (if it was available) for their answers on this issue. Where parents contradicted their son or daughter and said that informal labelling had occurred, then this was recorded.

C) Parental and leaver opinions of special education. The final analysis of results carried out in the normative study involved the leavers' and their parents' opinions of special education. Two ratings were made of the attitudes towards special education of the 33 leavers who were interviewed. These two ratings were based on the following two questions to the leaver:

- whether the leaver's experiences of special education had been generally good, mixed or neutral, or generally bad; and
- whether the leaver would have preferred to have gone to another, more integrated school.

The leavers' answers to these two questions were rated by two independent raters. There was a high level of agreement between the two raters (96 per cent). Where there was disagreement between the raters, the decision of a third rater, the researcher, was taken as final.

Parents and leavers were also asked about the positive and negative aspects of attending Monroe Heights or Summerdale special unit. The ratings of these answers were more complicated. Initially interviewees' answers were divided into two categories according to whether they involved:

practical educational matters (E), such as the quality of teaching or the amount of work that pupils were given; or issues concerned with labelling or social isolation (L/SI), for instance contact with friends, or the amount of bullying. Each of these general categories was then sub-divided according to the variety of issues that were raised by parents and leavers (see sections 5.3.3 A and B). There was a lower level of agreement between the two independent raters (82 per cent) concerning the assignment of opinions to these sub-categories. Disagreements were referred to the third rater. Because both parents and leavers were asked for their opinions of special education, it was possible to make comparisons between the two interview groups on these issues.

5.2.6 Summary.

The aims of the normative study have been: a) to complement the ipsative and pilot studies by setting those intensive studies of leavers' abilities to cope with labelling in the context of leavers' employment history, their experiences of name-calling and opinions towards special education; and b) to see whether a survey could provide any support for the hypothesis that special education leavers actively interpret labelling. Three different types of interviews with 80 (76%) of non-physically handicapped special education leavers from a special school and a special unit in Central Region between 1982/83 and 1985 have been carried out. This has allowed an analysis of these issues:

i) the employment history of leavers;

ii) the incidence of informal labelling; and

iii) parental and leaver opinions of special education.

5.3 RESULTS.

5.3.1 Employment alternatives for school leavers.

Although special education pupils are legally entitled to stay in school until they are nineteen, the school records show that only 21 of the 110 leavers from Monroe Heights and Summerdale did so. All of the five leavers with a physical handicap stayed at school after they were eligible to leave, while only fifteen of the eighty leavers with a mental handicap on whom I was able to gather information, did so (see Tables 5.6 and 5.7). Of these fifteen pupils, eight stayed on at school only until a place at an ATC or on a college course became available.

There are at least two reasons why so few pupils stayed on at school. First of all, not all parents had been aware that they could ask for their child to stay on at school. Secondly, many parents did not really see the point of further education, at least not within the school system. At that time, to continue at Monroe Heights or Summerdale special unit after the age of sixteen meant that pupils had to repeat a year rather than being involved with new subjects and new opportunities. Table 5.6 illustrates the employment situation of the eighty leavers from the Central Region of Scotland on whom it was possible to gather information, on the 31st March 1986. This date was chosen because it fell in the middle of the time taken over the normative study interviews and allowed interviewees either to recall or to foresee the leavers' employment status with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Where interviews took place over two months before this date, contact was re-established with the leaver to confirm his or her employment status at the end of March.

Table 5.6 Employment status of school leavers on 31st March 1986.

Employment	Time after being eligible to leave school					
	Under one year		One to two years		Over two years	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Staying on at school for at least an extra term	2	-	1	-	-	-
Segregated						
a) Adult Training Centre	2	-	1	-	5	5
b) Registered for SDA	1	-	-	3	-	2
c) Living in a community	-	1	-	-	1	-
Partially segregated						
a) College course	3	4	-	1	-	-
b) Sheltered workshop	-	1	-	-	-	1
Integrated						
a) Unemployed, receiving Supplementary Benefit	1	1	7	-	9	5
b) Youth Training Scheme	4	1	1	-	-	1
c) Other government schemes	-	-	-	1	4	1
d) Temporary or seasonal work	-	-	1	-	3	-
e) Open, permanent employment	1	-	-	-	2	-
f) Supported by spouse	-	-	-	-	-	3
Total number of leavers on whom information was gathered	15	8	10	5	24	18

In addition to looking at a leaver's employment status on the 31st March 1986, I also asked interviewees about the leaver's history of work up until that time. This information is represented in Table 5.7. Thus Table 5.7 not only shows, for instance, whether a school leaver was unemployed on the 31st March 1986, but also whether he or she had ever been unemployed for a period of more than one month since leaving school.

A chi-squared test shows that there is a significant difference at the 0.01 level between male and female leavers in the degree to which their time after leaving school is spent in segregated, partially segregated or integrated employment (χ^2 = 9.65, d.f. = 2). Thus the 31 female leavers spent 31 placements within segregated or partially segregated environments and only 25 placements in integrated settings, while the 49 male leavers

spent only 22 placements in segregated or partially segregated settings and on 61 occasions had worked or lived in a more integrated environment.

Table 5.7 Employment history of school leavers on 31st March 1986

Employment	Time after being eligible to leave school: Under one year		One to two years		Over two years	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Staying on at school for at least an extra term	2	-	2	1	5	5
Segregated						
a) Adult Training Centre	2	-	1	-	5	6
b) Registered for SDA	1	-	-	3	-	2
c) Living in a community	-	1	-	-	1	-
Partially segregated						
a) College course	4	5	2	4	6	7
b) Sheltered workshop	-	1	-	-	-	1
Integrated						
a) Unemployed, receiving Supplementary Benefit	1	2	9	1	18	9
b) Youth Training Scheme	4	2	3	-	10	8
c) Other government schemes	-	-	1	1	7	1
d) Temporary or seasonal work	-	-	1	-	3	1
e) Open, permanent employment	1	-	-	-	3	-
f) Supported by spouse	-	-	-	-	-	3
Total number of leavers on whom information was gathered	15	8	10	5	24	18

In the remainder of this section I will present a brief description of the different employment opportunities available for special school leavers.

A) Segregated working environments.

There are three types of placement which were described by the Careers Officer as being specifically suitable for leavers whom she did not think were 'fit for work' either then or in the future. All of these placements took place within a segregated environment.

1) The Social Work Department may recommend that the appropriate placement for the leaver is in one of the four Adult Training Centres in the Region.

During the course of this study a fifth ATC, Brucedyke, opened in Central Region, catering specifically for trainees under the age of 25. Only four centres were in operation at any one time, however, as the Region was using its new, increased capacity to renovate the older centres.

Research suggests (e.g. Ward, 1985) that many ATCs are 'silting up' and that most of the special education leavers who enter an ATC will stay there for the majority of their working lives. In this study, of the fourteen leavers from Summerdale and Monroe Heights who entered an ATC, only one (Bridget) managed to make a complete break from the ATC, when she left to be married, while another trainee (Alan) found a temporary part-time job which limited his attendance at the centre. Colin, who was included in the pilot study, also managed to leave the centre but he is not included in the normative study as he left Monroe Heights before he was sixteen.

2) At least four of the six leavers shown in Table 5.6 as registered for the Severe Disablement Allowance were waiting for a place to be found for them at an ATC. In order to register for the SDA parents had to have their son or daughter certified as 'mentally handicapped' by a doctor. These leavers were then considered to have withdrawn from the labour market.

3) Two leavers lived in communities run by registered charities. Warren was placed on a two year course at a Camphill-Rudolf Steiner school. This is quite an expensive option (the fee was £6,600 pa in 1983), and seems to be one that the Social Work and Education Departments are reluctant to take because of the cost. Other placements for school leavers may be arranged through charities such as the Scottish Society for Autistic Children (SSAC), the Scottish Society for the Mentally Handicapped (SSMH) and the Red Cross. The only individual in this study to be placed with one

of these three organisations was Molly who was diagnosed as autistic after leaving school, and who went on to live with the SSAC.

B) Partially segregated working environments.

Some individuals were thought to be unable to work in open employment, but were considered to be suitable for work in a sheltered workshop, or on a special needs college course. Both of these placements involved leavers being segregated from non-special needs leavers. In this respect they did not represent a clean break from the stigmatising environment of special education. However, at college there were non-special needs workers, while the Sheltered Workshops provided a more ordinary working environment than, for instance, that of an ATC. Thus these placements are best considered as partially, rather than completely, segregated.

1) There were two colleges within Central Region which offered special needs leavers a one year course in Education for Independence. To preserve the anonymity of the students attending them, these colleges will be referred to as 'Braemar' and 'Blackness'. The Careers Officer recomended individuals for these courses to the college authorities on the basis that such students would be able to benefit from them, and would eventually be able to manage to live on their own.

The one year course at Braemar was an extension course for school leavers with learning difficulties. It had three aims: to extend and broaden the students' basic education and social skills; to provide an environment in which the students would mature and gain confidence; and to assess the student's potential for Further Education or for training for an independent life. The curriculum broadly reflected the three aims of the course, with Basic Education and Life and Social Skills forming the 'core'

of the curriculum. Other subjects that were offered included cookery, metalwork, drama, home economics and physical education.

While the extension courses that the former special education pupils attended was taught within the main body of the college, leavers were not able to integrate with other students to the extent that some parents and leavers had hoped for. Moreover, special education leavers were not simply ignored by other students, for I observed members of both courses being verbally abused during coffee and lunch breaks.

The financing of students was a persistent problem for both colleges during the 1985/86 academic year. Between October and December 1985, the DHSS insisted that all parents who wished to apply for financial support while their son or daughter was at college must apply for the Severe Disablement Allowance. This meant that parents had to ask their doctor to sign a certificate which stated that their son or daughter was mentally handicapped. Those parents who declined to do this had to pay for their son or daughter to attend college from their own pockets. Each of the students that I interviewed at college was aware that the only way that he or she could receive any money while at college was to be certified as mentally handicapped. After the 1985/1986 year the financing of the college courses was met by the YTS with students studying until Christmas before spending the rest of the year on placements.

2) There were two types of sheltered workshop in Central Region: a Social Work Department sheltered workshop making signs; and REMPLOY which has a factory in Stirling. REMPLOY is a non-profit making organisation which has over 89 factories in the U.K. employing more than 8,000 people with a disability in 1981 (Hutchinson, 1982). REMPLOY were the major sheltered workshop employers included in this study, and the work that they offered

involved, for instance, making sweaters for the British, Dutch and German armies. In addition to the two female leavers who are shown in Table 5.6 as working in a Sheltered Workshop on the 31st March 1986, three female school leavers who were involved in the Ipsative Study and were at that time in college, subsequently went on to work with REMPLOY on a two year YTS course from September 1986.

C) Integrated environments.

The Central Region Careers Officer with special responsibility for leavers with special needs, identified some leavers as capable of working in open employment perhaps after a brief period of work introduction ('open employment' is the term used to refer to work outside government or sheltered training schemes). In addition to work adjustment schemes and to the mainstream YTS courses, some leavers entered community industry or community scheme projects.

On March 31st 1986, very few leavers were either in full-time open employment (three leavers or 3.75 per cent of the 80 leavers interviewed) or had ever had any experience of full-time or even temporary or seasonal work (nine leavers or 11.25 per cent). Only one of the nine leavers who had had experience of open employment was female. By contrast with these low overall employment rates, forty (50 per cent) of school leavers had subsequently spent a period of at least one month as unemployed. Being 'on the bru' constituted the single most frequent day-time occupation (or non-occupation) for both male and female leavers.

The employment history of those school leavers who were in full-time employment was precarious. Jack, for instance, spent two weeks before leaving school in November 1985 gaining work experience with a large supermarket. At the end of that time he was promised a permanent, full time

job working in the grocery section, but after the Christmas rush had passed he was first of all reduced to part-time work and then given notice. Jack was only able to keep a job with the supermarket by applying for the post of trolley collector, which the supermarket had been unable to fill as few others were prepared to work when it was raining or cold. Despite being promised other jobs inside the store Jack is still, three years later, working 'on the trolleys'. Of the other leavers who had been in open employment, Gary worked as a kitchen assistant in an hotel for which he had previously worked through the YTS. George and John both worked for their fathers, although only George's father was still in business at the end of March, 1986 and able to employ him. The extent to which George's employment can be classified as 'open' is, therefore, unclear.

5.3.2 Incidence of informal labelling.

Prediction 1 suggested that leavers in integrated working environments who had been called names were more likely to say that this had been the case than leavers who worked in segregated or partially segregated employment. Of the 33 leavers who were interviewed, 11 said that they had been called names because of their attendance in special education, while 22 leavers said that they had never been called names. Of these twenty two, 10 were supported by their parents, 8 were contradicted and in 4 cases no parental interview had been carried out. The Fisher exact test showed that there was no statistical evidence to support the prediction that there was a relationship between the degree of segregation of a leaver's work and his or her denial of informal labelling.

Using the procedure of combining parental and leaver interviews described in Section 5.2.5, it was possible to produce an estimate of the incidence

of informal labelling amongst 35 male and 25 female leavers. The results of this analysis have been outlined above in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Incidence of informal labelling.

Incidence of informal labelling	Special education leavers Male	Female	Total
No report of labelling	19 (54%)	6 (24%)	25 (42%)
Labelling reported by either leaver or parent	16 (46%)	19 (76%)	35 (58%)
Totals	35 (100%)	25 (100%)	60 (100%)

Table 5.8 shows that there was evidence that of the sixty leavers, 35 (58 per cent) had been called names or otherwise victimised. It should be remembered, however, that because of the difficulties that have been described above, this figure is probably an under-estimate. Table 5.8 shows that there were fewer reports of male leavers being the victims of name-calling than there were of female leavers. However the use of a chi-squared test with Yates' correction indicates that this difference is not significant at the 0.05 level (although it is significant at the 0.1 level [χ^2= 3.61, d.f. = 1]).

5.3.3 Parental and leaver views about special education.

There was a wide range of opinion amongst the 54 parents who were interviewed about the merits of special education. Some parents saw special education as one of the best things that could ever have happened to their son or daughter. Others had very negative attitudes towards special education and bitterly regretted that they had not resisted the placement of their son or daughter in a special school or a special unit. Moreover, even when parents had a generally positive opinion of the special school,

some still had serious doubts about whether or not sending their child there had been the right thing to do.

Just as there was no clear consensus of opinion amongst parents as to whether special education had been a positive or a negative experience, so there was a wide divergence of views amongst the 33 leavers that I interviewed. Using a chi-squared test, the difference between parents' and leavers' opinions was not significant ($\chi^2 = 1.1$, d.f. = 2).

Table 5.9 Parental and leaver opinions of special education.

Opinions	Parental	Leaver
Positive	25 (46%)	14 (42%)
Neutral or Mixed	16 (30%)	14 (42%)
Negative	13 (24%)	5 (15%)
Totals	54 (100%)	33 (100%)

In addition to asking parents and leavers for their general opinions of special education, I also asked them to make a more specific comparison of special and mainstream education. Table 5.10 shows that most parents would have preferred their children's education to have been more fully integrated with mainstream classes. By comparison with parents, leavers tended to favour a retention of the status quo, with almost twice as many leavers saying that they preferred to remain within special education than to have attended a main school or academy. If the four parental 'don't knows' are excluded, then a chi-squared test with Yates' correction shows that the difference between parents and leavers concerning which school they would have preferred the leaver to have gone to is significant at the 0.05 level ($\chi^2 = 4.27$, d.f. = 1).

Table 5.10 Parental and leaver opinions on segregation and integration.

Opinions	Parental	Leaver
Stay on at school/unit	19 (35.2%)	21 (63.6%)
Would have preferred another school	31 (57.4%)	12 (36.4%)
Don't know	4 (7.4%)	-
Totals	54 (100%)	33 (100%)

Prediction 2 suggested that leavers who had been informally labelled would be more likely to have a negative opinion of special education and to wish to have gone to a more integrated school than leavers who said that they had not been informally labelled. Table 5.11 illustrates the relationship between leavers' reports of informal labelling and their opinions of special education. Using a Chi-squared tests with Yates' correction showed that leavers' reports of labelling was not significantly connected to their opinions of special education (χ^2= 0.04, d.f. = 1).

Table 5.11 Leavers' reports of labelling and their opinions of special education.

Opinions	Leaver reports informal labelling Yes	No
Positive	5	9
Neutral or negative	6	13

Similarly a Chi-squared test with Yates' correction showed that the relationship between the reporting of informal labelling by leavers and their desire either to have gone to a more integrated school or to have stayed within special education was not significant (χ^2= 0.89, d.f. = 1). Table 5.12 illustrates this.

Table 5.12 Leavers' reports of labelling and their desire for integrated or segregated education.

Opinions	Leaver reports informal labelling Yes	No
Stay on at school/unit	5	15
Would have preferred another school	6	7

Prediction 3 concerned one possible coping strategy that leavers in segregated working environment might use to avoid discussing labelling. It was suggested that labelling would continue to pose a threat to those individuals who had not been able to make a transition to an integrated working environment and that one way that leavers might use to cope with this continued threat would be to avoid discussing labelling. Prediction 3, therefore, hypothesised that leavers in segregated or partially segregated working environments would be more likely than leavers in integrated working environments to express positive views about special education and to say that they preferred segregated to integrated schooling. A Chi-squared test with Yates' correction showed that there was no significant relationship between leavers' work status and their opinions of special education ($\chi^2 = 1.04$, d.f. = 1). Table 5.13 shows the relationship between integration and segregation and opinions of special education.

Table 5.13 Working environments and opinions of special education.

Opinions	Working environments: Segregated or partially segregated	Integrated
Positive	7	7
Neutral or negative	14	5

Table 5.14 illustrates the relationship between leavers' working environments and their desire to have stayed within special education or to have gone to a mainstream school. A chi-squared test showed that this was not significant ($\chi^2 = 2.05$, d.f. = 1).

Table 5.14 Working environments and leaver opinions towards segregated and integrated education.

Opinions	Working environments: Segregated or partially segregated	Integrated
Stay on at school/unit	11	10
Would have preferred another school	10	2

The non-significant trends in Tables 5.13 and 5.14 suggest that, contrary to prediction 3, leavers in integrated work settings tended to have a more positive view of special education and to be more inclined to say that they would have preferred to have stayed within special education than leavers in segregated or partially segregated settings.

In addition to looking at parents' and leavers' general opinions of special education, the specific points that interviewees made for and against education were recorded. After deciding whether these points were broadly supportive or critical of special education (see Tables 5.15 and 5.16), the opinions that leavers and parents expressed were grouped into two categories (see Section 5.2.5). The first category concerned practical educational matters (E), while the second involved issues connected to labelling and social isolation (L/SI).

A) Positive points about special education.

Educational issues. Parents often compared special education with mainstream or 'ordinary' education. Thus, whereas mainstream schools were

seen as insensitive to the needs of children with learning problems and classes that were too large, some parents described the special school as being geared to coping for those with special educational needs, offering pupils a variety of activities and with a good staff-pupil ratio.

Labelling and social issues. Special education leavers described the educational factors that their parents saw as important as positive elements of their schooling. In addition, however, they also tended to pick out the social aspects of going to school as positive points, for instance being able to make friends and being bullied less. Indeed leavers saw being able to make friends as the single most positive aspect of special education, while parents picked out the quality of teachers and the educational progress that their children had made as the most positive aspects.

A chi-squared test with Yates' correction showed that the difference between the numbers of leavers and parents making positive comments was not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.09$, d.f. = 1).

Table 5.15 Parental and leaver positive opinions of special education.

Opinions	Parental interviews (n = 54)	Leaver interviews (n = 33)
Able to make good progress (E)	17 (31%)	5 (15%)
Good teachers (E)	16 (30%)	5 (15%)
Smaller classes mean teachers have more time (E)	11 (20%)	-
Good lessons (E)	7 (13%)	12 (36%)
Good discipline (E)	5 (9%)	-
Generally good (E)	5 (9%)	-
Other positive opinions (E)	5 (9%)	-
Less bullying (L/SI)	3 (6%)	5 (15%)
Making friends (L/SI)	2 (4%)	16 (48%)
No postive opinions	16 (30%)	8 (24%)

Note. Categories are not mutually exclusive: more than one response possible for each interviewee.

B) Criticisms of special education.

Educational issues. Just as with the positive opinions expressed by parents and leavers concerning special education, so the criticisms that parents and leavers made seemed to differ in the exent to which labelling, bullying and social isolation featured as criticisms. Using a chi-squared test, however, the difference between parents and leavers in the types of comments that they made about special education was not significant at the 0.05 level (χ^2= 2.38, d.f. = 1).

Sometimes the positive and negative statement that parents made about special education were contradictory: for instance seven parents praised the standard of the lessons at either Monroe Heights or Summerdale, whilst 21 criticised the teaching and 7 parents believed that there should have been more emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. Three parents of pupils at Summerdale complained to me that their son or daughter spent all day watching television, playing with plasticine or working with books that a child of eight or nine could use. Partly because of these educational difficulties at least two sets of parents had paid for their daughters to receive private tuition while they had been at school.

Labelling and social issues. Some parents were concerned that the segregation of pupils was intrinsically wrong, and as Table 5.10 shows, a majority of parents would have preferred their son or daughter to have attended a more integrated school system. Even where parents felt their son or daughter was 'mentally handicapped' some objected that it was wrong that all children with a mental handicap should be 'lumped together' and treated as if they were a consistent, homogeneous mass. Many parents of children with a more obvious handicap objected to the presence of disruptive children.

There was a non-significant trend for special education leavers to be more concerned than their parents about the social aspects of school. In particular the effects of travelling to a different school on their already existing friendships and the difficulty of keeping in touch with friends that they had made in special education were seen as criticisms of special education by leavers. Leavers referred to verbal abuse not simply in terms of the unpleasant aspects of name-calling, but also in terms of the lost friendships and peer group rejection that this involved. However only 10 parents (19%) cited name-calling and bullying as criticisms of special education although over half of the leavers had suffered at least one incident of such informal labelling.

Table 5.16 Parental and leaver negative opinions of special education.

Criticisms	Parental interviews (n = 54)		Leaver interviews (n = 33)	
Failed to stretch individual/ Not enough work/poor teaching (E)	21	(39%)	5	(15%)
Distance from home too great to visit (E)	16	(30%)	-	
Special education wrong (L/SI)	16	(30%)	-	
Lack of facilities at school leaving (E)	12	(22%)	-	
Name calling and bullying (L/SI)	10	(19%)	10	(30%)
Lack of friends at home (L/SI)	9	(17%)	10	(30%)
Should be more emphasis on basics (E)	7	(13%)	-	
Classes are too large (E)	6	(11%)	-	
Too many disruptive children (E)	4	(8%)	-	
Other negative opinions	11	(20%)	-	
General dislike (E)	-		6	(18%)
Too strict (E)	-		2	(6%)
No negative opinions	15	(28%)	14	(42%)

Note. Categories are not mutually exclusive: more than one response possible for each interviewee.

Using a chi-squared test with Yates' correction there was no significant difference between leavers and parents in the numbers making negative comments compared to no negative comments ($\chi^2 = 1.24$, d.f. = 1).

5.4 DISCUSSION.

This chapter has had two aims: firstly, to present a survey of labelling and special education leavers which would also provide a means of checking the representativeness of the leavers studied longitudinally in the pilot and ipsative studies. The second aim of the normative study was to see whether this survey could provide any support for the proposition that special education leavers actively interpret the labels attached to them and do not simply reflect the views of others. This discussion will be organised to address these two areas.

5.4.1 What do Special Education Leavers do?

Half of the eighty leavers on whom I was able to gather information had spent at least one month unemployed and many had spent considerably longer. By contrast only nine leavers had ever enjoyed open employment, and as two of these leavers worked for their fathers it is debatable whether they could really be considered as being in open employment. At the time that the study was carried out, only three of the eighty leavers were still in work (and one of these leavers worked for his father). Male leavers were significantly more likely to be able to find work in integrated environments than female leavers, for instance only one of the leavers who had had experience of open employment was female. For the many leavers who were available for work but could not find any, the only realistic options to unemployment were provided by temporary periods of work on Youth

Training and other government sponsored schemes. Similarly attending college courses or staying on at school, although of educational benefit, were seen by many leavers and their families as merely postponing the moment when they would have to look for work.

As May and Hughes (1984) have pointed out, the only option to these alternating periods of unemployment and short-term work for the majority of leavers is some form of segregated day care provision, either in an Adult Training Centre or with an even more isolated, community-based charity. Of the fourteen leavers who went on to work in an ATC, only one managed to leave, and that was when she married and became pregnant.

What these figures cannot tell us, however, is what leavers and their families saw as the alternatives that were open to them; that is whether they did, indeed, see their future as a choice between long periods of unemployment and attendance at an ATC. Many parents and leavers were unwilling to consider the ATC as a future if the leaver was unable to find work. Thus, the mother of one young lady told me that, although her daughter was hyperactive, she would never consider allowing her to go to an ATC because when she had been younger she had gone to a nursery school near an ATC and returned pulling faces 'like the mongols'. Moreover, of the 14 leavers who entered an ATC, 12 did so immediately upon leaving school, with only 2 leavers having experienced any time as unemployed before entering an ATC. Thus for many leavers even very long periods of unemployment did not lead to an ATC.

5.4.2 What is the extent of informal labelling?

It is difficult to give more than an estimate of the proportion of the leavers in this study who had been victimised because they had attended

special education. There are at least three reasons for this, some of which have already been touched upon. First of all, informal labelling is a particularly sensitive issue for both leavers and their parents. For leavers it is a sensitive issue because often this name calling has been carried out by teenagers that they were once friendly with, or with who they would, perhaps, still like to be friends. For parents it may be painful to remember the taunts that have been aimed at their children.

Secondly, it can be difficult to assess the accuracy of the interviews because parents may not necessarily be aware that their children have been called names, especially if this took place at school. Moreover memories tend to be blurred. Finally, it is almost impossible to assess whether or not the victimisation that took place was a consequence of the leavers' special educational placement or whether it would have occurred regardless of such a placement. What is important, however, is the reason for this labelling that was given by the leaver or by his or her parents rather than any motive that we might ascribe to the labeller.

Despite these difficulties, Table 5.8 shows that at least 58 per cent of the 60 leavers on whom it was possible to gather this type of information had been the subjects of informal labelling. This figure is considerably higher than that provided by Flynn (1987) who estimated that a quarter of the participants in her study had been victimised (see section 1.1). The large discrepancy between these two estimates is probably caused by the much more stringent criteria for viçtimisation used by Flynn than those used for informal labelling in this study. The results from this study are broadly consistent with those produced by Jahoda et al. (1988).

It is chiefly through informal labelling that the special education leaver is made aware of the negative views of others towards him- or

herself. It is because this name-calling or victimisation is based on the formal labelling of an individual in terms of his or her attendance at a special school or unit, that it can pose a particularly potent threat to the individual's identity. Informal labelling also contributes to the general social isolation of special education pupils and leavers, and this was a criticism that 30 per cent of the leavers made of special education.

5.4.3 What evidence does this study provide to support the hypothesis that individuals actively interpret labelling?

One of the central aims of this thesis was to examine the hypothesis that special education leavers actively interpreted the reasons why they had been labelled. To this end three predictions or hypotheses were made at the start of the chapter. No significant evidence was found to support these predictions. There seem to be at least two possible reasons for this:

i) the general hypothesis is incorrect and leavers passively accept their labels. Yet the qualitative evidence from the pilot study contradicts this explanation;

ii) the three predictions that were made did not employ sensitive enough quantitative techniques of analysis to address this issue of an active interpretation or passive acceptance of labelling.

The remainder of the main study, the ipsative study, will use the qualitative techniques described in the pilot study, and will further explore this area.

5.4.4 What is the significance of leaver/parent diff[illegible]?

One of the difficulties that faces professionals who work with individuals with a mental handicap involves attempting to reconcile the

needs of the client with the concerns of his or her family. Sometimes there can be conflict of interest between the two. This was illustrated in this study by the non-significant difference between parents and leavers in their views of special education. Parents tended to be more inclined than leavers to have positive views of special education, but were in general more likely to have preferred their son or daughter to have had a more integrated education. Similarly parental praise or criticism of special education tended to concentrate more on educational issues than the social advantages or disadvantages. Parental reluctance to cite informal labelling and bullying as criticisms of special education seemed to be linked to at least three factors:

i) the problem of informal labelling does not affect parents as deeply or as personally as it does their children. Many parents suggested that their son or daughter had grown used to name-calling and did not let it bother them anymore;

ii) criticisms of informal labelling may be implicit in the much more frequent parental criticisms of the whole educational system; and

iii) the comparative lack of complaints about informal labelling may represent some form of post-hoc rationalisation by parents of their decision to send their son or daughter to special education. Thus some parents told me that the stigma that was attached to Monroe Heights when they were young did not exist any more.

5.5 SUMMARY.

In conclusion, employment opportunities for special school and special unit leavers in Central Region were bleak. Over eighty per cent of the special education leavers in this study left school as soon as they were

able to. Some leavers went, either immediately or after a brief period of time, to Adult Training Centres. Others alternated between short-term periods of work, generally on government schemes, and unemployment. Roughly a third of the leavers were able to attend college courses designed to cater specifically for adolescents with special educational needs in their first year after leaving school. Only a lucky few of these young men and women were able to find, and fewer still were able to keep, jobs in open employment or with relatives.

Although this survey did not provide any evidence to support the hypothesis that special education leavers actively interpret the reasons for their labelling, it did show that almost two thirds of leavers had been the subject of informal labelling. This figure is probably something of an underestimate. In addition there were differences, albeit non-significant ones, between the attitudes of leavers and their parents towards special education.

From this survey, then, we can see that approximately one leaver in five from this special school and special unit in Central Region will go on to attend an ATC, one in three will attend a college course, while half will, at some time over the three years after leaving school, be unemployed. By using results such as these, we can examine the representativeness of the leavers studied longitudinally in the pilot and main studies (see Chapter Seven).

CHAPTER SIX: THE IPSATIVE STUDY.

A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF ELEVEN SPECIAL EDUCATION LEAVERS.

6.1 INTRODUCTION.

One of the main findings of the survey reported on in the last chapter, was that at least 58 per cent of the eighty special school and unit leavers who were contacted had been informally labelled. This survey, however, was not able to provide any evidence to support the hypothesis that labelled individuals do not passively accept the negative views of others, but in fact actively interpret such labelling. In order to examine this issue more closely, the second part of the main study will, therefore, extend the longitudinal techniques that were used in the pilot study with ATC trainees, to special education leavers who are undergoing the transition from school to working life. This longitudinal study of a relatively few leavers, or ipsative study, is thus able to complement the survey, or normative study, which was presented in Chapter Five.

The pilot study showed that trainees in Adult Training Centres carefully selected material so as to explain labelling in ways that reduced or eliminated their own responsibility for that labelling. Some trainees, for instance, blamed external factors, others recognised that they themselves had specific difficulties, while others denied that they had been labelled. However, there was little variation over the course of the study in the accounts of these individuals, most of whom stayed at an ATC throughout this period. If it is the case that individuals actively interpret labelling, then we could expect that the explanations used by those special education leavers who moved from a special school or unit to a more integrated and less stigmatising environment, would vary with any changes in their circumstances.

The principle aim of the ipsative section of the main study, then, was to examine the reasons that special education leavers give for their labelling. The methods that were used to do this were essentially those which were employed in the pilot study: first of all, I will present quantitative data taken from an attributional analysis, and then I will move on to a more detailed qualitative analysis of each of the eleven leavers, which will be presented through case studies. As I detailed in Section 1.5.2 A, the attributional analysis used throughout this thesis is similar to that developed by Abramson et al. in that it employs the categories of internal, external, stable, unstable, global and specific attributions. Where the analysis used here differs from traditional forms of analysis is that it does not first of all make a distinction between external and internal attributions, then divide each of these into global and specific attributional sub-categories which are then, in turn further sub-categorised into stable and unstable attributions.

Although there were many similarities between the pilot and ipsative studies, there were also three important differences. Firstly, the participants in the ipsative and pilot studies were different. The participants in the ipsative study were younger, represented a broader range of special education leavers and were interviewed both before and during the transition from school to working life. The pilot study, on the other hand, could only examine school leaving retrospectively. Secondly, the ipsative study did not make any use of the trainee and instructor assessments of the trainees' abilities that were used in the pilot study (see section 4.3.2 for a discussion of the difficulties involved in the interpretation of these results). Finally, because the pilot study had shown that special education leavers were able to provide explanations for

their labelling, interviews in the ipsative study were carried out in the expectation rather than in the hope of eliciting such explanations. Thus, the initial interviews in the ipsative study tended to be more relaxed than their counterparts in the pilot study and were able to examine labelling more extensively as a result of this increase in confidence.

6.2 METHOD.

6.2.1 Participants.

Eighteen pupils were eligible to leave Monroe Heights in either May or December of 1985. Two months before the end of their last term the parents of these 18 special school pupils were sent a letter asking for their permission for me to interview their son or daughter. The letter that parents were sent included a note from the rector, or headmaster, of Monroe Heights which said that the study had his approval (see Appendix three).

Two sets of parents refused to allow their children to be interviewed (although one of these, Joe, subsequently approached me when he was at Braemar college and asked me to interview him). Eight parents gave permission for their children to be interviewed and 8 did not reply to my original letter. Of those 8 pupils whose parents gave permission, one had a physical rather than a mental handicap and although he and his mother were initially interviewed, there was no subsequent follow-up and details from this leaver have not been included in this chapter. Thus, only 7 special school pupils have been included in the ipsative section. In addition, 4 pupils at Summerdale Special Unit were eligible to leave during 1985. All 4 of these teenagers agreed to take part in the study as did all of their parents. Altogether, therefore, 11 leavers participated in the ipsative study.

The mean age of the 11 leavers at the time of their first interview was 15 years and 11 months (SD 4 months; range 15:8 to 16:7 years). The mean length of time that they had spent at either Summerdale special unit or at Monroe Heights (excluding other periods in special education) was 5 years and 2 months (range 1:3 to 10:8 years). Unfortunately only 6 leavers participated in the study until the final interviews. The mean age of these 6 leavers at the time of their final interview was 17 years and 6 months (SD 10 months; range 17:0 to 19:1 years). The mean length of time that these 6 leavers had spent at either Summerdale special unit or at Monroe Heights was 4 years (range 1:3 to 8:8).

6.2.2 Interviews.

The participant-centred research with these 11 leavers was carried out over 14 and 20 months depending upon whether the leavers had left school in the May or in the December of 1985. Where possible, participants were interviewed fully at the start and at the end of the period of study. These full interviews covered the leaver's school history, attitudes towards special education and experiences of name calling. At six monthly intervals between these full interviews, briefer follow-up interviews were carried out to check the participant's progress. Thus up to four separate interviews were carried out with each leaver. Parents were also interviewed at the start of the study and, again at the end if their son or daughter was still a participant. These interviews concerned the parents' attitudes towards special education and their son's or daughter's attendance at a special school or unit, the incidence of informal labelling and the leaver's educational history.

Chapter Six: Ipsative Study

The two full interviews, at the begining and at the end of the study, covered issues (e.g. labelling) that many, if not all, leavers found difficult to talk about and which therefore had to be approached with discretion. If a leaver indicated in some way that he or she would prefer not to discuss an issue, then their decision was respected. In addition, during the interviews I was careful not to challenge or contradict the explanations that a leaver gave for his or her labelling. This approach to interviews had two important methodological consequences:

i) if a leaver said that he or she did not know of any reasons for his or her labelling then I did not continue to question him or her at that point but returned to the subject later in the interview. If at that time the leaver repeated that he or she did not know of any reasons, then I did not raise the subject again in the interview. Those leavers who gave reasons for their labelling were therefore asked more questions than those who did not; and

ii) two leavers (Linda and Simon) were particularly reluctant to discuss labelling. I kept in contact with both of these leavers up until the point when they started work (Linda on a college course, and Simon as a refuse collector). To have interviewed either of these leavers again at that time would have required me to approach them in their working environments, which would have been difficult for them to explain to their new colleagues. Moreover, on the basis of our follow-up interviews I did not feel that either leaver was likely to have altered his or her position on labelling. Because of these two factors, and because both Linda and Simon were reluctant to discuss labelling issues, I felt that I could not continue to justify even the intrusion on their lives that these interviews

represented, and neither Linda nor Simon were interviewed at the end of the study.

I tried to spend at least six hours with each leaver before formally interviewing him or her for the first time. The purpose of spending time with leavers before the first interview was to try and establish an empathic relationship which would allow me to more fully understand their needs and aspirations and would also help leavers discuss sensitive issues with me.

6.2.3 Quasi-experimental study design.

For Campbell and Stanley (1966) social science experiments involve the structured organisation of observations around 'some agent or treatment presumed to cause change' (p. 4). During this study there has been no single treatment or group of treatments: rather, any change between the attitudes of leavers first of all at school and then 14 to 20 months later would have resulted from a large number of changes. In order to minimise the possibility that differences in the accounts of participants were the consequence of outside factors, a quasi-experimental design allowing the rigorous collection of data within a naturalisic setting was adopted.

Given the fact that quasi-experimental studies by definition lack some of the rigid controls that we associate with experimental designs, what differentiates a quasi-experimental design from a non-experimental study, and why should we prefer the former to the latter? There are two main answers to these questions. First of all a quasi-experimental design incorporates a basic experimental method involving subjects or participants, structured observations, an experimental variable, results and conclusions. The researcher, although unable to control the

experimental variable, is still able to exercise control over whom he studies and how he studies them. Secondly, and related to this element of control, the quasi-experimental design is still able to allow the generation and testing of hypotheses (Campbell and Stanley, 1966).

The quasi-experimental design features of the ipsative study include: the use of participant observation; the internal discipline and replication of the first and final interviews; and the use of case studies to examine individual differences and variations of accounts. Some of the theoretical and methodological implications of these features has been discussed in Chapter Three.

6.2.4 Possible sources of bias within the ipsative study.

Research which is carried out in a natural environment involves a number of methodological difficulties. Chief amongst these is the lack of control that the researcher has over the events that he or she studies. It is therefore pertinent to consider here both some of the possible threats to the external and internal validity of this study, and those features of the quasi-experimental design which may have acted to lessen or negate these threats. Campbell and Stanley (1966) and Cook and Campbell (1979), for instance, list a number of possible threats to the validity of experimental and quasi-experimental designs.

1. History is a threat when the observed effect might be due to an event, other than the treatment of research interest, taking place between the first and the final interviews. This is a particular problem in research that is carried out in the field where the researcher is unable to insulate participants from outside influences or to choose dependent variables that could not plausibly have been affected by outside forces. In the context of

this study it is possible that variations between the accounts given by leavers in their first and final interviews occurred either randomly or as the result of influences other than the process of leaving school.

The possibility of random forces influencing participants cannot be completely eliminated. However within social psychology there is a substantial body of literature (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987) which argues that variations in accounts do not occur randomly but are the result of individuals in different social contexts drawing upon different linguistic resources. If, for instance, as Potter and Wetherell suggest, changes in the accounts given by individuals are linked to changes in their environment then enough material needs to be presented in the results section for the influence of outside forces to be gauged. Thus in the present study, as much information as possible about changes in a leaver's life was collected, and while it is obviously impossible to present all of this material in a single report, as much information as is relevant has been presented for each individual. This is one of the reasons why the analysis of data includes quite lengthy case studies which attempt to link variations in context to variations in the hypothesised function of the accounts.

2. Maturation is a threat when an observed effect might be due to the effects of processes within the participant, rather than to the treatment of research interest. The late teenage years, for instance, are a period of many rapid changes for all adolescents. Changes in the accounts of participants may therefore reflect these teenage traumas rather than the effects of leaving special education. If maturation is a threat, then we might expect similar changes between all leavers irrespective of whether they go on to work in open employment, a sheltered workshop or an Adult

Training Centre. Although there was no specific control group, a comparison between the accounts of leavers at an ATC and those in more integrated settings would help to illustrate whether the changes in leaver's accounts were specific to the changes in environments, or whether they occurred due to general maturational developments.

3. Selection is a particular threat where the researcher lacks the ability to randomly assign participants to the groups that he or she is studying. It is possible that any bias in the composition of the group of leavers that arises because of this lack of randomisation may interact with other threats to produce forces that might spuriously appear as treatment effects. A selection-maturation interaction, for instance may occur and mean that any change is the result of maturation that is specific to the group being studied.

To overcome this possibility I have tried to interview as many special education leavers with a mild learning difficulty as possible. Moreover the ipsative normative design facilitates comparisons between the special education leavers involved in the longitudinal study and the majority of leavers over a three year period.

4. Testing refers to the effects of having an interview on the data obtained from a second interview. Thus the experience of one interview may cause the interviewee to answer differently during a second interview without this reflecting any real change in the intervening period. In particular, it is possible that extensive questioning on a sensitive topic such as labelling may cause a participant to reflect on this area more than he or she might otherwise have done and thus to develop explanations which might not otherwise have occurred to him or to her. These new accounts may therefore be the result of interviewing and thus be experimental artefacts

rather than spontaneously occuring phenomena. Moreover, the relationship between myself and each participant developed and changed over the 18 months of the study so that repeated interviewing may have uncovered ideas that were new to the series of interviews but which nevertheless existed at the first meeting.

Two steps were taken to try and overcome these problems. First of all, I spent a large amount of time trying to get to know each leaver before interviewing him or her so that the changes in our relationship between the first and the last interviews would be minimised. Secondly, only the first and the last interviews covered sensitive material directly so that the effects of interviewing could be kept to a minimum.

5. Instrumentation is closely related to testing and becomes a threat to the internal validity of a study when the interviewee becomes more experienced between the first and the final interviews. Subtle variations in the questions that participants are asked might then produce radical variations in their answers. This is a particular problem with unstructured and flexible interviews. As far as was possible, therefore, issues that were connected with labelling were approached in exactly the same way in the final interviews as they had been in the first ones. In addition the quotations that have been provided in the case studies include questions as well as the leavers' answers.

6. Mortality is a threat when an observed effect may be due to the different kind of persons who dropped out of a group during the course of the study, resulting in a selection artefact. This was a particular difficulty with this study for it was only possible to carry out a final interview with 6 of the 11 leavers who were interviewed at the start of the study. We have already seen why Linda and Simon were excluded from the

final interviews. In addition it was impossible to interview Jim and Steve as they moved out of the area, while the final interview with Maureen could only be carried out with her mother present, which limited the type of questions that Maureen could be asked.

6.2.5 Analysis of Results.

The analysis of the results from the ipsative section closely follows that developed through the pilot study. In the pilot study we saw that simply cataloguing a participant's attributions could serve to disguise individual variations between leavers. Moreover differences between individuals, for instance in terms of home circumstances, parental support and openness, meant that it was impossible to ask all participants exactly the same questions, and therefore impossible to use a rigid, structured interview format. For these reasons the pilot study represented an attempt to develop a more flexible form of analysis based on the ratings of entire interviews by independent judges.

1) Ratings. Following on from the analysis used in the pilot study, raters in the ipsative study were asked to rate the participant's first and last interviews for three major areas: a) opinions of special education; b) experience of informal labelling; and c) the reasons given by participants for formal labelling. All of the transcripts were randomly allocated to five independent raters, and the ratings that they produced were compared with those made by the researcher. All five independent raters were psychology postgraduates employed on a Regional Training Course in Clinical Psychology and all were familiar with attributional theory (e.g. Weiner, 1985). Instructions were provided as to when a leaver could be rated as using a specific attribution. In particular it was emphasised that

attributions had to be used rather than mentioned, and that raters should be sensitive to the effects of leading questions from the interviewer.

Agreement levels for all three areas were calculated by dividing the number of agreements between raters by the number of agreements plus disagreements and multiplying by a hundred. Disagreements between raters were resolved through discussion and, if necessary, by referring the issue to a third, independent rater.

1) Opinions of special education. Raters were asked to rate leavers on two of the issues that were discussed in the normative section, namely whether the leavers had generally positive, neutral or mixed, or negative views about special education, and whether leavers would have preferred segregated or integrated education.

B) Experiences of informal labelling. Raters were required to assess whether or not a leaver said that he or she had ever been called names. Name calling which occurred before the individual was placed in special education, or which took place within the special school or unit was discounted. If special unit pupils were called names by pupils who were at the school but not in the unit, then they were rated as having been informally labelled. Where a participant said that he or she had not been called names, raters were provided with a transcript of the parental interview and were asked to rate whether parents supported or contradicted their son or daughter.

C) Reasons given for formal labelling. Raters were asked to rate the leaver's account for the reasons that he or she gave for their formal labelling. This stage of the analysis was identical to that used in the pilot study (see section 4.1.3).

2) Case studies. We have seen above how the use of case studies can supplement the analysis of results through a more detailed examination of individual participants. Moreover case studies need not simply illustrate group themes, but can also provide a method of analysis in themselves. For instance Kazdin (1981) has described how the use of multiple cases involving continuous assessment and stability information can overcome many of the threats to validity described by Campbell and Stanley, and contribute to the elimination of rival hypotheses.

6.2.6 Summary.

Some of the threats to the validity of the study can be dealt with to a greater or lesser extent through the design of the project as a whole. By interviewing a range of special education leavers, of different ages and at different times during the transition from school to adult life, and by interviewing some participants only once, general trends, if they exist, may be detected. If changes occur simply as a result of interviewing or adolescent trauma, then we might expect similar changes amongst all participants over the course of the study regardless of context or age. Alternatively if changes in accounts are linked to changes in context or age, then we would only expect to find similar variations in the accounts of participants who had undergone similar experiences. These controls, however, operate for the group as a whole and not for individual cases within the study. The explanations of the changes in the school leaver's accounts given in the case studies must therefore be regarded as provisional.

6.3 RESULTS.

6.3.1 Attitudes towards special education.

1) First interviews:

Table 6.1 Ratings of leaver's attitude towards special education.

Leaver	Generally positive	Neutral or mixed	Generally negative
Christine	x		
Gavin	x		
Jack	x		
Jim		x	
Linda			x
Mary		x	
Maureen			x
Phil	x		
Rob	x		
Simon		x	
Steve		x	

The agreement levels between raters concerning the attitudes of leavers towards special education was 82 per cent. Five (45 per cent) of the leavers were rated as having a generally positive attitude towards special education, 4 as having a neutral or mixed attitude (37 per cent) and 2 (18 per cent) as being generally negative.

Table 6.2 Ratings of leaver's attitude towards integration and segregation.

Leaver	Preferred mainstream	Preferred to stay in special education	Did not know
Christine		x	
Gavin	x		
Jack		x	
Jim	x		
Linda	x		
Mary	x		
Maureen	x		
Phil		x	
Rob		x	
Simon		x	
Steve	x		

The agreement level between raters over leavers' attitudes towards integration and segregation was 91 per cent. Six (55 per cent) of the leavers were rated as expressing a preference for a more integrated education. Of these 6 leavers, 3 were from the special unit, while only 1 (Jack) of the 5 leavers who said that he or she was glad to have had a segregated schooling was at Summerdale special unit.

There was a significant correlation between leavers' attitudes towards special education and their preferences for mainstream or segregated education. Using Kendall's tau this correlation was shown to be significant at the $p = 0.05$ level ($N = 11$, $\tau = 0.61$).

ii) Final Interviews: Only 6 of the 11 leavers were interviewed at the end of the study. All 5 of the leavers who were rated in Table 6.1 as having positive attitudes towards special education were interviewed fully at the end of the study, while only 1 of the 6 leavers who was rated as having a neutral, mixed or negative attitude towards special education remained in the study to the end. Similarly 4 of the 5 leavers who were initially rated as preferring special to mainstream education were interviewed again at the end of the study, while only 2 of the 6 leavers who were initially rated as expressing a preference for mainstream education were interviewed again.

Table 6.3 Ratings of leaver's attitudes towards special education.

Leaver	Generally positive	Neutral or mixed	Generally negative
Christine	x		
Gavin	x		
Jack	x		
Mary			x
Phil		x	
Rob	x		

There was 100 per cent agreement between raters over the 6 remaining leavers' attitudes towards both special education and towards segregation and integration. There were two changes in leavers' attitudes towards special education. Both Mary and Phil were rated as having more negative perceptions of special education. Leavers' attitudes towards special education are shown in Table 6.3.

Table 6.4 Ratings of leaver's attitudes towards integration and segregation.

Leaver	Preferred mainstream	Preferred to stay in special education	Did not know
Christine		x	
Gavin	x		
Jack		x	
Mary	x		
Phil		x	
Rob		x	

As a comparison between Tables 6.2 and 6.4 shows, none of the leavers changed their attitudes towards integration and segregation.

In the first interviews there was a significant correlation between leavers' attitudes towards special education and their preferences for segregation or integration. Using Kendall's tau the relationship between these two ratings in the final interviews was shown not to be significant at the $p = 0.05$ level ($N = 6$, $\tau = 0.66$).

6.3.2 Informal labelling.

1) First interviews: As we saw in Chapter One, informal labelling occurs when a leaver is called names, bullied or otherwise victimised by his or her peers as a result of being sent to a special school or unit. Thus Christine was rated as saying that she had not been informally labelled

because, although she agreed that she had been called names, she said that this had stopped when she went to Monroe Heights school.

Table 6.5 Leaver's acknowledgement of informal labelling.

Leaver	Leaver said that he or she had been called names		Leaver said that he or she had never been called names.	
	Supported	Contradicted	Supported	Contradicted.
Christine			x	
Gavin	x			
Jack	x			
Jim	x			
Linda				x
Mary				x
Maureen	x			
Phil		x		
Rob	x			
Simon			x	
Steve	x			

There was 100 per cent agreement between raters concerning whether or not a leaver (and, where relevant, his or her parents) said that he or she had been called names because he or she went to Monroe Heights or the special unit. These interviews provided evidence that at least 9 of the 11 leavers had been informally labelled. This informal labelling ranged from leavers being told that they went to the 'mongol school', to being 'battered' (beaten up) and having grafitti painted on the family's garage doors. Three of the 4 leavers who said that they had not been informally labelled were female, while 6 of the 7 leavers who said that they had been informally labelled were male.

ii) Final Interviews: There was 100 per cent agreement between raters over whether leavers and their parents said that the leaver had been called names because he or she went to a special school or unit.

Table 6.6 Leaver's acknowledgement of informal labelling.

Leaver	Leaver said that he or she had been called names		Leaver said that he or she had never been called names.	
	Supported	Contradicted	Supported	Contradicted.
Christine				x
Gavin	x			
Jack	x			
Mary	x			
Phil		x		
Rob	x			

There were two differences between the ratings of the final interviews with the six leavers shown in Table 6.7, compared to the ratings of the first interviews with the same six leavers shown in Table 6.6. In the first interviews, Christine's mother was rated as stating that her daughter had not been called names because she went to Monroe Heights, whereas in the final interviews she said that her daughter had, in fact, been informally labelled. Mary was rated in the final interviews as saying that she had been called names, whereas in the first series of interviews she was contradicted by her mother when she said that she had not been informally labelled.

6.3.3 Reasons given for formal labelling.

i) First interviews: There was an 81.2 per cent agreement level between raters concerning the attributions made by leavers for their placement within special education. Only one leaver (Phil) did not give a reason for his placement. All of the leavers who gave a reason for their placement recognised some personal difficulty in learning (internal attribution). Having done so, eight of the ten leavers who provided an explanation for their labelling then went on to qualify the extent to which they could be

held to be personally responsible for this labelling. This was most commonly done by leavers limiting the extent of their difficulties to certain areas, while citing other areas in which they were more competent. None of the leavers referred to their difficulties as global or all encompassing, while only one suggested that it was likely to persist (N.B. within this attributional framework, comments such as 'I am slow' did not necessarily qualify as *stable* attributions).

Two leavers were rated as using an additional attribution, which could not otherwise be categorised. Both Christine and Jack compared themselves with other pupils and suggested that although they had difficulties, these were not as bad as those experienced by some pupils.

Table 6.7 <u>Ratings of leaver's attributions of the causes of formal labelling.</u>

Leaver	Makes no attribution	Internal	Specific	Unstable	External	Stable	Other
			Attribution				
Christine		x	x				x
Gavin		x	x	x	x		
Jack		x	x	x	x		x
Jim		x					
Linda		x	x				
Mary		x	x	x			
Maureen		x	x		x	x	
Phil	x						
Rob		x					
Simon		x	x	x			
Steve		x	x	x	x		

ii) <u>Final interview</u>: There was 92 per cent agreement between raters over the attributions made by leavers for the reasons for their formal labelling. All but one of the leavers gave reasons for their formal labelling, although once again the account provided by Rob must be regarded with suspicion. Four of the 5 leavers who gave a reason for their formal

labelling provided an internal attribution for this which they then went on to qualify in some way (except for Rob). Jack, however, did not cite an internal deficit and instead attributed his formal labelling simply to external factors.

Table 6.8 Ratings of leaver's attributions of the causes of formal labelling.

Leaver	Makes no attribution	Internal	Specific	Unstable	External	Stable	Other
Christine		x	x				
Gavin		x	x	x	x		
Jack					x		
Mary		x	x	x			
Phil	x						
Rob		x					

Of the 5 attributions made in their first interviews by the 6 leavers who were re-interviewed, 5 attributions were not repeated (although four of these omissions were by Jack). Using a sign test this ratio of 5 omissions from 17 attributions is not significant at the $p = 0.05$ level. However, the differences between the attributions made by the leavers in the first interviews and in the last interviews is almost entirley due to the differences in Jack's account. The type and number of attributions made by Gavin, Mary, Phil and Rob did not change between the first and the final interviews, while Christine merely omitted the additional attribution that she had been rated as using in the first interview.

6.3.4 Case studies.

As we have seen above, the analysis of accounts through attributions presented in Tables 6.7 and 6.8 does not illustrate the complexity of the

accounts given by leavers. Consequently, this results section also includes case studies which present a more detailed analysis of the attributions used by leavers. These case studies have been compiled in order of increasing complexity as represented by the number of different attributions that participants made in their first interviews.

1) Leavers who did not make any attributions for their formal labelling.

Phil. Date of birth 5:12:69.

Phil has three older sister one of whom also went to Monroe Heights school. Phil is a very good swimmer and his mother showed me the medals and certificates that he had won for swimming and gymnastics. Phil told me that when he left school he would like to work as a life guard.

When Phil was at primary school the teachers told his mother that he was 'not coming on'. He was sent first of all to a special education primary school and then when he was seven to Monroe Heights. Phil's mother told me that both of these special schools had been ideal for her son, whom she described as 'not very bright'.

First interviews. 18:11:85 and 17:12:85. Parental interview 16:12:85.

i) Informal labelling. Phil's mother told me that he had never been called names. When I asked Phil, however, he told me that he had been:

[6.1] I; Sometimes people who come here have the mickey taken out of them, has that ever happened to you?
Phil; Yes.
I; What sort of things?
Phil; All sorts of things.
I; What sort of things do they say?
Phil; That you come to the mongol school.
I; Does that happen a lot?
Phil; Aye.

ii) Formal labelling. Although Phil acknowledged that he had been called names because he went to Monroe Heights, he did not give a reason why he

had gone to Monroe Heights or explicitly recognise that there was any difference between his school and others (although he implicitly recognised that there was when he said that it was called the 'mongol school'). Phil said that he would have preferred to have been at Monroe Heights than to have gone to any other school. His answers were typically very brief and succinct, for instance:

[6.2] I; Why do you think that you came to Monroe Heights rather than go to a different school?
Phil; [No answer]
I; Any ideas?
Phil; No.
I; Would you have preferred to have gone to a different school?
Phil; I'd have preferred to have come here.
I; Why?
Phil; I just like it here.
I; Was there any reason that you didn't go to a different school?
Phil; [No answer]

iii) Summary. Phil said that he had been called names because he went to the 'mongol school'. He did not give any reasons for his attendance at Monroe Heights other than to say that he was glad to have gone there. Phil emphasised that his sporting abilities were important to him.

Follow-up interviews 12:6:86 and 8:9:86.

Phil did not leave Monroe Heights at Christmas as he was entitled to do, but stayed on until the summer. After leaving he went on a YTS sponsored college course at Braemar college which also involved work experience at a local DIY multi-store. Phil told me that he had stayed on at school because there was nothing else to do.

Final interviews 4:12:86 and 11:12:86. Parental interview 7:1:87.

i) Informal labelling. Phil told me that he had been called names because he went to Monroe Heights, although his mother did not know about this. He told me that other children often told him that he went to the 'Mongol' school and that this made him feel 'cross'.

ii) Formal labelling. Phil did not give any reasons why he had been at Monroe Heights rather than at an ordinary school, or one that was nearer his home. He simply said that having stayed on at school had been better "than walking about the streets".

Phil was rated as having a neutral or mixed view of special education, for instance he said that being at Monroe Heights had been "alright sometimes". Phil also said that he preferred being at Monroe Heights to a more integrated education.

iii) Summary. Phil's account changed very little over the year between his two main interviews. The only change was in the rating that he was given for his views of special education, which changed from being generally positive to neutral or mixed. In both his first and his final interviews Phil did not give any reasons for his attendance at a special school although on both occasions he said that he had been called names because he went to Monroe Heights.

2) Leavers making one attribution for their formal labelling.

Jim Date of birth 14:10:68.

Jim first entered special education when at the age of eight he went to Davies House, a special education primary school. When he was twelve, Jim was transferred to the special unit at Summerdale school. His father (an unemployed joiner) felt that Jim had learnt very little at the unit, principally because the teachers there did not give the pupils enough work. He told me that "if you are backward, then you just stay backward". He believed it was disgraceful that Jim, who was nearly seventeen when he left school, should do so without even having been taught to tell the time.

First interviews 6:6:85 and 13:6:85. Parental interview 17:1:86.

i) Informal labelling. Jim told me that he would have preferred to have been in another part of the school to the unit. He told me that he had been called names such as 'bo-bo and that, that I'm slow' by other non-unit pupils at school.

ii) Formal labelling. Jim agreed that he was "a bit slow" in "maths and that" (*internal* attribution). He mentioned that the work that he was given at school was "kid's stuff", for the primary school. After he had been to college, Jim said that he would be able to find a job as a bricklayer (although he admitted that this would be made harder by his academic difficulties) and to live on his own if he wanted to.

iii) Summary. Jim emphasised that he viewed himself as an equal member of society. Although he agreed that he had academic difficulties he emphasised his interests in football and in other sports.

Follow-up interviews 24:2:86 and 10:6:86.

Jim left school in the summer of 1985 and started at the course for pupils with special educational needs at Blackness College. He told me that he did not like going to college, partly because of the problems that he and the other students were having with finance, but also because college had not been as good as he thought it would be. When the course became part-time Jim worked for one day a week in the stores of the engineering department, which he did not enjoy. He told me that the students there made fun of him and told him to work faster. This verbal abuse was indicative of the overall lack of integration of the course students amongst the rest of the college.

I was unfortunately unable to continue interviewing Jim after he had left college as both Jim and his family left the area.

Chapter Six: Ipsative Study.

Rob Date of birth 19:12:67.

Rob is an only child. He lived with his parents in a small town three miles from Monroe Heights. He had only been at Monroe Heights for three months before I interviewed him, having previously attended Hillpark (a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties) for nine years. According to the schools' speech therapist, Rob was at times echolalic, and this tendancy to repeat part of a question brought into doubt the extent to which his account could be relied upon as a true indication of his feelings.

First interviews. 24:5:85 and 13:6:85. Parental interview 14:6:85.

i) Informal labelling. Rob said that he had been called names both at the school and at home. Rob told me that sometimes this upset him, but that he tried to ignore it. He said "I just feel agony ... just don't feel like it, fooling, calling me names. Calling me names all the time". During my interview with her, his mother on several occasions referred to Rob as 'mentally handicapped' in front of him.

ii) Formal labelling. Because of his communication difficulties it was often difficult to understand exactly what Rob was trying to say and the extent to which he was merely repeating elements of the question. He told me that he was 'slow' (*internal* attribution) but did not, or could not, explain in what ways. Rob said that he wanted to find a job when he left school and he associated having a job with attending the local ATC.

iii) Summary. It is very difficult to draw any conclusions from Rob's account other than that he had been called names because of his attendance at Monroe Heights and Hillpark and that this had upset him. For instance it was difficult to tell whether or not he understood that there was a

difference between special and mainstream education, or between going to an ATC and having a job.

Follow-up interviews 19:11:85 and 10:3:86.

Rob left Monroe Heights in November 1985 as soon as a place at a local ATC became available. He told me that he had enjoyed Monroe Heights but was glad to be working now. He also spoke about getting married and eventually doing the same job as his father.

Final interview 30:1:87 and 4:2:87. Parental interview 3:4:87.

Two months before these interviews Rob's father died suddenly. Rob was very upset by this and became very concerned to leave the centre and to find a job so that he could support his mother. His mother, however, was concerned to keep Rob on at the ATC.

i) Informal labelling. It was still very difficult at times to understand what Rob was saying. He told me that he had been called "porker" or "porknut".

ii) Formal labelling. Rob told me that he did not know why he had gone to either Monroe Heights or to Hillpark. He did, however, agree that he was 'handicapped' (*internal* attribution) although it was difficult to understand exactly what he meant by this, or whether he knew what the phrase meant.

3) Leavers making two attributions for their formal labelling.

Linda. Date of Birth 24:9:69.

Linda's father is a businessman and the family lives in a quiet residential area. She has one older brother. At the age of seven Linda suffered a series of petit mal attacks for which she received medication until just before the start of these interviews. Linda started at Monroe

Heights school when she was eight years old, her parents having been given the alternative option by the Education Department of keeping her on at her old school. They decided, however, that it would be better for Linda if she went to Monroe Heights where, in her father's words, "she would be a big fish in a small pool, rather than a little fish in a big pool". Her parents described this decision as one of the hardest of their lives. Linda's father said that it had been particularly hard for him because as a boy he had gone to a local school, and he therefore knew what the local attitudes to Monroe Heights children was.

First interviews 31:5:85 and 6:6:85. Parental interview 22:6:85.

i) Informal labelling. Linda's parents felt that her attendance at Monroe Heights exacerbated her shyness and lack of confidence and meant that Linda had nobody who lived near her whom she could talk to. Instead she had often been called names and reduced to tears by other children. Linda's cousin, for instance, used to live near by and as children she and Linda had been very close. After Linda went to Monroe Heights, however, their friendship ended.

Linda told me that she had not been called names at home. Although other children knew that she went to Monroe Heights, Linda said that 'they don't mind'.

ii) Formal labelling. Linda told me that she had only been at Monroe Heights for "a couple of years", and again "something like three or four years", whereas in fact she had been there for seven years. She said that she would have preferred to have gone to another school rather than Monroe Heights because she felt that she would have learnt more elsewhere. Linda said that she had gone to Monroe Heights because she was slow with her work (*internal* attribution):

[6.3] I; What was the reason that you said you came here?
Linda; I was behind the class with my work.
I; Will that make it difficult for you to get a job?
Linda; Could be, yes.

Linda recognised the significance of her placement at Monroe Heights and attributed it to her own personal limitation of being "behind the class with my work". However she rejected the idea that either she or anyone else at Monroe Heights was handicapped and confined her own difficulties to her school work (*specific* attribution).

iii) Summary. One of the most significant aspects of Linda's account lay in what she did not say; there was no mention, for instance, of her epilepsy, or of her decision to remain at Monroe Heights school. Her differences from others were minimised as were her own difficulties in working. The emphasis of some elements at the expense of others was consistent with her parents' claim that they had always been careful to tell Linda that she was just the same as everyone else.

Follow-up interviews 10:10:85 and 19:4:86.

Linda left school as soon as she was able to and started at Braemar College on their extension course for pupils with special educational needs in September 1985. At college Linda was far more negative about her time at Monroe Heights than she had been when she was at school. She said that the college course had been better in just about "every way", with better teaching and a greater variety of subjects being offered. Linda's parents decided not to register Linda for the Severe Disablement Allowance and she therefore received no money while she was at college. They made it clear to me that they had always taught their daughter that she was just the same as everyone else, and that to have described her as *severely disabled* would have gone against everything that they had ever taught Linda.

Chapter Six: Ipsative Study.

In September 1986 Linda went back to college on a catering course with students from mainstream education. In the two follow-up interviews Linda had become more and more reluctant to talk about her time at school or even to continue to take part in the study. She had increasingly emphasised that she was just the same as the other students at the college.

Because of her reluctance to continue with these interviews, I decided not to procede with the final interviews with either Linda or her parents. I felt that I could not reasonably expect to achieve any new information from such interviews and that to do so would only serve to remind Linda of her previous stigmatisation. In addition she had just managed to enter a college course with other students from mainstream education who did not necessarily know that she had been to Monroe Heights school. To interview Linda under these circumstances would, I felt, be unjustified.

4) Leavers making three attributions for their formal labelling.

Christine. Date of birth 6:9:69.

Christine is the youngest of three children in a lower middle class family. At the High School where she had been before going to Monroe Heights, she was often made fun of by the other children in the class because of her low scores in tests. Her mother tried for several years to make the education authorities give Christine more help, but she did not go to Monroe Heights until she was fourteen. After this her mother said that her improvement had been enormous and she regreted that Christine had not been able to go there earlier.

First interviews. 24:5:85 and 31:5:85. Parental interview 24:10:85.

i) Informal labelling. Christine told me that she was much happier at Monroe Heights than she had been at her previous school. At the High school

the other children had called her names because she wore glasses and needed help with her work, as passage 6.4 shows:

[6.4] I; What was it like at the High school?
Christine; I didn't like it, everyone kept taking the mickey out of me.
I; Why was that?
Christine; I don't know. All the teachers kept me behind ... I used to stay behind because the other ones were further on than me, plus I had no friends there.

Christine told me, however, that since leaving High school and going to Monroe Heights this name-calling had stopped. Her mother supported Christine in this.

ii) Formal labelling. Christine recognised that she went to Monroe Heights because of her educational difficulties (*internal* factors):

[6.5] I; Would you have any problems living on your own that other people wouldn't have?
Christine; I don't know about that. I'm just slow that's all.
I; In what sort of things?
Christine; Reading and writing ... I was alright in English, it was just maths that I wasn't good at.

Christine confined her difficulties to *specific* academic areas. At the same time, however, she said that if she had come to Monroe Heights sooner than she did, then she might have been able to learn more. She suggested that going to the High school contributed to her learning problems. In addition Christine said that although she was not as bright as some of the other pupils, she was nevertheless more able than others (*additional* attribution):

[6.6] I; You say that you prefer to come here rather than go to another school?
Christine; Yes.
I; Do you think that you missed out on anything by coming here?
Christine; No. I should have, But I wish I'd been eligible to come here a bit earlier on.
I; Why?
Christine; I don't know, I must admit I might have had more, been getting more, harder, faster, learning faster ...
I; You say that you are 'slow' at times, what does that mean?

> Christine; Well, I'm no as bright as others, sometimes I'm faster than others. I was too far behind in the other school, I'm getting more help here.

iii) Summary. Christine, then, agreed that she was "slow" but confined this to *specific* areas, cited the lack of assistance at her previous school and compared herself to others who she said were less able than she was. She denied that she was handicapped in any way although she recognised that there were those at the school who were.

Follow-up interviews 10:10:85 and 29:4:86.

Christine told me that although she had enjoyed some of the classes at college others had not been very good. She hoped that she would be able to find a job working with animals when she left. While she had been at college, her boyfriend who had previously been at the Royal Scottish National Hospital had had problems at his hostel and had been admitted to Bellsdyke Psychiatric hospital. This greatly affected Christine and for several months she found it difficult to concentrate or to work.

Christine's mother applied for the Severe Disablement Allowance although she said that she rejected the idea that Christine was severely disabled. Christine did not mention the SDA when I spoke to her and instead told me that she started to receive £23 per week because the "bank manager" had been changed.

Final interviews. 20:1:87 and 27:1:87. Parental interview 30:1:87.

After leaving college Christine began working with REMPLOY, the sheltered workshop company, making knitwear such as balaclavas and sweaters for the army, on a two year YTS course. She told me that she would like to carry on working at REMPLOY at the end of that period.

i) Informal labelling. Christine's mother told me that recently some children had thrown lumps of ice at Christine and had

called her names. When I interviewed Christine, however, she said that she had not been called names since she left the high school.

ii) Formal labelling. Christine told me that she went to Monroe Heights School partly because of the hostile attitudes of other children which had upset her. She recognised that she had academic problems (*internal* attribution):

[6.7] I; When you moved to Monroe Heights, was there any reason for that?
Christine; I wasn't happy up there because everybody kept annoying me.
I; Other people?
Christine; Yes, they were impatient with me ... I did go to Remedial. but they didn't help me any.
I; That was in terms of what?
Christine; That was just school, reading and writing, I was alright at writing, but the reading. It was mostly English and that, arithmetic.

These difficulties are confined to *specific* academic subjects which although they generally do not concern her as much in her current job are still apparent:

[6.8] I; You said that you went to Monroe Heights because of problems with your English, do you have problems with that anymore?
Christine; No.
I; Do you get those sorts of problems at all now?
Christine; Not really, just my arithmetic mostly.
I; When does that cause you any problems?
Christine; Fractions and things like that.
I; Do you have much of that to do now?
Christine; No, we don't have much of that.

iii) Summary. Christine said that she had not been called names because she went to Monroe Heights, although her mother said that she had been. She said that she had gone to the special school because of academic problems but confined these to certain areas.

Mary. Date of birth 1,9,69.

Mary's step-father is a car salesman, and she was the only middle-class pupil at Summerdale special unit. She lived six miles away from the school

on a private housing estate. When Mary was at primary school her parents were advised that she should go to Monroe Heights. Her mother, however, was concerned about the stigma that would be involved in attending a special school and refused to agree to this. Instead Mary stayed at Primary school and then went on to the special unit. Mary's parents paid for her to receive speech therapy.

First interviews. 2:5:85 and 9:5:85. Parental interview 21:5:85.

i) Informal labelling. Mary's mother said that her daughter had often been called names because she went to the special unit both at school and at home:

[6.9] I; What's the school like?
Mother; The school's very rough, she doesn't like it at all, Mary. She gets a lot of ridicule off the other kids in the school ... she's had an awful stigma from the kids around here as well about being at the 'spastic school' and 'mongul' and, aw the names she gets called, it's really sad. And kids round the school as well call her names and harass them, her class ... the likes of the boys and other girls round here, they can be quite nasty and say that she goes to a spastic school, really nasty things they say. [6.9a] But she gets hurt, really does get hurt, she tries to kid on that it doesn't matter to her but it does.

Mary, however, told me that she has not been called names and while she agreed that one of the boys in the unit had been called names, she said that this was because "Jack wears glasses and they make a fool out of him".

ii) Formal labelling. Mary recognised that the special unit was different from other parts of the school. In doing so, however, she emphasised some of the non-stigmatising aspects of the special unit and the benefits of attending the unit, such as how it had helped her to develop. For example:

[6.10] I; How about being in this unit, it's a bit different from the rest [of the school]?
Mary; Yeah, I go away at ten past three.
I; Do you mind coming here rather than to the rest of the school?
Mary; Well it learnt me how to read proper, it fixes up my English and my reading, and on a Wednesday night there's, I go to speak proper with Mrs C, I do poems with her.

Mary said that although she had areas of difficulty (*internal* attribution), coming to the unit had enabled her to improve (*unstable* attribution). Mary told me that she would prefer to be in another part of the school, the N stream with her friends, but explained that she was in the unit because "here it's OK, it can be alright in here sometimes". Mary described her problems as lying in *specific* academic areas (e.g. reading) and said that if she was to live on her own, then she would be able to cook and wash without needing any help.

iii) Summary. Mary denied that she had ever been called names although her mother indicated that this verbal abuse had sometimes been quite severe. Mary recognised that she had problems with her reading and writing, but was generally reluctant to talk about labelling. We can speculate that one of the reasons that Mary is so hurt by name calling (passage 6.9a) may be because of her inability to explain her formal labelling in terms other than that of a personal liability. If Mary was to acknowledge that she had been called names then because she was unable to explain such labelling other than in personal terms, she would also have had to recognise that others saw her learning difficulties as more extensive than she was prepared to agree to.

Follow-up interviews 24:2:86 and 10:6:86.

Mary left school in the summer of 1985 and that autumn started on the course for students with special educational needs at Blackness college. When I visited Summerdale in the November after she had left school, one of the teachers showed me a cutting from a national newspaper with Mary's photograph in it. The article concerned the difficulties that parents in Lothian had had in receiving money from the DHSS while their children attended college. Mary's mother was quoted in the paper as saying that Mary

was "definitely not mentally handicapped". When I interviewed Mary at college early the next year, she told me essentially the same thing, that she did not receive any money "because I don't have a handicap, so I don't get any money, only Lorraine [another student] gets any money, and she's handicapped".

Final interviews 17:2:87 and 19:2:87. Parental interview 18:12:86.

At the end of the course at Blackness college, Mary did not know what she would be going on to do in the future. In September however, she started a two year YTS job working at REMPLOY, the sheltered workshop.

i) Informal labelling. Whereas in the first series of interviews she said that she had not been called names, in the final interviews Mary agreed that she had been:

[6.11] I; Did you get any hassle off people for being in the Unit?
Mary; Un-huh.
I; You did, what sort of things?
Mary; Oh, they were horrible, I just ignored it, I didnae bother, I just ignored it, they got used to me being in there.

ii) Formal labelling. Mary told me that she had hated her time at school but would not say why this was, although she did say that she would have prefered to have been in a higher stream with her friends at school. I asked her why she had not been:

[6.12] I; Is there any reason why you weren't [in the higher stream]?
Mary; Because I'm slow at reading, well I'm not very good.
I; Anything else, do you have any other problems?
Mary; No, just reading, that's all ... I'm not that bad a reader.
[6.12a] I; Do you still have problems reading?
Mary; I've no been reading for a wee while, so it'll be way down again, it'll be slow.

In 6.12a Mary appeared to go further than she had been prepared to do at school. She recognised that her attendance in the unit was due to academic difficulties (*internal* attribution), and at the same time confined these difficulties to reading (*specific* attribution), saying that they do not

extend to other areas, while even within reading "I'm not that bad a reader". In 6.12a Mary linked her reading ability to the amount of practice that she had. Without practice her reading ability had deteriorated, and by implication with practice it would improve. Thus Mary's slowness is *unstable*.

iii) <u>Summary.</u> In the first series of interviews Mary did not acknowledge that she had been called names and although she did recognise that she had had problems reading, Mary said that these had been resolved by her attendance in the unit. She was rated as having a neutral view of special education and prefering to remain within the special unit than to have a more integrated education.

After she had left school Mary said that she had hated her time at school and would have preferred to have been in a different class. She distinguished between herself and another student at the college who she said was handicapped. Mary confined her difficulties to reading, and linked her abilities in reading to the amount of practice that she had. She described being slow as a specific rather than global, temporary rather than permanent, and essentially external rather than internal difficulty.

<u>Maureen.</u> Date of birth 23:9:69.

<u>First interviews</u> 24:5:85 and 31:5:85. Parental interview 28:6:85.

When she was seven Maureen had been knocked down by a car and quite badly injured. Her mother thought that this might have caused Maureen to become "not badly mentally handicapped, a bit backward, yes, but not awfully badly mentally handicapped really". The decision to send her to Monroe Heights the following year had been a very hard one for her to take:

[6.13] Mother; ... it's hard, it's awful hard to think what's the best, you just don't think when they're younger. But, I mean, at an ordinary

> school, she might have got, made her feel rotten for not being able to keep up with the class. You just don't know really. It's a hard decision to make when you're faced with it.

Maureen told me that she had not been very happy at Monroe Heights and that she was looking forward to going to college. After leaving college she would like to find a job "looking after the wee ones".

i) Informal labelling. Maureen said that she had been called names such as 'tosser' because she went to a special school. She told me that this name calling was the main reason why she did not like Monroe Heights and why she would have prefered to have gone to another school with her friends from home. Passage 6.14 illustrates this:

[6.14] I; You said before that you don't like coming to school. Why is that?
Maureen; I don't know. Because of the names they call me ... it's just because people call me names at home.
I; And it's because you come here that that happens?
Maureen; Yes.

Maureen's mother confirmed that her daughter had been called names by children near her home. According to her mother as Maureen grew older then "she's just realised what it [going to Monroe Heights] means".

ii) Formal labelling Maureen gave two explanations for going to Monroe Heights (as passage 6.15 shows). First of all she cited the childhood accident that her mother had told me about, and secondly Maureen said that she was "slow with my work" possibly as a result of the accident.

[6.15] I; Why do you think that you come here [to Monroe Heights].
Maureen; I got run over and my mum said that I couldn't keep up with the rest of the class.
I; How did that happen?
Maureen; A friend pushed me into the road.
I; And were you badly injured, how long were you in hospital for?
Maureen; I don't know, my mum tells me I was in for two weeks.
I; And because of that you came here?
Maureen; I was slow with my work as well ... I couldn't keep up with the rest of the class.

When I asked Maureen about the accident she told me that "I had stitches in my head and tummy ... They said that I had something removed, but I can't remember what". I asked Maureen where she had had something removed from and she replied "from my head". Maureen also told me that her mother "said it [the accident] affected me a wee bit". Maureen's mother, however, told me that during the operation the doctors had only removed some of her daughter's intestine. Although Maureen attributed being at Monroe Heights to *internal* factors (being slow), this slowness was in turn partly attributable to an *external* cause (an accident). Instead of being at Monroe Heights because of something that she had done or not done, she was there because of something that had happened to her. Moreover Maureen interpreted being slow in terms of working less quickly than the rest of the class, as a quantitative and not a qualitative difference. When I asked Maureen what problems this difference might cause her, she limited these difficulties to one *specific* subject area:

[6.16] I; When you leave here will you have any problems that others won't?
Maureen; Probably with spelling, I'll have to learn to spell better, I'll need to learn to spell.

iii) Summary. Maureen agreed that she had been called names because she attended Monroe Heights school. She said that there were two reasons why she went to the special school: firstly it was because she had been involved in a road accident; and secondly, at least partly because of this accident, she had been slower with her work than the rest of her class. Being slow with her work was described not as an inability to do the work, but simply as taking longer over it. Maureen said that she had specific problems with spelling and that this did not affect the rest of her life. Maureen's account of her accident seems to be an elaboration of the

explanation that her mother had given me. While there were some similarities there was also a significant difference in that in Maureen's account the focus of the damage was her head and not her stomach.

Follow-up interviews 10:10:85 and 29:4:86.

When she left school Maureen began the course for students with special educational needs at Braemar college. She said that she had enjoyed the course but that it had not been as good as she had hoped. Maureen's mother applied for the Severe Disablement Allowance while Maureen was at college, and this involved their GP confirming that Maureen was severely disabled.

Final interview. 1:12:86.

This last interview could only be carried out at Maureen's house with both Maureen and her mother present. It was impossible to question Maureen at all deeply about labelling, especially as her mother tended to answer questions for her. Since leaving college in July, Maureen had been unemployed apart from eight weeks which she had spent packing boxes in a local factory. Maureen had had two job interviews for work looking after children which is what she would ideally have liked to have done, but in both cases she had been turned because the employers felt that she was too shy. Maureen said that she would be prepared to do anything for a job now.

Maureen said that she had not liked school at all and that she would have preferred to have gone to a different school where she felt that she would have learnt more.

5) Leavers making four attributions for their formal labelling.

Gavin. Date of birth 23:10:69.

Both of Gavin's parents were unemployed. Gavin's mother said that as a young child he had been knocked down by a lorry. After this "he had awful

pains in his head" which the doctors though at first might be meningitis, but which they were later unable to explain. When he was seven Gavin went to a special education primary school, and went from there to the special unit at Summerdale. His mother described him as a "wee bit slow" and a "slow learner". At the special unit Gavin had a reputation for fighting. His parents felt that he was the victim of abuse because he went to the special unit, and that he was unfairly prevented from defending himself.

First interviews 8:10:85 and 26:11:85. Parental interview 2:12:85.

Gavin often worked at nights behind one of the cash registers in his brother's fish and chip shop. He said that when he left school he wanted a job "pressing the buttons and adding up and stacking shelves, a job without any writing to do". Gavin was eligible to leave school at Christmas 1985 but his parents decided that he should stay on until the summer of 1986, so that he would be able to go straight on to the course for special education leavers at Braemar college (see Chapter Five).

i) Informal labelling. Gavin told me that in the past he had been called names and bullied at school because of his attendance in the special unit. Now that he was older, however, he was able to talk to other pupils without being victimised.

ii) Formal labelling. Gavin provided a complicated argument to explain why he attended the special unit and it is worth examining this in some detail. First of all Gavin argued that his placement in special education and the verbal abuse that he suffered were due to forces that were beyond his control:

[6.17] I; You say that you got some hassle when you were 14 or 15 here? Was that just people taking the mick out of you? what did they do?
Gavin; All ... different things. Things they'd say, I mean inside here? that's why I left, that's why I wasn't in here, I was in the out, somewhere else.
I; Did you get into any fights?

Gavin; I kept thinking when I got home, I keep thinking, I say 'I wish I was in the likes of my pals class'. Some of my pals are in a class and me on the outside, I feel right down. [6.17a] But it's not that, it's the teachers that put you into a class, they put you into any class they want and if you get choosed a class you didnae like, you got to stay in the one you get put in.
I; Do you get anybody [who] says that 'All the people in the unit, they are all just slow or handicapped'?
Gavin; Aye. A lot of times, but I just ignore it, because I'm used to them calling me things like that.
I; Do you think anyone here is?
Gavin; I'm not really handicapped, but I'm slow with my work and things like that. But I'm not handicapped, it's just that when you're in a low class, [6.17b] it's just classes like anybody else, it's just that you cannae do the work that they folk can do. And you're getting on with the work that us, we can do but they can do the harder work. It's just that we're down the lower and they're up the higher and there's nothing to it, but they keep on calling us that because we don't do a lot of their work.

In passage 6.17 Gavin admited that he was "slow" with his work, yet he placed the responsibility for his attendance in the unit on his teachers. He cited *external* factors for his formal labelling, and yet he also associated being in the special unit with his work difficulties: if he could be transferred to another part of the school then he would be given harder work to do and "if I could get harder work to do, it would at least bring me on a bit better". However Gavin acknowledged that he was not clever enough (*internal* attribution) to be "put into the outside bit where you can get harder work" and while he tried to do so, there was a limit to what he was able to achieve. Passage 6.18 illustrates some of the ways in which Gavin saw himself both as being less able than some others, and as the victim of *external* forces:

[6.18] I; What sort of lessons do you get here?
Gavin; I'm in between, there's some easy things and some hard things. I wish I could have went to another bit of the school, but I've no got the brains for another bit of the school.
I; So you'll just stay here?
Gavin; Uh-huh. I'll just stay here. But when I go to college I hope I get taught a lot in college. I should be alright once I've left college. I hope so.
I; You say that you don't have the brains, what does that mean, in what way?

> Gavin; Er, well, I didnae ken much. I cannae read very well and I cannae do real writing, but I can do printing and I'm no a good speller. So hopefully they can teach me all that in college, they've got a computer which can teach how to spell, on the computer. That's what the computer's for, to tell you to spell and write. I hope so. That's the two most important things that I need is writing and spelling. That's all. I'm good at my sums, I'm good at maths and things like that. I'm not very good at writing.
> I; That's the only area that you have problems in?
> Gavin; Just, problems. I keep telling the teachers that I want harder writing and I want spelling and writing, but they doesnae, just gave us the same work and everything ... But I mean you never know, it might change, maybe when I leave college I maybe able to write and it's better there than here so I maybe able to get a job in the police and nobody could tell till my time's up.

While Gavin acknowledged that "I've no got the brains for another bit of the school", he did not see this as a long lasting or permanent deficit. Instead Gavin made a number of important qualifications to this initial statement. First of all he described his "lack of brains" not in terms of a general inability to learn items or to remember information but rather as a lack of knowledge in *specific* areas. Gavin minimised the areas in which he had problems: it was just in writing and spelling "that's all. I'm good at my sums. I'm good at maths and things like that". Secondly these problems could be corrected when he went to college and was able to work on the computer (*unstable* attribution).

Some of the elements of Gavin's account seem to be contradictory. Thus it does not appear to be the case that Gavin built up a story in which each element was consistent with each of the others, yet the different elements of the account may be consistent if they are examined in terms of an overall function. One function that the account may have served was to mitigate the threat to Gavin's identity created by his formal and informal labelling.

One way in which we can examine whether or not this was the actual function of the account is to examine how Gavin explained the various

inconsistencies that appeared. He began, as we have seen, by explaining that although he had difficulties, these were specific and unstable and were in part due to the lack of work that he had been given by his teachers. If Gavin had the ability to be in another class and if he wanted to leave the unit, then in addition he had to explain why he was not in a different part of the school. If he did not do so then his presence in the unit would be implicitly due to a lack of innate ability. Gavin thus had to provide a new feature to resolve what would otherwise be a contradiction in his account. This new explanation appears in passage 6.19:

[6.19] I; So what you're here ...
Gavin; I could have had a chance to go to this bit [outside the unit], but I didnae like it, aye because I've been in here for, since I came here, then if they were going to just shift us into the next class probably they would have made a fool, this was like coming here since I came to school, then going into a different class for a term, it's no very good.
I; So do you mind coming here?
Gavin; I would rather, maybe go to another school, or maybe go to another school, get on better there I think.

In passage 6.19 Gavin suggested that he did in fact have the opportunity to move to a higher class but *he* decided not to because he foresaw difficulties and because if he moved now it would only be for a term. Instead of moving to another class at Summerdale, Gavin therefore proposed another option, that he should go to another school where they would know nothing of his previous history.

Gavin, therefore, provided several arguments to reconcile the apparent discrepancy between his presence in the unit and the external, specific and unstable nature of his academic difficulties. Firstly he argued that it was the teachers who decided which classes pupils attended, a process which he had no control over (6.17a). Secondly the unit was, in fact, the <u>same</u> as any other part of the school and simply provided an appropriate level of

work. The stigma that it had acquired within the school was therefore unjustified (6.17b). Lastly Gavin said that he himself decided not to move because of the increased chances of being "made a fool" (6.15).

If Gavin had not perceived that there was a discrepancy between his attendance at the unit and his definition of being *slow*, then he could simply have argued that the unit was just like any other part of the school. Instead Gavin used two arguments which although contradictory had the purpose of justifying his attendance at the unit not in terms of an intellectual deficiency, but rather in terms of external circumstances (i.e. that he decided to stay in the unit and also that the teachers put him there). If Gavin had not produced these arguments then he would have been left with either denying that there was any essential difference between the unit and the rest of the school, or with admitting that his placement was due to an intellectual deficiency (which if it is to be solely responsible for his placement must be greater than he was willing to admit). We can therefore take the appearance of these two arguments as confirming our original hypothesis about the function of the account as a whole, namely that they serve to limit the extent to which he is responsible for his presence in the unit.

iii) Summary. Gavin said that he was slow but not handicapped, that he had been called names and that although he liked the unit, he wished that he was either in another part of the school or in another school entirely. He went on to use a number of arguments which acted as qualifications to the above points; while he accepted that he was slow, he limited this to a few specific difficulties which were temporary, and partly the result of poor teaching.

Gavin said his attendance at the special unit had lead to informal labelling, and he related his presence in the unit to a number of factors over and above his slowness: for instance he said that he had decided that being at the unit was the best thing for him, while elsewhere he said that being at the unit was also beyond his control. I have argued that although elements of this account are contradictory they served the purpose for Gavin of limiting the extent of his personal liability for the threatening position which he is in. His presence in the unit is instead forced upon him by external circumstances whether he made the ultimate decision or not.

Follow-up interview 27:5:86.

Although Gavin was eligible to leave school at Christmas 1986 he stayed on until the summer. Gavin complained that he had not found his last six months at school very worthwhile as he had not been given hard enough work to do. He had also been in trouble for hitting another pupil who had called him names. Gavin was looking forward to going to college as he believed that he would be able to make friends from all over the college, be able to go to the pub at lunch time and to be entitled to hit back if he was bullied.

Final interviews 4:12:86 and 11:12:86. Parental interview 17:12:86.

Gavin attended a pre-YTS course at Braemar college. He told me that he did not like coming to college partly because of the amount of time that he had to spend travelling (an hour each way) and also because of the little money that he had left after he had given some to his mother, and spent £3 on travelling.

1) Informal labelling. Just as he had done when he was at school, Gavin agreed that he had been called names and attributed this to his attendance at the special unit.

ii) Formal labelling. Gavin said that he should never have been in the special unit and that it had been the teacher's fault that he was placed there. He told me that he would have prefered to have been, and should have been in another part of the school:

[6.20] I; Looking back - would you have preferred to have been in a different part of the school? Or were you glad that you were in the unit?
Gavin; Well I would rather have been in another bit of the school, instead of in the unit, but I should have been, actually in another bit of the school 'cos there was nothing wrong with me, they that were in the unit were kind of backwards or whatever. So I was at a special school before I came to Summerdale and that school brought us on great; I could read, I could write and I could spell there, no bother. But now, at the special school at Summerdale it brought us back a bit, so my mum says "phone up Mr F" [the rector] and asked if I could get into the normal bit, and he says "No". So I should have been in it. I should have had a wee meeting ((a wee vote or something)) because I was alright. I was pefectly alright, there was nothing wrong with me ... It wasnae my fault in the unit, it was the teacher's fault I was put in the unit.
I; What, why was it their fault?
Gavin; Well they should have brought us up, and I mean before I went to Summerdale school, they should have brought us and I should have had a wee test to see what I was like.
I; What, before you went to the unit?
Gavin; Aye, I should have had a wee test, and I never had nothing like that, they just shoved me right in the unit, so it's their fault I got put in the unit without a test.

There are a number of important differences between this account and that produced in the first series of interviews. Now that he was at college Gavin said that he was "alright ... perfectly alright, there was nothing wrong with me" and that he should never have been placed in the unit. The others in the unit, however were "backwards or whatever". Gavin said that his initial placement in the unit was made by the teachers and was completely wrong, he should have been placed in the "normal" bit of the school instead. He introduced a new element into his account by claiming that he should have been given a test and that the teachers were wrong to

have kept him in the unit. This, of course, begs the question of why he was ever placed in the unit, which is addressed in passage 6.21:

[6.21] I; Why were you in the unit in the first place?
Gavin; Because I was at a special school before I came here, so they shoved me in there, I should never have went in there. It was made again.
[6.21a] I; Why were you at a special school, then? Was there any reason for that?
Gavin; Well I was at St Mongo's once and, er, I got run down. I think it was a lorry and it never stopped and it just ran me right down. And it was a hair's breadth away from the hearing. So I was in hospital for about three weeks, then I came back out and I came to be a wee bit backward and I went to, ken, St Patrick's School, I went to that school, and that was a normal school. But then they said that I was too slow, because of the work, not doing, ken the work and I was a wee bit slow with my writing and that. [6.21b] So they none of them had any patience, so they sent me to Davies House and that's the special school, at Davies House. And they brought us on quite well, they had patience, they had time and patience so they brought us on great. Then I went to Summerdale and I should have been put in the normal bit of Summerdale instead of the special unit, but I wasnae. So I blame Mr F for that, but then he's a good teacher, I like Mr F but he shouldnae have put us in the special unit, he should have put me into the normal bit.

Although Gavin said that he had been backwards (*internal* attribution), this was again limited to *specific* areas. For instance Gavin told me that "even the teachers would say I'm a hard worker, I concentrate, I take my time, watch what I'm doing, and see if I make any mistakes". Being backward was also attributed to two *external* factors: a road accident [6.32a]; and poor teaching [6.21b]. Later Gavin said that one teacher in particular "made me go backwards" because "she does all your work for you". Being backward was dependent upon the quality of teaching that he was given and was therefore temporary, or *unstable*.

iii) Summary. As in the first series of interviews Gavin represented himself as the passive victim of circumstances and the errors of others. First of all there was an accident which injured his head and which caused him to miss several weeks of schooling. When he returned to school he was

"a wee bit backward". The teachers then said that he was "too slow" and sent him to Davies House because "none of them had any patience". Finally the teachers at Summerdale were at fault for two reasons: it was their fault that he was not given a test and immediately put into another class; and one teacher in particular made him go backwards by doing his work for him. The concept of some objective measure which would somehow reveal the *real* Gavin reinforces an interpretation of Gavin's account which holds that he recognised that he had a learning disability, but saw this backwardness as both the product of external forces and as being temporary in nature.

Simon. Date of birth 4:2:70.

Simon was the youngest of five children all of whom lived at home. His father was a miner. Simon was partially sighted and wore extremely large and thick glasses. His difficulties in seeing were first noticed when he was four years old and Simon had been at Monroe Heights School since he was seven. Simon was given the option of leaving Monroe Heights at one point during his school career, but both he and his parents decided that he should stay on. He told me that Monroe Heights was "alright".

First interviews 29:11:85 and 3:12:85. Parental interview 3:12:85.

i) Informal labelling. Simon told me that he had never been called names at home or at school other than his nick-name of 'specky'. He had several friends who lived near him and whom he used to visit quite regularly. His father said that he had never heard of anyone verbally abusing his son.

ii) Formal labelling. Simon's attributions of the cause of his problems were dominated by his poor eyesight just as his face was almost obscured by his glasses. He attributed not only his placement at Monroe Heights to his visual difficulties, but also his problems with reading and writing. He

told me that "I was a wee bit slow with my writing because of my eyesight, I take my time, but ...". Simon agreed that he had difficulties (*internal* attribution), but limited them to *specific* areas. Passage 6.22 illustrates this:

[6.22] I; Why do you think that you come here? Did anyone ever give you a reason?
Simon; It was probably because of my eyesight.
I; Were you ever slow at all?
Simon; Not really, it was just my eyesight kept me back a wee bit.
I; How was that?
Simon; Well my writing and that, seeing for reading and that.
I; How's it been since you got the glasses, has that helped?
Simon; No, not much.
I; What sort of things do you have problems with?
Simon; Stuff on the board and wee small writing and stuff like that.

Simon produced a contradictory argument to explain his present difficulties. He said that he still had many problems, for instance identifying buses and reading timetables, and he felt that these were likely to continue (*Stable* attribution), while he felt that other areas would be easier when he left school. For instance reading would be easier because he would be able to hold writing close to his face rather than trying to read it from the blackboard as he had to do at school.

iii) Summary. Simon said that he had not been called names because he went to Monroe Heights school and his parents agreed with this. He told me that he was slow but that this was only because of his poor eyesight, which was also the reason that he had gone to Monroe Heights. Simon said that he only had difficulties in certain areas and that although some things would improve when he left school, other difficulties would remain.

Follow-up interviews 24:2:86 and 28:5:86.

Simon left school and started work on a two year Youth Training Scheme. This involved spending two days at Blackness College and working for three other days with the Council Cleansing Department collecting household

rubbish. Simon told me that he was glad to have left Monroe Heights, but that he did not care much for going to college. The lecturers at college felt that he used his poor eyesight as an excuse for not doing any work, and they wondered whether he was as able as they had been lead to believe.

During the course of these follow-up interviews it became apparent that as increasing demands were made of Simon by the lecturers, so he became more reluctant to attend college and more hostile towards those whom he identified with school, including myself. Over the summer Simon's father arranged for him to work full-time with the Cleansing Department and at this point I decided to end my contact with Simon. He had made it clear during the follow-up interviews that he still attributed all his academic and educational difficulties to his poor eyesight, and I felt that a final interview would not produce any new material and would undoubtedly upset Simon.

Steve. Date of birth 5:10:69.

Steve first went to Monroe Heights school when he was nine years old. Before this he had attended a local primary school where he had had to repeat his Primary 2 year. After a few weeks in P3, his parents told me that they had received a letter asking them to see his headmaster who said that Steve should go to Monroe Heights school.

First interviews 8:11:85 and 29:11:85. Parental interview 18:11:85.

1) Informal labelling. Steve told me that when he was at primary school he used to have a lot of friends but that he lost these after he started to attend Monroe Heights. When he went to Monroe Heights "somebody found out what school I was at and they went and telled everybody else, and everybody else just insults me now". Steve described one incident:

[6.23] I What about back at home, do people give you any hassle at home?
Steve; Nah, except for gangs, but that's about it and they don't bother me.
I; What sort of things do they do?
Steve; Oh they just call me names, ken about the school and all that. And one of them scraped a name onto the, one of the lock-up doors, but we dinae ken what it reads, we cannae even understand it, their writing's just appalling, we cannae even understand it. They've writen something about the school but they've spelt it wrong, they've spelt it "M-U-N-R-E-V" and it's not spelt like that. Their spelling's bad, so I've had to find out the person who's not very good with their spelling.

During the second of these initial interviews, Steve told me more about this incident:

[6.24] I; Do you have quite a few friends at home?
Steve; Not a lot, because after my ((I quitted the war)) half of them don't come round to play any more, so I just sit in the house and play with the computer.
I; So why don't people come round to play any more?
Steve; Oh I don't know. It's coe I quitted the school and that ken, they dinnae play with me 'coe they insult me and that, and I found out who done the inscribing on the wall, it was one of my mates, who was down the stairs done it, and they telled me that they cannae even spell it or nothing, he cannae even spell my name or that ... he cannae even spell the school or that "M-U-N-R-E-V", what's that supposed to spell?

In addition to incidents such as these Steve said that some people made funny noises at him and did "things with their hands that are no really nice".

ii) Formal labelling. Steve said that he would greatly have preferred to have gone to a different school to Monroe Heights. Steve produced four different explanations for his being at Monroe Heights. First of all Steve said that he was placed at Monroe Heights because he was slow with his work (*internal* factors): although at his previous school he could still do the work, it took him longer to complete it than it did the other pupils. Although Steve agreed that he had problems with his work, he did not feel that these were sufficient for him to have been sent to Monroe Heights. Passage 6.25 illustrates this:

[6.25] I; What was the reason for the move [from primary to special school]?
Steve; The reason was because I was slow with my writing, the teacher just couldn't keep up with me and he thought I was too slow. Ken everybody else got finished by 3.00, but I never got finished till about 4.00.
I; Did you like coming here, did you mind coming here?
Steve; I felt like coming to the Murray, because the Murray do things like that for slow writers, ken I never thought why they put me here the first time. If I was slow writing, they could have put me at the Murray but I wasnae old enough then to get put to the Murray.

Steve said that since he has been at Monroe Heights his problem was not that he was too slow with his work, but that he was "too quick, they're saying that I'm too quick with my writing the noo, that I need to slow down and make it neater".

The second explanation that Steve gave was that he had developed difficulties with his work partly because of an accident with his bike (*external* attribution). Moreover since he had been at Monroe Heights he had not been given hard enough work to do. His difficulties had been imposed on him, and were not of his making. These themes are clearly shown in Passage 6.26:

[6.26] I; What about the school itself, your primary school?
Steve; Aye, it was OK, the work that they gave was OK and that, geography and that. We don't get that anymore, we used to with Mr E doing geography, but he's given it up for some reason, 'cos he's head teacher or something, assistant head teacher.
I; Do you prefer the work there to here?
Steve; Aye, I prefer the work there, because I'm no getting enough education here as I was at the Grange. Because I was pretty brainy when I was at the Grange, but when I came here I started no listening and getting, my brain started to wack.
I; Why was that?
Steve; It was just an accident that I had, I was playing with my brother and he fell off his bike, and I was meant to catch it, and it hit my chest and I tumbled backwards and I broke my arm, that one, and I had stitches in there. The bone went right up to my hand, ken it never came through my hand so they had to move it right down ... I was in hospital for quite a while and I thought I had something wrong with me, but they no telled me about that. They've telled me that there is something wrong with me but they're no telling.

Thirdly, Steve limited the extent to which he was slow to *specific* areas. He told me that he was good at catering and with his hands, it was just maths and geography that he was not so good at. Finally, Steve said that when he leaves school and moves out of the area then he would not have any problems (*unstable* attribution). Nobody would know which school he had been to and he would be able to make friends, go on a catering course and eventually find a job.

iii) Summary. Some elements of Steve's account were contradictory, for instance that the school had made him worse because they did not give him enough work, but also that his writing was better then than it had been before. However the main thrust of Steve's account was to reject the insults and names that his former friends used against him. Steve said that this victimisation occured because he went to Monroe Heights, which was because he was "slow". Being slow was in turn attributed to external factors such as the lack of work that he had been given at Monroe Heights, and limited to specific areas. Steve also said that he should never really have gone to Monroe Heights at all and that when he left he would not have any problems.

Passage 6.27 shows that although Steve recognised that he had difficulties with his work, he nevertheless rejected a global definition of these difficulties and instead asserted a much more positive view.

[6.27] I; Do you think that it's [the names others call him] true at all?
Steve; I think half the names that they come out with are true but I dinae really like it, I dinae really like them saying things like that.
I; Do you feel ...
Steve; Left out?
I; Yes.
Steve; No I never feel left out. Ken I'm backward in my work, I can see that. But in everything else, I'm just not left out.

Chapter Six: Ipsative Study.

Six weeks after leaving school at Christmas 1985, Steve and his parents moved to England in search of employment. I was therefore unable to continue interviewing Steve.

6) Leavers making five attributions for their formal labelling.

Jack. Date of birth 16:11:69.

First interviews 1:10:85 and 8:11:85. Parental interview 15:1:86.

Jack's mother and step-father were unemployed and both his brother and one of his older sisters had been to the special unit at Summerdale. When Jack moved to Summerdale from primary school he was placed in the X stream (i.e. the special unit), but was later moved to the G or remedial stream only to be returned to the unit as his work fell away and his attendance record and his behaviour worsened. Jack's mother told me that she had had to struggle to have him readmitted to the unit, but that as soon as this happened his grades shot up again and he enjoyed himself more.

Although Jack lived only 100 yards away from both Jim and Gavin he was not particularly friendly with either of them. Jack's friends at school were generally much younger than he was. He told me that he often went for long walks or bicycle rides on his own "to keep out of trouble", and that he had recently taken up stamp collecting and had joined the Sea Cadets.

i) Informal labelling. Jack said that he had often been called names such as "mongol" and "tink" by other teenagers, and that he had been "battered" (beaten up) several times both at school and near his home:

[6.28] I; Do you get any hassle from people where you live?
Jack; Aye.
I; What sort of thing?
Jack; Ken, just about the same as what you get in the school. Usually if you're walking down the bottom of the road they call you names and everything.
I; Is that for any reason?

Jack; When I was wee I was getting battered, I couldnae go out without getting battered, that's why I didnae, I usually kind of (( )) but I never, maybe I was doing it but I was never in it 'cos every time I go out I get to stay out there, I was trying to get away from it. Ken people used to batter me and that.
I; To beat you up?
Jack; Yes, so if I was leaving home I wouldnae like to stay in Scotland. I'd just like to get away.

Jack told me that the reason that he was called names and "battered" was "probably because I need help with my work".

ii) Formal labelling. The victimisation that has been described above was one of the reasons that Jack said that he was in the unit, as passage 6.29 shows:

[6.29] I; And you don't find any problems with the work?
Jack; No. When I was in the other classes, I just got made a fool out of every time. And I just walked out every time, I just couldn't take it. So they put me back down in here.
I; Was that the other people in the class?
Jack; Uh-huh.
I; So, why do you think that you're in the unit?
[6.29a] Jack; Well it was probably for my own good. Ken in case anything did happen.
I; What sort of things might happen?
Jack; Well, ken maybe I wouldnae come back to school because I wouldnae have had, kept going.

Jack attributed his attendance at the unit to the hostile attitudes of others which meant that the decision for him to return to the unit was taken by others "probably for my own good" (6.29a). If he had not been moved then he might have walked out of the school. Moreover Jack also acknowledged that one reason he was in the unit was "probably because I need help with my work". Jack therefore attributed his attendance at the unit to both *external* factors and his own particular problems with his work (*internal* attribution).

Jack defined the extent of his work difficulties by emphasising his abilities in some areas while recognising difficulties in *specific* subjects. He emphasised that he had a good memory, and that he was quite

good at some subjects, indeed he said that he was the best reader in his class. Jack emphasised that his academic difficulties were limited and by doing so provided an *additional* attribution as he compared himself to others in the class who were not as good as he was. Even though these others pupils were "slow", they were still able to "catch up" with the work:

[6.30] I; Do you think that there is anybody in this unit who is slow or handicapped?
Jack; Well there's quite a lot of folk that's pretty slow but still at the same time they're able to catch up.
I; Do you have any problems yourself?
Jack; Well I did have. But I'm the best reader in my class now. I'm pretty fast with my work. Ken I wouldnae like to go into the bigger class because it's good down here ... I'm the fastest in my class at writing, ken I can spell good and that and I'm a good writer, I don't need help with everything.

Jack confined his difficulties to academic areas and emphasised the role of other people in creating his difficulties. He was able to prosper in the special unit, but when he went to the G stream he was bullied and victimised. Jack maintained that when he left school he would have no problems in finding or keeping a job, and that his problems with his work were purely temporary (*unstable* attribution).

iii) Summary. Jack did not adopt the attitudes of those in the school who called him a "mongol" or a "tink". Instead he compared himself favourably with other pupils in the unit, emphasised the positive aspects of his work and limited his academic difficulties to certain areas while excluding others. Jack said that he was placed in the unit for external reasons ("for my own good") and because he needed help with some aspects of his work. Jack was therefore able to acknowledge the significance of his placement in the unit and the fact that he was called names and bullied by others, but without adopting a negative view of himself.

Follow-up interviews 21:4:86 and 18:7:86.

Before leaving school at Christmas 1985 Jack spent two weeks stacking shelves at a local supermarket on a Work Introductory Course. The supermarket told him that they were impressed with his work and offered him a full-time job which he accepted after leaving school at Christmas. In January the store reduced Jack to a part-time basis and then decided to make him completely redundant. Shortly before he was due to finish, however, Jack applied for and was given a job collecting the trolleys from the carpark. As the supermarket was both large and popular, and because the carpark was badly laid out and the number of trolleys was limited, this could be quite a difficult job, especially if the weather was bad.

Final interviews. 14:11:86 and 21:11:86. Parental interview 22:11:86.

Jack was still working at the supermarket collecting trolleys. He told me that he felt that the management would keep him in that job rather than move him into the store as nobody else would do it.

i) Informal labelling. Jack had been called names both at his work and at his home by people who knew that he had been at the special unit. His brother, David, who was also at the unit used to have the same problem, but he was a good fighter "so he just showed them and he just battered them all" and now "he doesn't get any trouble". Jack however did not like to fight and was still called names. When this happened he said "I just don't get bothered with them. I can't be bothered with them anymore".

ii) Formal labelling. I again asked Jack why he had been placed in the special unit. Jack said that it was simply because he had been called names in the 'G' stream:

[6.31] I; Why did you get put into the unit?
Jack; Well I suppose they said that it suited me, ken, a lot of folk was battering me in the classes, ken the upper classes, and I just went away home.

I; Why were they battering you?
Jack; They just didn't like me.
I; So they just said that it was to stop you getting battered and going home?
Jack; I suppose it was to stop me getting battered and that.
I; Were there any other reasons?
Jack; No.
I; What was it like in the Unit?
Jack; I liked it there quite a lot, I mean I got on with everybody in there, when I was in the other class I didn't get on with anybody.

In this account Jack explained his presence in the unit as due to his victimisation by other pupils (*external* attribution), which was because "they just didn't like me" and not because Jack had problems with his work. Although Jack acknowledged that he had experienced difficulties these were explained in terms of the teachers failing to give him hard enough work to do. For instance Jack complained that lessons were suspended because the class was allowed to watch the World Cup qualifying match between Scotland and Australia ("I mean that wasn't teaching us nothing"). Thus those problems with work that existed were said to have been caused by his presence in the unit rather than having contributed to his placement. In these final interviews Jack emphasised that the work was often too easy for him and that if he had been given hard enough work, then he would have made more progress:

[6.32] I; What about the lessons, what were they like?
Jack; Well a lot of the work was easy, but, well it was alright.
I; Were they too easy for you?
Jack; Well sometimes it was awful easy.
I; And sometimes it was too difficult?
Jack; No, I wouldn't say that any of it was difficult, ken, sometimes I'd have a wee bit of a problem or that, but at other times it was real easy.

iii) Summary. The accounts that Jack gave changed in several ways. While he was at school he said that he was called names because he needed help with his work; in the final interviews, however, Jack said that the name-calling took place because people knew that he had been at the unit and because

they did not like him. Similarly in the first interviews Jack linked his attendance at the unit with his work problems. A year later these difficulties were not mentioned except as the consequences of his presence at the unit, for instance as due to a lack of hard work at school.

6.4 DISCUSSION.

6.4.1 Representativeness.

The ipsative-normative design of this study enables us to examine the extent to which participants in the longitudinal study are representative of a wider sample of special education leavers. Two points should be remembered when comparing the two studies, however:

i) The normative study collected information from eighty leavers out of a total population of 105 non-physically handicapped school leavers from a special school and a special unit between the 1st May 1982 and the 31st December 1985. The normative study thus includes information from 10 of the 11 leavers interviewed in the ipsative study (I had lost contact with Steve before 31st March, 1986), as well as the five former pupils of Monroe Heights who were involved in the pilot study. And

ii) For the sake of standardization, Tables 5.6 and 5.7 in the normative study represent the employment status of leavers on the 31st March 1986. By contrast, the ipsative study continued until the end of 1986. Thus the employment status of ipsative study leavers in their last interviews does not necessarily correspond with the normative study.

Participants in the ipsative and normative studies can be compared on at least three issues: reporting of informal labelling; opinions of special education; and employment status.

Chapter Six: Ipsative Study.

1) Informal labelling. We saw in Chapter Five that there was evidence that at least thirty-five (58 per cent) of the 60 leavers in the normative study on whom it was possible to gather information had been informally labelled. These sixty leavers included the eleven ipsative study leavers, of whom ten (90.1 per cent) leavers were called names because they went to a special school or unit.

This large difference between the leavers from normative and ipsative studies may well have been due to two factors: first of all, I was generally able to establish a good relationship with the leavers from the ipsative study with whom I spent a great deal of time, while I met many of the other leavers and their parents in the normative study on only one, or perhaps two, occasions. Secondly, as we saw in the pilot study, many ATC trainees found it difficult to tell me that they had been called names, while only three special education pupils were contradicted by their parents during the course of the study.

2) Opinions of special education. In the normative interviews, 42 per cent of the 33 leavers who were interviewed were rated as having a positive opinion of special education, the same number were rated as having neutral or mixed views, while 15 per cent were rated as having a negative view of special education. The 11 leavers from the ipsative study had very similar views. Five of the eleven leavers (45.45 per cent) were rated as having positive view, four (36.36 per cent) as having neutral or mixed views and two (18.18 per cent) as having negative view of special education.

There was similar agreement between the attitudes of the leavers from the normative and ipsative study towards special and ordinary education. Twenty one of the leavers from the normative study (63.6 per cent) would have preferred to have gone to a mainstream school compared to six (54.54 per

cent) of the leavers from the ipsative study. Both of these results are slightly confounded by the fact that the eleven leavers from the ipsative study comprised one-third of the participants in the normative study.

3) Employment status. By comparison with the participants in the normative study, the leavers in the ipsative study went on to work in more integrated work environments. I will compare the two studies on the basis of the segregated, partially segregated and integrated categorisation described in section 5.3.1.

i) Segregated working environments. Fourteen of the 80 leavers (17.5 per cent) contacted during the normative study had spent at least one month as trainees in an Adult Training Centre while only Rob of the ipsative study leavers went on to an Adult Training Centre. The pilot study which was carried out in ATCs, however, and which gave me access to all Monroe Heights and Summerdale leavers in ATCs, may have produced a slightly exagerated estimation of the number of leavers in ATCs. In addition, the pilot study provides us with longitudinal information concerning five former Monroe Heights pupils who went on to an ATC, although it does not give us any information on their attitudes towards labelling and special education while they were at school.

None of the leavers in the ipsative study received the Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) while they were unemployed or lived in a community, while six normative study leavers received SDA and two lived in a community.

ii) Partially segregated working environments. Twenty eight participants in the normative study (35 per cent) attended a college course for people with special educational needs after leaving school. In addition, Phil and Gavin from the ipsative study began college courses in September 1986 and were therefore not recorded as being on a college course in the normative

study. Eight of the eleven ipsative study leavers (73 per cent) attended a college course. One of the reasons for the discrepancy between the two studies may have been that the course run by Blackness College, and which was attended by Jim and by Mary in the ipsative study, started in September 1985. Before this, the majority of Summerdale special unit leavers had had to make a forty mile round trip to Blackness College if they had wanted to experience further education.

Two leavers from the normative study (2.5 per cent) worked for REMPLOY on the 31st March 1986 although both Mary and Christine from the ipsative study went on from the college courses that they were attending at the end of March to work for REMPLOY.

iii) Integrated working environments. Exactly half of the normative study leavers had experienced at least one month 'on the bru'. By contrast only one (Maureen) of the eleven ipsative study leavers had had any experience of unemployment by the time my contact with them ceased. This is partly explained by the fact that the ipsative study leavers had all left school less than two years before the end of the ipsative study, while the effects of unemployment were most keenly felt by teenagers who had left school more than two years before. Thus of the forty leavers in the normative study who had been unemployed, the majority (67.5 per cent) had left school over two years before, even though only 42 (52.5 per cent) of the 80 leavers on whom information was collected in the normative study had left school over two years before.

Twenty-seven (33.75 per cent) of the 80 leavers in the normative study had worked in the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), or its previous incarnation of the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP). Ten leavers (12.5 per cent) had worked in other government funded schemes, such as the Community Industry

Scheme. At least four (36.3 per cent) of the eleven leavers in the ipsative study that I followed had worked on a YTS placement. In addition two leavers, Christine and Mary, worked on YTS placements with REMPLOY. Because of the time difference between the two studies described above, none of these six YTS placements were included in the normative study.

One of the most disappointing, although not the most surprising, result to have come from the normative study, was that so few leavers managed to find any work in open employment. Only nine (11.25 per cent) of the 80 leavers in the normative study had had any experience of open employment, including work in temporary or seasonal employment, or in two cases with their fathers. Similarly, by the end of the ipsative study, only Jack had worked in open employment although he is still, almost three years after leaving school, with the same company.

6.4.2 Leavers' explanations for their labelling.

As we saw above, seven of the leavers who were interviewed in the ipsative study said that they had been called names on at least one occasion because they had attended a special school or unit. The parents of two leavers reported that their daughters had been informally labelled even though both Linda and Mary said that they had not been called names. Simon and Christine's parents initially agreed with their children that they had not been informally labelled, although Christine's mother said that she had been informally labelled in the final interview. We have also seen above that only one of the eleven leavers was unable to provide an explanation to account for their formal labelling, and that all of these ten leavers recognised that their own difficulties had in some way contributed to their placement in special education. This did not mean, however, that these

leavers had a negative opinion of themselves. Thus eight leavers confined their difficulties to specific areas, five stated that they saw their difficulties as only temporary and four participants blamed external factors for their placements.

At the end of the pilot study (section 4.6.4) I suggested that if leavers actively interpreted the reasons for their labelling, then we would expect to see changes in the accounts of leavers before and after they left school. Yet a comparison of Table 6.7 and 6.8 shows that of the six leavers with whom it was possible to carry out a final interview, only one leaver (Jack) showed any major changes in attributional style, while the attributions that four leavers made did not change at all. However, when we examine the case studies, we can see that the accounts of these leavers changed dramatically. I will illustrate this change in the leavers accounts with reference to three leavers, Jack, Mary and Gavin.

Jack. In the first interviews Jack was rated as using five different attributions to explain his presence in the special unit. Yet in the final interview he was rated as using only one attribution. One reason for these changes may be that Jack was able to find a job even before he left school and, that although this job was not without its difficulties, he was able to remain in employment for the duration of the study. Jack thus had no need to acknowldge his attendance at the unit other than in the least demeaning or threatening terms. In the final interview he represented his presence in the unit solely in terms of external factors. Jack told me that he was in the unit because he would be beaten up otherwise, while being there meant that he was not given hard enough work to do. His full-time job validated his claim that his difficulties had been the fault of other people or as a result of his circumstances.

Mary. In the first interviews Mary said that she had never been called names, although her mother graphically described several instances of such name calling and Mary was later to say in her final interview that she had been called names. In the final interviews Mary also said that she had hated her time at school, whereas in the first interiews she had been rated as having a neutral attitude towards school. The changes in Mary's account indicate that she actively interpreted why she had been formally and informally labelled. For instance, the change in her attitude towards the special unit appears to be connected with having left school. If in the first interview Mary had said, as she did in the final interview, that she hated the unit and would have preferred to be elsewhere, then she would have had to explain both why she hated the unit and why she was not in another part of the school. If Mary had been forced to address these issues, then she would also have had to recognise that she had been called names and to have discussed the reasons for her attendance in the unit, both of which she was unwilling to do.

Once Mary had left the unit she was able to recognise that she had been informally labelled and that at least partly because of this she hated the unit. One reason that this labelling did not concern her to the extent that it had done before, may have been because she had left the special unit, found a job and consequently had new friends and new interests.

Gavin. In the first series of interviews the attributions that Gavin used presented him with a dilemma; on the one hand he claimed that he was not handicapped, although he admitted he was slow in certain areas and that this slowness was in part a product of poor teaching. At the same time, however, he still had to explain his presence in the unit. He resolved this by saying both that he had decided to stay on in the unit and that pupils

had to stay where they were put by teachers. In addition he minimised the differences between people in the unit and those in other parts of the school.

In the final interviews Gavin resolved some of the previous inconsistencies in his account by om itting certain elements (e.g. that he had decided not to move into the G stream) and by introducing two new factors (i.e. the claims that he should have been tested, and that the origins of his problem lay in a childhood accident). This had the effect of emphasising the external and unstable nature of his difficulties.

Gavin had been unable to produce such attributions on their own when he was still at the unit because if the teachers had moved him he might have failed and had to return to the unit. Once he had left school this risk no longer applied. Instead Gavin asserted that he had always been 'perfectly alright', that his attendance at the unit was due to the failure of the teachers to give him a test, and that his continued presence at the unit had been due to poor teaching methods. Gavin did not use his previous argument that he had decided not to move up to another class perhaps because this would now be wholly incompatible with his assertion that the teachers would not allow him to sit a test to do so.

There are at least two reasons for this discrepancy between the attributional analysis and the case studies, in which the former indicates very little change in explanations while the latter shows that the accounts that leavers produced changed rapidly. First of all, the attributional analysis was not sensitive enough to be able to respond to the subtle changes that occured in participants accounts. This lack of sensitivity is particularly clear in the accounts of Gavin, where the external

attributions that Gavin used in the first interview served a completely different function to the external attributions that he used in his final interviews. Secondly, all the leavers (except for Jack) were unable to enter an integrated working environment upon leaving school, and were thus unable to fully complete the transition from school to working life that had been expected.

6.4.3 Summary.

The ipsative-normative design of this study facilitated a comparison between the broad spread of the survey carried out in the normative study and the more detailed examination of individual participants in the ipsative study. When comparing the two studies, however, it must be remembered that information from 10 of the leavers in the ipsative study was included in the normative study, and that the ipsative study continued until the end of 1986 while the normative study produced a one-off picture of leavers' employment status on the 31st March 1986. Allowing for these and other important differences in the sampling techniques that were used by the two studies, the results that they are gained are largely similar.

By comparison with the participants in the normative study, more of the leavers interviewed in the ipsative study had been the subject of informal labelling (58 per cent of normative study leavers compared to 90 per cent of ipsative study leavers). Leavers in both studies had similar opinions of special education (e.g. 45 per cent of ipsative study leavers were rated as having a positive view of special education compared to 42 per cent of leavers in the normative study) and similar preferences towards an integrated education (64 per cent of normative study leavers would have

prefered to have gone to a mainstream school compared to 55 per cent of leavers in the ipsative study).

Proportionately more of the leavers in the ipsative study, compared to the normative study, went on to a college course or to work for REMPLOY, while fewer leavers in the ipsative study went to Adult Training Centres or lived at home and claimed the Severe Disablement Allowance. Although half of the leavers in the normative study had experienced at least a month of unemployment, only Maureen from the ipsative study was unemployed during the course of the study. Both the ipsative and the normative studies showed that it was very difficult to find and then to keep hold of a job. Apart from the two leavers who worked with their fathers, only seven leavers in the normative study had had any experience of work in open employment (e.g. not on a Youth Training Scheme) and only two leavers were still working at the time of the normative study.

Although ten of the eleven participants in the ipsative study had been exposed to informal labelling, only Rob described himself as handicapped (and it is unclear to what extent Rob was merely repeating back what others had told him). Instead, the explanations that leavers gave represented active interpretations of the reasons for their placements. For instance, leavers recognised that they had difficulties in certain areas but limited the extent of these difficulties and often blamed them on external factors.

The attributional analysis showed that of the six leavers with whom it was possible to carry out a final interview, only Jack and Christine made any changes to the attributions that they used to explain labelling. However, the more detailed examination of participants accounts that was possible through the use of case studies, showed that there were more subtle changes in the explanations of all the leavers. The changes in

participants's accounts between their first and final interviews reflected the changes in the leavers's circumstances. Thus, Jack was the only leaver in the ipsative study to move from the segregated environment of a special unit to the integrated environment of open employment and his account changed dramatically. Although Jack's accounts showed the most dramatic changes, the explanations that other participants used also changed. For instance, while the attributional analysis indicated that Gavin's account did not change, the case study showed that the function of some of the attributions that Gavin made had indeed altered.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

7.1 Evidence for active interpretations of labelling.

The main aim of this study was to examine the explanations that special education leavers gave for their formal and informal labelling. To this end, the thesis was divided into three parts: a pilot study; a normative study, or first part of the main study; and an ipsative study, or second part of the main study. Throughout this thesis I have suggested that special education leavers actively interpreted the reasons for their labelling. We are now in a position to examine the evidence that supports this suggestion. This evidence can be summarised as falling into four main points.

7.1.1 Exposure to negative social attitudes.

We saw in Chapter Five that at least 58 per cent of the sixty leavers that it was possible to gather information on, had been the victims of at least one incident of informal labelling. Because the production of this figure relied not upon observation but upon parents and leavers reporting such labelling, it is likely that this is an under-estimate of the true incidence of informal labelling. Moreover, informal labelling was not the only way that leavers could become aware either of their devalued social status or of the hostile and negaitive attitudes of other people. For instance, Aileen lived with her parents in a quiet residential area where she was never bullied or called names. When she was eight or nine she used to play with the girls next door who were about her own age. Over the last year, however, her neighbours have been friendly with Aileen's younger sister and have had nothing to do with Aileen herself. Other special school pupils and ATC trainees were reminded of their handicapped status by the

prominent signs by the front gates of Monroe Heights and two of the ATCs. These told anyone who cared to read them that they were institutions for the *mentally handicapped*. In addition some parents openly told me that their children were handicapped while others said that their son or daughter was lazy and could never do 'real' work (NB it must be noted that the majority of parents did not make such perjorative statements).

Despite the many different ways in which leavers could become aware of the negative social status of special schools and units, only 15 per cent of the 33 leavers interviewed in the normative study had wholly negative views of their special schools or units, while only 36.4 per cent would have preferred to have gone to another school. Moreover, while parental opinion should have been an important factor in the decision to send a school pupil to a special school or unit, parents were almost twice as likely as leavers to say that they would have preferred their son or daughter to have gone to a more integrated school. There was a significant difference between parents and leavers on this issue of segregation and integration.

The disparity between leavers' awareness of labelling and their comparatively positive views of special education is, at first sight, quite puzzling. Why should leavers who report that they have been informally labelled still have positive views of special education? One reason might have been that the leavers who did not report any incidents of informal labelling were more inclined to have favourable opinions of special education and to be less likely to wish to have gone to a different school than leavers who had been infomally labelled. Yet Tables 5.11 and 5.12 showed that there was no significant connection between opinions of special education and informal labelling. The absence of a spontaneous rejection of

special education by leavers who had been called *names* because of their attendance within special education indicates that leavers may well be engaged in some form of active evaluation of special education.

7.1.2 Rejection of the label of mental handicap.

Although many leavers have been exposed to the negative attitudes of others, only one (Rob) of the eleven leavers in the ipsative study and none of the pilot study trainees whom I interviewed described him- or herself as handicapped (as I described in Section 6.3.4, it is unclear to what extent Rob was merely repeating back what he had been told without fully comprehending its meaning). The majority of participants (e.g. Colin and Richard from the pilot study and Christine, Mary and Gavin from the ipsative study) vehemently denied that they were in any way handicapped. Similarly none of the leavers that I interviewed described themselves as having a global deficit or even one which affected a large part of their lives. Instead, as we have seen in Chapters Four and Six, leavers produced a variety of descriptions of themselves. Some leavers, for instance, described themselves as slow while others attributed their labelling purely to external factors.

7.1.3 Selective interpretations of the reasons for labelling.

The explanations that leavers gave for their labelling were selective. Leavers emphasised the subjects that they were good at, limited their difficulties to specific areas and blamed these difficulties on external factors that they had no control over. The function of these explanations for leavers seems to have been that they served to highlight elements of their personal history which were less personally damaging than the

explanations that were offered to them by other people. This active and selective process can be seen even with those leavers whom Edgerton (1967) would have described as using a strategy of denial (see Section 4.6.1 for a full discussion of this point). What these individuals seemed to be aware of, but nevertheless denied, was that they realised that other people saw them as being handicapped. Although we can conclude that these leavers were, in fact, aware of their negative social status and of the hostile views of others, we cannot conclude that these participants had accepted these views as being justified.

7.1.4 Longitudinal changes.

At the start of this thesis I made it clear that one of the principle reasons for carrying out a longitudinal study was to examine the transition of special education leavers from the stigmatising environment of a special school or unit, to more integrated work settings. Unfortunately only one leaver (Jack) was able to make such a transition during the course of the ipsative study. The changes in Jack's account were dramatic, as he moved from providing five attributions for his labelling to relying on one. The changes in the accounts of the other five participants, although more subtle, were nevertheless related to the move from a special school or unit to a partially segregated college course or sheltered workshop. By contrast, the accounts of the six pilot study participants, five of whom were still at their ATCs in the final interview, changed very little over the course of the study.

One of the advantages of analysing material through case studies is that it allows a detailed description both of the differences between

individuals, and the effects of different situations and environments on a participant's account. There were notable differences between many of these accounts and in the next two sections of this chapter I will describe how the effects of labelling are mediated by both individual and situational factors.

7.2 Individual differences: what it is like to be labelled as having a mental handicap?

It is clear from this study that each participant's experiences of both formal and informal labelling was unique. While it is impossible to detail all of these individual differences, some of them can be usefully be thought of as varying along the following dimensions: the severity and origin of mental impairment; extent of physical or sensory handicap; amount of exposure to negative social attitudes; social class; and parental and family influences.

1) The severity and origin of mental impairment. At the start of this study, I decided that I would make no attempt to determine the IQ level of participants. There were essentially three reasons for this decision. First of all, the emphasis throughout this thesis has been on the social consequences of attending special education. Secondly, there has been a history of research which has shown that an IQ score may bear more relationship to an individual's educational opportunities than to that person's ability to make sense of the world (e.g. Mercer, 1971, 1973). Finally, there was a danger that by finding out a participant's IQ scores, I would be indulging in my own form of labelling. This would impede my attempts to form an empathetic relationship with the leavers and might also hinder my research by acting as a self-fulfilling hypothesis.

At the same time, however, we must recognise that the school leavers in this study varied in their ability to make sense of their surroundings. For instance, both Sharon and Rob had at one stage attended a school which was, in effect, still reserved for the out-dated category of Severely Educationally Subnormal, or ESN(S), children. Although I would not wish to suggest that either Sharon or Rob were unable to form judgements about their own position in society, we cannot avoid the possibility that both the experiences of these two leavers and their degree of mental impairment may differ from those of the majority of special education leavers in this study.

2) The extent of physical or sensory handicap. A large number of the leavers had sensory and physical handicaps. While these physical and sensory handicaps may have been underlying factors in the formal placement of some pupils, it has not been the aim of this study to determine their exact contribution. Instead, this thesis has been concerned with identifying the explanations that have been used by leavers to explain their labelling, and several leavers cited physical or sensory handicaps as contributing to their labelling. Sharon, for instance, blamed her attendance at an ATC on her slight deafness and a broken arm, while Angela said that she was slow because she was left handed.

The variations between the explanations that were used are also important. For instance, some illnesses and accidents (e.g. road accidents) were used to explain labelling while others (e.g. epilepsy) were not. One reason for these variations may have been that physical handicaps resulting from accidents could be presented as 'Acts of God' over which the leaver had no control and for which the leaver could therefore not be held responsible. Illnesses, such as meningitis and epilepsy, on the other hand,

may have been seen as more stigmatising by leavers, both because their consequences persisted and because the deficit which resulted could not necessarily be confined to certain areas. The reasons why some factors and not others are used as explanations needs further investigation.

3) The extent of informal labelling. The extent to which a special education leaver personally experiences victimisation and name-calling, will obviously affect the explanations that he or she produces to account for such labelling. Moreover, although we have seen above that almost two thirds of the leavers on whom information was gathered had experienced at least one incident of informal labelling, within this group of victimised leavers there were still quite considerable differences. Keith, for instance, was bullied and assaulted almost every day when he went to catch the bus to school, while Warren's mother told me that her son sometimes used to come home covered in spittle after he had been spat upon by some of her neighbours. Keith and Warren's experiences of informal labelling both originated outside the home and contrast with those of Colin whose step-father often told him that he was mentally handicapped.

4) Social class. Only fourteen (17.5 per cent) of the eighty special education leavers that I interviewed in this study were from Class I, II and III families (Registrar General's Social Classification). These upper and middle class parents were more likely to live in residential areas where there would be less likelihood of their children suffering sustained and prolonged harassment. In addition, these parents may have been more likely to have insisted upon alternative educational placements for their children, which partly contributed to the relatively few numbers of children from social classes I, II and III in this study. Mary's mother, for instance, refused to allow her daughter to attend Monroe Heights and as

a consequence she was able to attend a special unit at Summerdale Accademy. There may be other children whose parents similarly refused to send them to special school and who were thus not interviewed in the study.

5) Parental and family influences. Whether or not there was a class difference in family attitudes towards special education and handicap, there was certainly a wide variation between the families interviewed in this study in the ways in which they approached these issues. Colin's mother and step-father openly talked about his supposed handicap in front of him, while Aileen's father told his daughter that she had a handicap in the same way that her grandmother, who used a walking stick, had a handicap. Linda's parents, by contrast, emphasised to her throughout her school career that she was just the same as everyone else.

These variations in the way in which families approach special education have different consequences. For example, Linda's parents were horrified when they were told that if she was to receive any money while she went to college, then they would have to ask their GP to sign a form certifying that she was severely disabled so that she could receive the Severe Disablement Allowance. Yet several other parents were willing to find a doctor to sign this form and in the majority of cases, their children seemed to be aware of the significance of this.

7.3 Situational differences: what are the effects of the environment upon leavers?

There seem to be at least three different types of situational factors that influenced the explanations that leavers gave for their labelling: differences within special education; differences between special education

and provision for the school leaver; and the differences between these post-school leaving experiences themselves.

1) Special schools and special units. The special unit at Summerdale was partially integrated with the main school. It might, therefore, be expected that pupils at the unit could establish and maintain friendships with pupils from other parts of the school. In practice, however, special unit pupils were subject to informal labelling both at school and at home, while special school pupils were only vicitimised at home. Thus Christine was called names at school when she worked within mainstream education, but this name calling stopped when she was placed at Monroe Heights. Similarly both Jack and Alison, who were both at Summerdale Special Unit, spent part of their school careers in the remedial class but said that they prefered to work in the unit as they were bullied less there.

2) Special education and post-school provision. As I discussed in Chapter Two, the transition from school to adult life has been represented by many writers (e.g. Goffman, 1963; May and Hughes, 1984) as a crucial period if the labelled school leaver is to be able to escape further labelling. Thus while placements within special education may be stigmatising, they are also finite and temporary. Yet while all children have to go to school, few adults work at an ATC. Attending an ATC represents a much more permanent affair and the new trainee will see many other trainees who are in their fifties and sixties with the implication that he or she, too, may stay there for that length of time.

The ipsative study showed that the explanations that leavers gave for their labelling changed as leavers moved from their schools to study on college courses, or work in sheltered workshops or in a supermarket. The most marked changes in the accounts of leavers came from Jack who was the

only leaver to be able to make a successful transition from school to a working life in open employment. The explanations provided by the other leavers in the ipsative study also changed, while those of the Adult Training Centre trainees interviewed in the pilot study, the majority of whom stayed within their ATC over the course of the study showed far fewer longitudinal variations.

3) The different threats to identity upon leaving school. Leavers experienced a wide range of stigmatising environments upon leaving school; these varied from Jack who supported his family by working in a local supermarket, to those trainees who had very little chance of leaving the ATC or ever living independently. In section 5.3.1, I distinguished between three different categories of employment on the basis of the degree of segregation of the leaver from the community. While in some ways these were arbitary distinctions, they also had an element of face validity in as much as they were the distinctions used by the careers officer who placed leavers when they left school. Moreover, attendance at a segregated environment such as an ATC is likely to be more stigmatising than working in a partially segregated sheltered workshop, which is in turn less ideal than working in open employment. Similarly, while some of the extension course students at Braemar Technical College were called names by the other students at the college, the fact that this course took place at a recognised college of Further Education meant that the implications of such name calling were very different to the implications of labelling for a trainee at an ATC. For instance while the college course lasted only one year, trainees could stay at an ATC until they were in their sixties.

Leavers' interpretations of their experiences also varied. Some leavers, for instance, recognised that REMPLOY only employed handicapped workers,

whilst others claimed that working at an ATC was just like any other job. Similarly, unemployment was a typical rather than an untypical experience for all school leavers within Central Region. As such unemployment was taken by some special education leavers to provide a measure of equality with other school leavers, even though elsewhere (e.g. Breakwell, 1986) unemployment has been taken to pose a threat to identity for mainstream school leavers.

In section 6.2.4 I described some of the possible threats to the validity of this study. These threats included that from maturation, where the observed effect might be due to the effects of processes within the participant, rather than to the treatment of research interest. Although this study does not include a control group, I noted that a comparison between the accounts of leavers at an ATC and those in more integrated environments would help us to understand whether the changes in leavers' accounts were due to specific environmental effects or to general maturational developments.. When we examine the changes that occured in the accounts of the pilot and ipsative study leavers we can see that the most dramatic changes occured in the account provided by Jack who was the only leaver to move, during the course of the study, from the segregated environment of special education to the integrated environment of open employment. By contrast (see section 4.6.2) the accounts of the trainees in the pilot study changed very little between their first and their last interviews. The five leavers in the ipsative study who moved from special schools or units to the partially segregated environments of a college course changed the reasons for labelling given in their accounts accordingly. These changes were not dramatic enough to be shown in the attributional analyses, but were clearly illustrated in the more detailed

examination provided by the case studies (see section 6.4.2). This suggests, therefore, that maturation was not a threat in this study, although it is possible that changes in leavers' accounts were specific to school leaving, rather than being tied generally to variations in their environment.

7.4 Implications.

There are, thank goodness, many transitions in the lives of individuals with a mental handicap: from a special school to an ATC or a college course; from a hospital to 'care in the community'. These transitions are increasingly bringing individuals, who perhaps even twenty years ago would have been segregated and isolated, more and more into contact with other members of the community. Yet we are still left with the paradox I described in Chapter One: namely, that while on the one hand, the identification of an individual's special needs is necessary if help is to be given to that person, on the other hand this identification itself produces the problems associated with labelling that have been described in this thesis. If integration on its own cannot eliminate the adverse effects of labelling, then it is important that we understand these effects and have some idea of how they can be lessened.

One of the criticisms that I made of many of the previous studies of labelling (see section 1.3) was that they were unable to suggest any practical ways in which the effects of having been labelled could be counteracted. Although this study has not attempted to provide an evaluative comparison of the most effective methods of coping with labelling, we can at least begin to make some educated guesses as to how

individuals could be helped to come to terms with being formally and informally labelled.

1) <u>Direct counselling of individuals who are troubled by labelling.</u> For many special education leavers there will be no need for such help, but for some, particularly those leavers who have been especially badly treated by their peers or family, there may be unanswered questions and self-doubts which will need advice and support if they are to be satisfactorily resolved. These labelled individuals may be unable to reconcile their experiences with their own feelings of self-worth. Professionals, parents or others who are interested in talking about labelling with special education leavers should be aware of the following points.

i) The labelled individual will have been told that he or she is different or mentally inferior to others people. He or she may have been called names such as *bo-bo*, *monkey* or *Benny* by other school-pupils, by adults and perhaps by his or her family. In some cases it may not be enough simply to help the leavers produce a plausible explanation, in addition he or she may need access to a trained therapist who can help to resolve any deeper, emotional conflicts.

ii) Special education leavers are generally able to produce their own explanations for labelling. It should be remembered that labelled individuals will be actively trying to resolve the conflict between their own feelings of self-worth and the attitudes of others. Simply giving the leaver these explanations will not be enough. If these explanations are to be personally meaningful for that individual, then he or she will have to develop them for him or herself. The main aim of the counsellor, therefore, should be to support this development, while recognising the individual's

valid feelings of self-worth and encouraging other significant people in that person's life to do likewise.

Where leavers have been informally labelled by members of their family or peer group, counsellors should be aware that this may create particular difficulties for the labelled individual who still wishes to enjoy the positive regard of those labellers.

iii) From the accounts of leavers presented above, it appears that the explanations that many special education leavers give for informal labelling include several themes. Counsellors may choose to suggest or mention these to leavers and allow the leavers themselves to integrate them within their own explanatory frameworks. In this respect the role of the counsellor is to allow the leaver access to these explanations:

- that people do not really understand why the individual was placed in special education;

- that once a person has been placed in a special school or unit, he or she is never given a chance to leave, indeed because of the attitudes of others, sometimes it is best if he or she does not leave;

- some people are 'stirrers', they like to cause trouble and to pick on the weakest person. It's best to steer clear of this type of person who clearly have problems themselves.

iv) Explanations for formal labelling should seek to explain as much material as possible while allowing the individual to maintain or to develop his or her feelings of self-worth. Counsellors may choose to emphasise the following points:

- the individual's strengths, the ways in which he or she has changed and learned new skills, his or her achievements and ability to take meaningful decisions that affect his or her life;

- that labelled individuals are people just like everyone else, it's simply that they can't work as quickly as others can;
- the individual's needs should be clearly defined and limited to certain areas:
- that the individual's placement may have been caused by factors that he or she did not have any control over, such as having an accident, being ill or being inappropriately placed or treated by teachers;
- that the individual may have had problems before, but that those problems have gone now;
- that the individual's problems were caused by his or her placement and not the cause of such a placement: for instance he or she may not have been given hard enough work.

2) Training and education for parents and direct care staff. In addition to direct counselling of labelled individuals by professionals, such as clinical psychologists, who have received psychotherapeutic training, advice could be given to direct care staff and parents about how best to approach labelling. Indeed, many parents in this study told me that they were concerned about how best to discuss this area with their children. However, despite the importance of this subject, professionals rarely discuss labelling either with labelled individuals, their families or with other care-givers. This omission is not only due to the difficulties that some labelled individuals experience in talking about this area, but it is also due to the reluctance that many professionals have in discussing this very sensitive and personal topic. Yet, as this study shows, many labelled individuals not only think constructively about this issue but are also able to talk about it openly. One possible way of approaching labelling

would be as part of a general educational programme, which also sought to enhance the individual's self-assertiveness.

7.5 Implications for future research.

This thesis has addressed the issue of whether special education leavers actively interpret their labelling. It has presented a description, rather than an evaluation, of these explanations. At the same time it seems reasonable to assume that some explanations are more or less adequate than others. One way to determine the adequacy of these explanations is to examine them in terms of a trade-off between their explanatory power and their ability to function in Breakwell's (1986) or in Lazarus's (1978) terms as *coping strategies*. Thus section 7.5, in which advice is offerred to potential counsellors on the best way to discuss labelling with labelled individuals, is based on two related assumptions. Firstly, that individuals who are unable to provide explanations for their labelling may be at psychological risk from that labelling and, secondly, that one way to counteract that risk is to help the individual to create his or her own explanations. These assumptions need to be tested through clinical research.

Although this research was longitudinal, the time constraints that operated in the production of this thesis necessitated the main interviews with some participants in the ipsative study being separated by little more than a year. This short period of time meant that the thesis was unable to cover in full the transition of these leavers from school to working life. Moreover, the high mortality rate in the ipsative study meant that longitudinal interviews were carried out with only six leavers. In order to corroborate the findings presented in this thesis, therefore, it would be

necessary either to replicate the pilot, normative and ipsative studies with a larger number of leavers or, if possible, to re-interview the leavers in this study in a number of years time.

7.6 Summary.

A large number, if not all, of the leavers that have been written about in this thesis were aware that other people had labelled them as *different* and, in some important way, as *inferior*. Many leavers, as we have seen above, had suffered painful experiences. Yet several studies have shown (e.g. Coleman, 1983) that special education pupils and leavers do not necessarily have lowered self-concepts. It has been suggested above that the reason for this discrepancy is that special education pupils are actively able to interpret their labelling. There are four separate lines of evidence which support this suggestion.

Firstly, almost two thirds of the leavers in this study that it was possible to gather information on had been the subject of informal labelling. Indeed this figure is likely to be an under-estimate of the true incidence of name-calling and other forms of victimisation. Moreover, even where informal labelling has not taken place, there are other ways in which special education leavers may have been made aware of their negative social status. Despite this, however, many leavers had positive views of special education and leavers were significantly less likely than their parents to wish to have gone to a more integrated school.

Secondly, the pilot and ipsative studies showed that only one leaver (over whom there was some confusion as to whether or not he understood fully what he was saying) said that he was handicapped. Moreover, while ten of the eleven leavers that I interviewed in the ipsative study saw

themselves as having difficulties, eight of those ten leavers were able to provide other explanations for their labelling. Thirdly, the explanations that leavers provided were selective. Thus the majority of leavers emphasised those aspects of their personal history which were least similar to a global definition of mental handicap, while ignoring other parts of their history. Finally, changes in the accounts of leavers could be linked to changes in their environment.

I have described above how leavers' experiences of labelling vary according to individual and situational factors. For some leavers it is possible that their experiences of labelling may be such that they require some form of counselling, or even therapy, in order to help them provide meaningful explanations which are not personally threatening. Ultimately, the fruitfulness of this form of research will be judged not simply by the extent to which it increases our understanding of the meaning of mental handicap for individuals who have been so labelled, but also according to its practical usefulness. Social psychological research may thus provide a basis for further studies generated by educational and clinical considerations which will explore some of the considerations raised here in more detail.

Appendix One: transcript notation.

Double round brackets indicate that material in the brackets is either inaudible or that there is doubt about its accuracy, e.g.:

Geoff: I think ((it's about that))

Three full stops indicate that some material has been ommitted, e.g.:

Geoff: Well, this was about ... it was nine o'clock.

Material within square brackets indicates classificatory information, e.g.

Geoff: Well Brian [Geoff's brother] said that

APPENDIX TWO

For each of the following questions could you please award the trainee from one to five points according to their ability. In each case one point means that he/she is very poor at this particular skill, while five points means that they are very good at it; examples are given for each question of one point and five point abilities.

1) CONCENTRATION;

In general how good is the trainee at concentrating on a task and resisting distraction?

a) when they enjoy the task?

1	2	3	4	5
unable to concentrate				concentrates well

and b) when they find it boring?

1	2	3	4	5
unable to concentrate				concentrates well

2) MEMORY; In general how good is the trainee at recalling instructions?

1	2	3	4	5
very poor memory				very good memory

3) CARE AND SAFETY; how good is the trainee at correctly using tools and machines?

1	2	3	4	5
completely incapable				totally reliable

4) PLANNING; how good is the trainee at understanding the future needs of a situation and act accordingly? ie planning things out

1	2	3	4	5
never plans				always plans ahead

5) DECISION MAKING; how good is the trainee at deciding what he/she should do? when

a) they are familiar with the situation

1 2 3 4 5

completely indecisive — makes decisions rapidly

and b) it is a new situation for them

1 2 3 4 5

completely indecisive — makes decisions rapidly

6) INITIATIVE; How good is the trainee at acting on their own, without needing to be told to do something?

1 2 3 4 5

Always waits for permission or instructions — Able to act on their own accord

7) COMMUNICATION; how good is the trainee at making others aware of what he/she wants?

1 2 3 4 5

Unable to communicate — Able to communicate easily

8) COMPREHENSION; how well is the trainee able to understand what others say to them?

1 2 3 4 5

Unable to understand instructions in any form — Can rapidly understand complex instructions

9) SELF CONFIDENCE; how confident is the trainee

a) with people he/she knows eg family, friends

1 2 3 4 5

Thinks will make a fool of self so keeps quiet — Able to be themselves

and b) with strangers

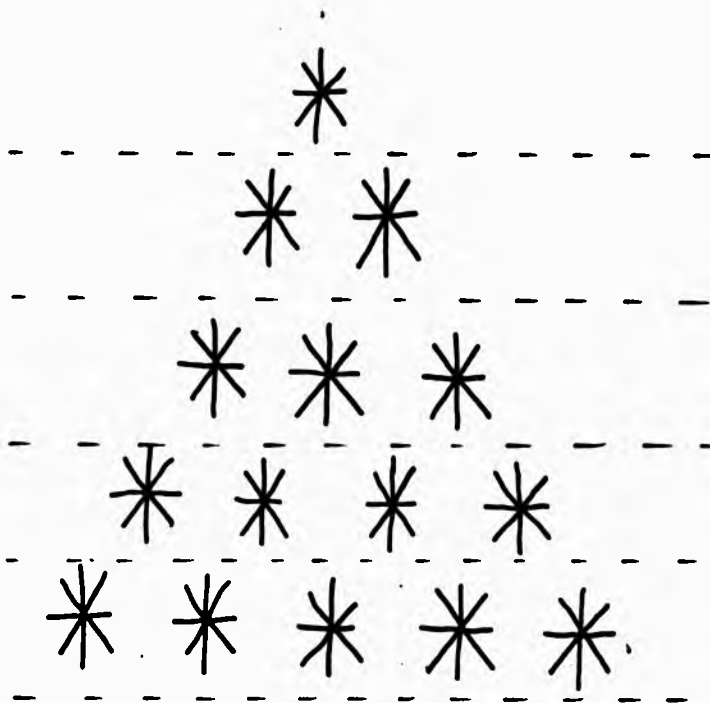
1 2 3 4 5

Thinks will make a fool of self so keeps quiet — Able to be themselves

10) GETTING ON WITH PEOPLE; how good is the trainee at making freinds?

1 2 3 4 5

Finds it difficult — Gets on well with everyone



APPENDIX THREE

Department of Psychology

IVERSITY OF STIRLING STIRLING FK9 4LA SCOTLAND | Telephone: STIRLING (0786) 73171
Telex: 777759 STUNIV G

R. Cheston

Psychology dept.

Dear Parent

I am a researcher from Stirling University and am engaged in a project which is looking at what happens to school leavers in the eighteen months after they leave school. I would like to investigate whether teenagers are able to find jobs, places on a course or other forms of employment, what hopes they have for the future and how they and their families cope with this period of change. In the present time of high unemployment the important period after leaving school is both a contraversial political issue and one about which there is very little information available about how it affects both school leavers and their families.

I have been carrying out this study since March of this year with school leavers from Academy and school and I would be very grateful to you if you would allow me to include your son or daughter in this study. This would simply involve me interviewing your son or daughter both before and after they leave school and also my having a brief chat with you to discuss these issues. Your name will be deleted from any findings that are reached so that complete confidentiality is maintained.

It would be of great help to this study if you could please fill out the attatched form and return it to the school. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX FOUR

Department of Psychology

[UNI]VERSITY OF STIRLING STIRLING FK9 4LA SCOTLAND | Telephone: STIRLING (0786) 73171
Telex: 777759 STUNIV G

Dear Parent

I'm a researcher from Stirling University and am currently involved in a project which is studying what happens to school leavers in the two to three year period after they leave school. I am trying to find out what sort of things teenagers have been able to do, what support there has been from the local services and how they and their families have coped with this period of change. In the present time of high unemployment the important period after leaving school is not only a controversial issue but one for which there is, as yet, very little information about how it affects both school leavers and their families.

I would be extremely grateful to you if you would allow me to include your son or daughter in this study. This would involve me having a brief chat with your son or daughter at a place and time of their choosing, either at home or at their place of work or education. I would also like to come round to your house to briefly discuss these issues with you. Neither of these talks would take very long and your name, of course, will not be disclosed so that complete confidentiality is maintained. I am already carrying out this work both with pupils who are about to leave and ex-pupils who have already left Academy, High School and School. I have also enjoyed the co-operation of Adult Training Centres as well as Technical College in this work.

I would be very grateful if you could please fill out the attached form indicating whether or not you are willing to help with this study and return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope. Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

R Cheston
Psychology Department

I .... do/do not agree to my

son/daughter .... being involved

in this study.

Signed

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