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**Two Worlds Two Minds: An ethnographic
study of primary schooling in England and France
Volume 1**

Claire Dominique Planel

A thesis submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the
requirements of the degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Social Sciences,
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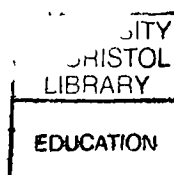
Abstract

There is growing interest and acknowledgement that culture plays an important role in learning. It is increasingly recognised that theories of learning that rely on human brain, affective and pedagogic explanations are not sufficient. It is accepted that the way the *mind*, as opposed to the *brain*, functions is to a large extent the result of the cultural context. The central aim of this thesis is to deepen our understanding of the relationship between culture and learning and to show the substantial effect of culture, or the context, on learning.

The theoretical perspective is essentially social constructionist. However the study gives more emphasis than social constructionism does to the role played by '*la pensée*', or thought, in culture. Social acts are held to be the surface manifestation of a deeper structure of mental phenomena, or cognitive constructs. It is held that societies are defined by their cognitive constructs and that these constructs influence the ways of thinking of actors in society and ultimately their behaviour. In order to convey and explain this emphasis and the fundamental significance of cognitive constructs in learning a new theoretical perspective has been created. It has been termed cognitive-social constructionism. This term has been coined in order to combine both the focus on cognitive constructs and the relationship with social constructionism. The study and its theoretical perspective are inter disciplinary, crossing the boundaries of anthropology, sociology and psychology.

The 'cultures' or societies on which the analysis is based are those of England and France. The study explores the existence of cognitive constructs on two levels: the contexts of the two societies; and pupil attitudes to learning and pupil performance in learning. At the level of the contexts data is taken from two sources: firstly research literature on the societies and their educational systems, both past and present, secondly empirical work carried out in classrooms in the two countries. At the pupil level data are based on empirical work. The methodology used is cross cultural ethnography, as in order to answer the research questions posed, the in-depth approach of an ethnography was required.

The study explores the existence of societal and cognitive constructs in both the background and classroom contexts of the two countries as well as in pupil learning. It identifies English and French constructs which are present in both the contexts and in pupil learning. The study is able to demonstrate the extent of matching between the context and learning. The development of cognitive-social constructionism as a theory, based on these findings, has important implications for the understanding of learning and teaching. It provides an explanation for inter country differences in pedagogy and pupil performance, as well as intra country differences in pupil performance.



I should like to thank Professor Broadfoot for her patience, understanding and optimism,
and all those, children and teachers, who allowed me access into their worlds.

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

The dissertation has not been presented to any other university for examination either in the United Kingdom overseas.

Signed: *A. D. Plead*

Date: *15th February 2000*

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Introduction

"You have to know a country well before you can pretend to measure the force of its real education." (Sadler, in Higginson, 1979 p. 35)

The main aim of research in education must be to better understand the process of learning in order to make improvements in learning possible. This thesis sets out to explore the fundamental contribution of culture, and national culture in particular, to learning. It is written at the close of the 20th Century where the last years have seen both an increase in the perceived link between the strength of national economies and the efficiency of national educational systems, and an increase in the international comparisons of individual countries. National systems of education have been de-stabilised by these external pressures and the internal pressures of meeting the demands of a post-modern society. Primary education in England in the 1980s and 1990s seemed to be losing its way. It was threatened by changing societal values concerning performance and achievement and the role of education in the modern world. Economically, England's position in the West was threatened by competing Asian economies, by countries whose educational systems seemed to prioritise the very elements of teaching and learning which Anglo Saxon theories of education held to be ineffective. English governments responded by tightening central control over education (Educational Reform Act 1988), imposing a national curriculum, national assessment and accountability and by encouraging more South East Asian approaches to teaching and learning. However it is the cultural understanding of learning which has been significantly missing in the educational debates and policies of this last decade¹.

The aim of this thesis is to start to bridge the gap in our understanding of the role of national culture in education. It is argued that styles of teaching and learning are not sufficient to explain differences in children's performance. Education is a social process and cannot be understood without reference to its cultural and contextual setting. Key words in this study are culture and context.

In order to understand the culture and context of a national system of education it needs to be compared with that of another country. Comparative education, like the discipline of anthropology, is based on the tenet that the study of other contexts and

¹ In 1997 leading members of the English educational field (Reynolds 1999, Tate 1997) started to give a greater prominence to the effect of culture on learning.

cultures increases understanding of our own context and culture. Furthermore such comparisons lead ultimately to more understanding of cultural process, in this case education, in general.

In this study the concept of learning is explored primarily through an ethnographic study of two English and two French primary schools. The ethnographies provide data firstly, on the processes in the classroom, during which pupil understanding about culture is negotiated and formed. Secondly, the ethnographies provide data about the influence of national culture on pupils' perceptions of school and their motivation to learn. Another important focus of the study, and source of data, is the national socio-cultural historical settings of primary education in England and France. A further and final important area is that of comparative English French pupil performance² at the end of primary education in key subject areas. Thus an approach of multiple perspectives was used to understand the influence of national culture on learning. The following figure sets out this approach:

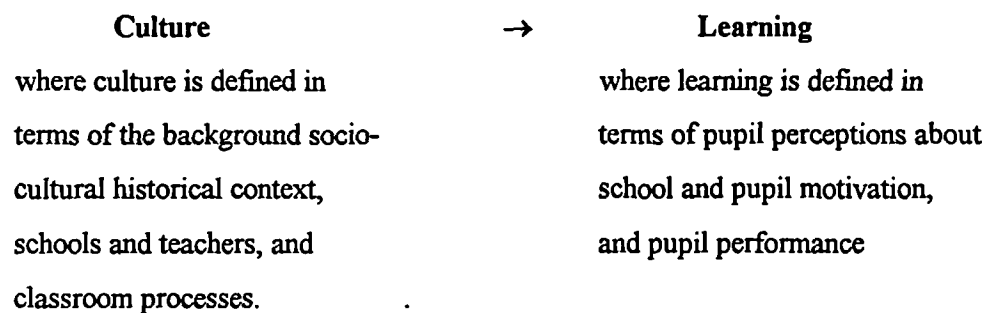


Figure 1. The influence of culture on learning

Origins and development of this thesis

My interest in researching culture and education arose from my academic, biographical and professional background of cross cultural comparisons. Social anthropology, in which I graduated, gave me an interest in how culture, where culture was defined in terms of cognitive phenomena³, affected social behaviour. Biographical factors of a bilingual and bicultural English French background also gave me a strong personal interest in the cultures of the two countries. Finally my professional experience of teaching

² Parallel to this study I was concurrently working on the STEP project (see Appendix 1.4.), which widened my understanding of English and French primary education both in depth and in breadth, and the QUEST project (see Appendix 1. 3.) which triangulated the ethnographic study and included data on comparative assessment of pupil performance in the two countries.

³ Social anthropology, in the 1970s when I graduated, was increasingly concerned with systems of classification (Levi-Strauss 1963, Douglas 1966, Leach 1964).

English in French primary schools and French in English primary schools, as well as parental participation in my own children's experience of education in English and French primary schools, led to the formulation of two research questions:

- 1. What are the differences between primary classrooms and learning in the English national context and the French national context?**
- 2. What can the perceptions of the pupils reveal about how they, and their attitude to learning, are affected by these differences?**

Initial reading (which was of necessity wide ranging as it included the disciplines of history, anthropology, sociology, psychology as well as the field of education) and data gathering (which suggested that English and French pupils' perceptions of schooling conformed to different ways of thinking) gave rise to a hypothesis:

Cultural characteristics affect pupils' ways of thinking which are in turn a key variable in their approach to learning

At this stage the concept of learning was restricted to pupils' perceptions of school and their motivation to learn. Subsequently, as a member of the QUEST team (see Appendix 1. 3.) my research interests expanded into comparative assessment. The definition of learning in the hypothesis thus expanded to include learning output: the performance of English and French pupils in language and maths. This led to the formulation of a third and final research question:

- 3. Do the cultural learning characteristics of England and France affect pupil learning and if so in what ways?**

Plan

This study is divided into four parts comprising eight chapters. There are two chapters in each part.

Part One contains the theoretical perspective and methodology. Chapter One sets out to provide the theoretical background to the study. It gives an essentially cognitive definition to the meaning of 'culture' and traces the development of theories of culture through different disciplines. Chapter One is divided into four sections corresponding to the three disciplines of sociology, anthropology and psychology with a final section which starts to draw the three disciplines together and starts to create a unified cognitive-social theory of learning, under the umbrella of comparative education. Chapter Two looks at methodology.

Part Two presents the evidence for the argument that social and cognitive constructs exist at the contextual level of: nations and their educational systems, and at the

contextual level of the classroom. Chapter Three uses the research literature to present the background context of English and French society and education. It illustrates what is meant by 'national culture'. It goes further than providing an understanding of the background context in which the empirical data will be set as it also draws out the inherent English and French social and cognitive constructs which lie hidden in the contexts. Chapter Four narrows the contextual focus and, using empirical work, explores the existence of social and cognitive constructs in English and French classrooms.

Part Three looks at pupil learning and the extent to which social and cognitive constructs are also to be found in pupil perceptions and pupil performance. Chapter Five, which is based on this study's empirical work, compares pupil perceptions of schooling and motivation in the two countries. Pupil motivation is seen to be linked to underlying national social and cognitive constructs. Chapter 6 looks at the output of pupil learning. It compares the performance of English and French pupils' in language and maths and relates differences in performance to social and cognitive constructs. It is based on a separate empirical study for which the author was responsible (see QCA study, Appendix 1. 2.; and publications listed in Appendix 2, Nos. 4, 5, & 6)

Part Four is given over to summarising the main findings and making further theoretical developments. Chapter Seven draws together the evidence from the study's empirical data and findings from the existing literature, in order to establish the existence of English and French cognitive constructs in education and society and to show how they affect pupils' learning in the two countries. It includes an evaluation of the study. Chapter Eight takes up where Chapter One left off and develops the theory of a cognitive-social constructionist explanation of learning.

Part One

Theory and methodology

Chapter One

The theoretical background

Introduction

This study belongs to the field of comparative education in that it is comparing education across national boundaries with the aim of improving our understanding about education in general. However such a seemingly neat categorisation, whose intention is by 'naming' this study's theoretical position to 'nail' it, is but one stroke of the classificatory hammer in the building of an unavoidably complex theoretical structure. The problem is that the meaning of the term 'comparative education', as used in the 1990s, is under some dispute. Alexander (1999, p. 8) refers to "its crisis of identity and purpose". The complexity of this study's theoretical position is partly due to the diversity in the nature and the scope of comparative education. Progress has been made to clarify the scope and methods (Theisen and Adams 1990) (Crossley and Broadfoot 1992), but there is still some contention as to whether comparative education should move away from trying to establish 'law like' conclusions to making generalised statements and whether it should encompass descriptive, analytical, evaluative and exploratory studies. It is not certain either that all would agree with Theisen:

"It (research in comparative education) should be planned, problem focused, theory driven (or with expectations of contributing to theory), and undertaken with an explicit methodology." (Theisen, 1990, p. 278)

This study does however share Theisen's concerns. It is because comparative education is showing increased methodological, theoretical and paradigmatic diversity (Theisen, op. cit.) that the classification of a study under the umbrella of comparative education is not sufficient but requires considerable amplification.

Both the scope and the nature of comparative education is unclear. What is it? It has been described as a field or 'context' (Broadfoot, 1977, p. 133) because it is not strictly speaking a discipline. Broadfoot describes its goal:

"To build on systematic studies of common educational issues, needs or practices as these are realised in diverse cultural settings in order to enhance awareness of possibilities, clarify contextual constraints and contribute to the development of a comprehensive socio-cultural perspective." (Broadfoot 1999, p. 26)

This study also shares these aims. Furthermore it belongs to comparative education in its cross disciplinary approach. Comparative education has been described as:

“Embracing a heterogeneous set of intellectual and professional objectives and activities, comparative education is the product of many disciplines and can lay claim to no single conceptual or methodological tool that distinguishes it clearly from other sub-areas in education or the applied social sciences.” (Theisen, 1990, p. 277)

This study is an instance of the multidisciplinary approach of comparative education as it finds its roots in a complex intermingling of the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and psychology. The theoretical background is complex because the social phenomena that this study analyses are complex and need a range of different disciplinary explanations. These theoretical sources need to be unravelled and their origins explained before they can then be combined into a single unifying theory that will form the theoretical backbone of this study.

Accordingly the important contributions from the three disciplines will be looked at in turn under the headings of social, cultural and learning theories. Finally these will be integrated into a combined socio-cultural and cognitive theory. In presenting the theoretical setting of this study under the three chapters of social, cultural and learning theory, which correspond to the three disciplines of sociology, anthropology and psychology, a certain amount of repetition is unavoidable as it is the same social phenomena which are looked at but from the perspective of different disciplines. The three disciplines act in the same way as differently tinted sunglasses, producing slightly different images of the same scene. This study is not only a fusion of the theoretical perspectives of different disciplines but also of different theoretical perspectives within each discipline.

1.1. Social theory: society, education and socialisation

In asking questions about how culture affects learning this study has to explore the concepts of English society and French society⁴. It has a strong theoretical base in sociology, it also shares many of its substantive concerns with those of the sociology of education. It tries to offer a sociological explanation for the behaviour, the perceptions, and the work produced by English and French pupils; that is, it explains these pupil attributes in terms of the social forces that act upon them. At the most general level there is a strong functionalist input from Durkheim in the basic assumptions made in this study about such concepts as society and education. This study also makes basic functionalist assumptions about socialisation which derive initially from Talcott Parsons. These assumptions need to be recognised and made explicit.

⁴For a definition of culture see Section 1. 2. The justification for looking at culture in a national context is set out in Chapter Two.

Durkheim established the concept of society as a 'thing' or social fact, which is more than the sum of its parts. Society cannot be 'seen' but it has an identity:

"Ainsi la société dépasse l'individu, elle a sa nature propre, distincte de la nature individuelle," Durkheim, 1963, p. 62)

and that identity can sometimes be 'seen'. Following Durkheim again, the identity of a society is created by the people within it and their actions together. It is held in the present study that the identity of society is thus visible through the actions of its members. This is based on Durkheimian theory that the identity of society "*the idea that it forms of itself*" (Durkheim, 1965, p. 470) can be observed in the processes whereby societies confirm that identity through ritualised conduct. Although Durkheim was primarily thinking of ritualised conduct in religious communal activities, this study takes the locus of ritualised conduct, where the identity of society can be observed, to be that of state education. It is held that the empirical data of teacher-pupil discourse and action, pupil perceptions, and pupil work, on which the research presented here is based, contain within them symbols which pertain to English and French society and help to define the identity of the two respective societies. Society can now be defined as:

"Distinct and relatively autonomous communities whose members' mutual social relations are embedded in, and expressed through, the medium of culture." (Lewis, 1976, p. 16)

The term 'society' is thus used in this study as synonymous with national context or country in the sense of English society or French society, because it is taken that members of English and French society share a general common identity. Another functionalist assumption, again derived from Durkheim, is that it is the perception that society has of itself, which is its identity (Durkheim, op cit.), that helps to maintain its cohesion⁵.

Stepping outside the functionalist perspective momentarily, this basic concept of identity is developed in this study to refer to a definition of identity which is held to operate on several levels and consist of a combination of these different levels: firstly an overt and manipulated identity which is expressed in the public domain; secondly the identity which members from other societies ascribe to a particular society; thirdly the identity which members of a society are consciously aware of holding; and finally an unconscious identity. To return to functionalism and the cohesion of society this study is very dependent on Durkheim's concept of the collective conscious, in other words his view that one of the ways in which society is held together is shared ideas or mental representations.

⁵ But departing from functionalism this study does not include teleology in its definition of society, that is that society anthropomorphically organises itself in a certain way for its own good.

For Durkheim the sharing between individuals of what goes on in the mind is the first prerequisite of a social group:

“(The State) serves to bring about that communion of minds and wills which is a first condition of any social life.” (Durkheim, 1957, p. 69)

This study’s concept of identity in society is thus derived from Durkheim’s collective unconscious. Identity is a fundamental concept in this study since, in exploring the relationship between culture and learning, English and French culture first have to be defined and it is the particular culture of a country that gives it its identity. Furthermore as will be seen in Section 1. 2. culture, or a country’s identity is held to consist of patterns of thinking, ‘la pensée’⁶, or ideas. Thus this study’s position that there is such a ‘thing’ as English society and French society; that these can be defined by shared identities; and that at the heart of these shared identities are shared patterns of thinking can be traced backed to Durkheim.

Another significant debt, that this study owes to Durkheim, is the concept of the role that education plays in society. Durkheim maintained that social institutions such as education or religion had specific roles in relation to each other and to society as a whole, in the sense of an organic solidarity, which helped to maintain the cohesion of society. The cohesive role of education was held to be multi-directional in that it interrelated at the same level with other institutions, it operated downwards and bound individuals together and upwards to incorporate individuals into society. This can be presented diagrammatically:

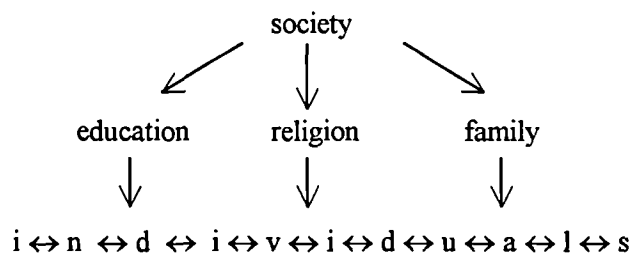


Figure 2 The functionalist perspective of the role of education

Thus the functionalist definition of education was that it structured society’s collective opinions and handed them on to the next generation in order to turn individuals into social beings. members who are part of society because they share in its identity:

⁶ The term ‘la pensée’ is considered crucial as the basis of this study is the degree to which the ‘pensée’ of a society can be revealed in pupil perceptions of school and learning. Defined in the Petit Larousse as “Ensemble des idées, des doctrines (d’un individu, d’un groupe)” it is awkwardly translated into ‘ways of thinking’ or cognitive constructs.

“Education is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him by the political milieu for which he is specifically destined.” (Durkheim 1956, p. 71)

Durkheim’s collectivist definition of education is highly relevant here, although such strong functionalist concepts of determinism and societal equilibrium are rejected. Individualist concepts of education such as Kant’s are seen as less useful⁷:

“The end of education is to develop, in each individual, all the perfection of which he is capable.” (Kant, quoted by Durkheim 1956, p. 62)

This study is concerned with the basic argument that education helps to initiate new members into the existing ‘pensée’ of a given society:

“The system of ideas, sentiments and practices which express in us, not our personality, but the group moral beliefs and practices, national or professional traditions, collective opinions of every kind To consolidate this being in each of us is the end of education.” (Durkheim, 1956, p. 72)

Thus English and French education could be seen as institutions, which both overtly and covertly, pass on the respective ‘pensée’ of each society into the country’s citizens.

Bourdieu has criticised Durkheim for his concentration on moral education:

“L’oeuvre de l’école, dans le développement moral de l’enfant, peut et doit être de la plus haute importance.” (Durkheim, 1963, p. 16)

and Durkheim’s argument that it was moral⁸ education rather than ‘la pensée’, that bound individuals together and created the society’s identity. This does not seem a very fair criticism of Durkheim whose thinking was clearly influenced by the intellectualism of his time and the important contemporary role, both in France and in England, which was given to morality and religion. As has already been seen Durkheim also understood education to mean what he calls *“une constitution mentale”* and the need for individuals to think the same way in order to identify themselves as a group, on the lines that “We think the same therefore we are the same”:

⁷ One of the inherent conflicts in national systems of education is the tension between individualist or collectivist ideas about the nature of education. Interestingly the two definitions relate strongly to the basic contrasts between English and French education. The former characterised English primary education at the time that empirical work was carried out and the latter was more readily associated with French primary education. This is one of the reasons why Durkheim is seen to be particularly relevant to the understanding of contemporary French primary education. Dubet (1996) also relies heavily on Durkheim’s sociological approach in his analysis of French primary education.

⁸ Durkheim’s use of the term “morale” is problematic in translation. Pickering (1979) uses the English word morality and makes it clear that morality includes descriptive ethics (observed action and attitude as

“Pour goûter la vie en communauté au point de ne pouvoir s'en passer, il faut avoir pris l'habitude d'agir et de penser en commun.” (Durkheim, 1963 p. 197)

When Durkheim's work is taken together as a whole there is sufficient evidence to support the argument of this study that social identity is based on shared ways of thinking. The idea that we think the same, therefore we are the same, is Durkheimian in origin. It is an approach echoed more recently by Sadler (quoted by Higginson, 1979, p. 49 and p. 98), and Halls (1976).

The functionalist perspective of the role played by education in society was further elaborated by the American scholar Talcott Parsons in the 1950s. For Talcott Parsons the main function of education was socialisation. This study agrees with the concept of socialisation as a strong downwards force acting upon individuals. Terms such as 'internalisation' and 'induction' were used to convey the social force of the process:

“The internalisation of certain patterns of value-orientation.” (Parsons, 1951, p. 208)

“The comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it.” (Berger and Luckman, 1966, p. 150)

In the same way as Durkheim took religion as an example of a social process in which a society's identity is revealed because ritualised conduct is a social process through which society makes and remakes itself, so this study uses socialisation in school as the fundamental process where society is making and remaking itself and pupils acquire the identity of their society. School socialisation gives us the chance to see what is in the package that is contained within each country's definition of education as it is presented to the next generation. Socialisation has been termed *“an access activity”* (Wentworth, 1980 p. 65), access not only for new members but, as in this study, also for observers:

“The 'observer' may see society's investment and understand it as an access procedure that opens the secrets of society to prospective members (or to observers)”. (Wentworth, op cit.)

Thus this study holds to the idea that socialisation, which could be described as:

A symbolic representation of society is usually said to be what is presented, passed and received during member replacement activity”. (Wentworth, 1980, p. 61), is an accessible social process where national characteristics of identity can be analysed.

It is held that it is in schools in particular that the identities of society can be explored.

Classroom practice, teacher discourse and pupil output (in the form of children's work), as

seen in laws, customs, modes of behaviour and thought) and traditional ethics (how people reason about morality).

well as pupil responses are taken on one level to be 'ritualised', in the sense that they are manifestations of the identities of English and French society and that such data can be analysed in order to establish those identities.

The phrase 'on one level' of the preceding paragraph refers to one way of looking at socialisation and society, the view from the top down where as Dawe (1970, p. 209) puts it, "*The actor is on the receiving end*" This is seen as useful in understanding the background contexts of England and France; looking at the influence of the history and structure of the educational systems of the two countries on the classroom contexts and their influence on pupil perceptions and learning. However does the structural approach reflect empirical reality and is it philosophically sound? English and French pupils and teachers are not robots and English and French societies are riven with conflicting tensions and different 'ways of thinking'. Individuals exert upwards forces on systems. Change is a feature of both systems. Social theory needs to reflect the tensions of modern society. Thus this study is also indebted to the sociology of social action where there is:

"The notion of actors defining their own situations and attempting to control them in terms of their definitions" (Dawe 1970, p. 212)

It is maintained in this study that individuals, that is pupils, gradually start to define in their terms what are the 'ways of thinking' of their society. It is through their exchanges with teachers, peers, parents, other adults and the media that their experience as pupils becomes meaningful.

Thus on one level this study is looking at national systems and structures - the macro level, and at another level the focus is on individual pupils - the micro level, and the theoretical perspective of social action. Individual pupils, their perceptions and their understandings of the world around them are central to building up this study's definition of national culture. Pupil 'pensée' is explored from the angle of pupil understanding of the reality of schooling. The theoretical assumptions of phenomenology, ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism which underlie the methodology are examined in Chapter Two. In this area key influences have been such classic works in the New Sociology of Education as Lacey (1970), Ball (1981), Hargreaves (1967), Woods (1985) and Pollard (1985). These works share the assumption that pupil strategies and negotiations are the key to understanding social reality. Strategies are defined as

"A type of patterned and active adaptation to a situation by which an individual copes. It is a creative but semi-routinised and situational means of protecting the individual's self." (Pollard, 1985, p. 155)

Pupils are thus seen to have a measure of self determination. Interactions between teacher and pupil, and pupil and pupil are, on a second level, points where different points of view are continuously presented, negotiated and exchanged. Meanings have to be negotiated before they are established. It is at these moments of inter-reaction that change occurs. Meanings are not smoothly transferred in the classroom. There is often pupil resistance. In practice teacher meanings are often not transferred to their pupils, or the resulting negotiation between teacher and class may be a pupil understanding that was not the original intention of the teacher. Moreover the direction of change is multi-directional. Firstly change is from the top down as the pupil is influenced by the 'pensée' of the teacher. Secondly the teacher's 'pensée' can be changed by the pupil's 'way of thinking'. Thirdly the pupils' peers, by witnessing the point of interaction, can be influenced by the exchange of meanings that they have seen occur. Hence the importance in the empirical work of observing the processes that occur in the classroom and the importance of interviewing pupils in groups, as the negotiation of meaning is an ongoing process.

This study is interested in covert cultural messages. Education is seen as polyphasic, like an iceberg its appearance is deceptive as it carries more invisible than visible information. In the same way as the hidden curriculum has been shown to pass on cultural messages about gender (Spender 1980), race (Wright 1992) and social class (Willis 1977) so this study is able to explore how the hidden curriculum passes on national cultural messages about ways of thinking.

The two ways of looking at society (Dawe's 1970 'two sociologies'), which can be summarised as from the top down or from the bottom up, are often thought to be in conflict. Attempts on both sides of the Channel have been made to resolve the conflict. For example Giddens (1979) argues for a theory of structuration. By distinguishing between the terms structure and system Giddens argues that sociology should look at how a system (the social practices of actors) through structure (rules and resources) is produced in social interaction. On the other side of the Channel, Bourdieu has tried to fuse structure and agency by the theory that social action results from a dialectical relationship between the individual's thought and his/her surroundings. Bourdieu termed the former 'habitus', which he defined as:

"The active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the forms of schemes of perception, thought, and action, tend to guarantee the correctness of practices" (Bourdieu, quoted by Harker, 1992, p. 16)

The latter, which he termed 'field', has been defined as:

"A structural system of social relationships at a micro and macro level".
 (Grenfell, 1998, p. 16)

This study does not see conflict between the 'two sociologies' but takes a pragmatic approach to social theory. It combines both approaches. It sees that there are downward forces favouring particular 'ways of thinking' for particular groups in society which act on individuals, for example the 'pensée' associated with gender. At the same time it sees that individuals seek to be self determining and take an active role as they are confronted with familiar or unfamiliar 'ways of thinking'.

This view of society can be presented diagrammatically as :

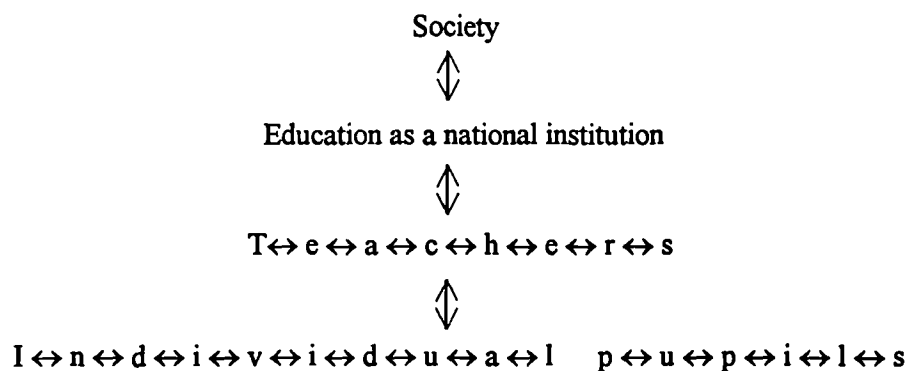


Figure 3 A pragmatic approach to social theory in education

The above approach to social theory, where both 'downwards' and 'upwards' forces in society are recognised, also underlies social constructionism, which Sections 1.1., 1.2. and 1.3, are leading up to through their consideration of social, cultural and learning theory:

"The goal of a socio-cultural approach is to explicate the relationships between human action, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which this action occurs, on the other." (Wertsch, 1995, p. 11)

Finally this study is indebted to Weber, firstly because of his role in developing a theory of social action but particularly in his concept of the ideal type. The concept of an ideal type is fundamental to sociological theory:

"The sociologist constructs type- concepts and seeks to formulate general statements about what happens." (Runciman, 1978, p. 23)

In the search for a positivistic social science, Weber like Durkheim developed theoretical tools. In order to define and concentrate on meaningful social action and separate it out

from the more unmeaningful social actions of emotions and errors, which he saw as deviations from a pure type, Weber created the ideal type:

“An ideal type is formed by the one sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasised viewpoints into a unified analytical construct. In its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality”. (Weber, quoted in Thomson & Turnstall, 1971, p. 63)

The concept of an ideal type is central to the present study. It is used in different ways. It is held that the identity of society is enshrined in an ideal type. Societies have abstracted idealised types and within society there is a concept of an ideal type member of society⁹ who represents those general characteristics. This is what Inkeles (1968, p. 76) meant by socialisation being forward looking, as it looks forward both to an idealised adult and an idealised society. Looking first at an ideal type of society, it is important at this point to make a distinction between this study’s aim of constructing the identity or ideal type of English and French society and concepts such as ‘stereotypes’ or ‘national character’. The latter two terms are not sociological in origin (although they make interesting data for analysis) as they are descriptive and not analytical terms which derive from two levels of perceptions of identity, those held by the outsiders and those held by the insiders of a society. This study analyses both consciously and unconsciously held social phenomena in order to construct ideal types for the identities of English and French society. Looking secondly at the notion of the ideal member of a society, in its most abstract form deterministic socialisation is about developing the ‘ideal’ member of society, the individual whose ways of thinking and ways of doing typify the ‘ideal’ of the identity of that society. In a useful introduction to Durkheim’s work Fox makes the same point:

“(French education) is a product of French civilisation; it consists of transmitting it; in short it seeks to make men modelled on the ideal type of man that this civilisation implies.” (Fox, introduction to Durkheim, 1956, p. 30)

and again in more detail:

“Each society sets up a certain ideal of man, as much from the intellectual point of view as the physical and moral; that this idea is to a degree, the same for all the citizens; that beyond a certain point it becomes differentiated according to the particular

⁹ Ideal types are not restricted to one per society. Different ideal types are associated with different sub groups in society. It is interesting to speculate whether England, with its relatively greater emphasis on individuality, allows for a greater variety of ideal types than does France.

milieux that every society contains in its structures. It is this ideal, at the same time one, and various, that is the focus of education." (Fox, introduction to Durkheim, 1956, p. 70)

One of the aims of this study is to reveal the identity of the ideal type of pupil and adult encapsulated in English and French schools. It is held that important data to be used in constructing these abstracted ideal types is to be found in the structures and practices of educational systems themselves because education itself embodies these ideal types.

Durkheim makes this explicit:

"French schools interpret and express the French spirit." Durkheim, 1956, p. 107

An example of this approach is Beattie's (1996) comparison of teacher selection systems in England and France, where the two national 'spirits', to use Durkheim's words, are explored. The concept of an ideal type is used in this study in its methodology, as will later be seen, and in the presentation of the analysis. Thus this study constructs ideal types using data from the educational systems of England and France, classroom observations, pupil perceptions, and pupil work. Pupils' perceptions, for example, are analysed in terms of ideal type constructs of 'work' and 'teachers'. Pupils' work is analysed and resented in the form of idealised types of national models of ways of thinking. They are ideal types because they represent an analytical construction of empirical data but no one informant could be found in reality to exemplify all the attributes of the type.

In this study social identity has been seen to be defined by the ways of thinking or 'la pensée' of members of society. Because social identity is objectified in the process of socialisation (Berger and Luckman, 1966, p. 78) it is like social reality, of which it is a part, 'seen' as the reality by members of society. Ethnocentrism is not therefore just a question of individual bias, it is the consequence of social identity and the cohesion of society. The introduction of the insiders' point of view and the consideration of whether or not 'la pensée' is consciously or unconsciously held by members of society have important theoretical implications. Durkheim uses the term 'la conscience collective', without addressing the issue of degrees of consciousness. It was not an issue for him. Whorf, in his understanding of the role that language played in influencing thinking, presented the unconscious position:

"The individual is utterly unaware of this organisation (of thinking) and is constrained completely within its unbreakable bonds." Whorf, 1956, p. 256)

Bourdieu also talks of the 'cultural unconscious' recognising that ways of thinking were often held unconsciously: Berger and Luckman take a more mixed approach and imply that ways of thinking can be held both consciously and unconsciously:

"(Internalisation is) the process by which the objectivated social world is retrojected into consciousness in the course of socialisation." (Berger and Luckman, 1966, p. 78).

Giddens (1979 p. 5) defines three levels of consciousness: the unconscious, practical consciousness *"Tacit stocks of knowledge which actors draw upon in the constitution of social activity"*, and discursive consciousness *"knowledge which actors draw upon on the level of discourse"*. In this study the data consists of both consciously and unconsciously held ways of thinking as it is maintained that social identity consists of both consciously and unconsciously held ways of thinking. Giddens's discursive consciousness (what English and French pupils say about their school experience) is used to understand both their practical conscious and their unconscious. The theoretical implications of looking at consciously held ways of thinking are that society cannot only be analysed from the observer's point of view but that the point of view of those members of society should also be considered. This is the theoretical position behind Weber's concept of 'intended meanings':

"Only occasionally is the meaning of action, rational or irrational, raised to the level of consciousness: where many people are acting in a similar way. But that should not prevent the sociologist from constructing his concepts on the basis of a classification of possible 'intended meanings': in other words, as if men acted in practice in conscious awareness of the meaning of their actions". (Weber quoted in Runciman, 1978, p. 25)

To conclude this section on social theory it has been seen that both structure and agency are used in order to look at the problem of whether culture affects learning. However sociological perspectives are not sufficient to explain so complex a topic, an examination of the anthropological contribution needs to be made.

1. 2. Cultural theory

In pursuing a socio-cultural and cognitive theoretical background to this study each element of the background and its theoretical traditions need to be looked at. Section 1. 1. dealt with the input from the 'social', that is, sociology. Section 1. 2. is concerned with the 'cultural' and includes the input from anthropology.

An anthropological definition of culture

The concept of 'culture' is fundamental to this study. What is meant by culture in the present study and why is it necessary to turn to anthropology? In essence the anthropological perspective is valued because the present study has a holistic notion of culture. Whilst the erstwhile overt differences between anthropology and sociology to do with subject matter and methodology have largely evaporated, studies in the two disciplines are still coloured by their traditional assumptions. These differences need to be unravelled in order to understand the extent to which this study uses an anthropological perspective as well as a sociological perspective. Much of what was written about society and the content of socialisation in the previous chapter on social theory was to do with culture. But there is a difference in emphasis. Sociology is more preoccupied with the internal workings of parts of society and anthropology is more interested in how the parts interrelate in order to define the whole. So though the two disciplines are looking at the same social phenomena, the term 'culture' was not much in evidence in Section 1. 1. and instead predominates in Section 1. 2. This is because the meaning that this study gives to 'culture' is more associated with an anthropological understanding of the term.

The perspectives of the two disciplines need to be looked at in more detail. Sociology gives a definition of culture which is limited to internal organisation. Definitions tend to consist of a list of internal characteristics. For example: Berger and Luckman (1996, p. 83), Inkeles (1968), Wentworth (1980, p. 68) and more specifically Woods (1990):

"Social, shared, systemic, cognitive, learned, values and beliefs, rules and codes of conduct and behaviour, forms of language, patterns of speech and choice of words, understandings about ways of doing things and not doing things." (Woods, 1990, p. 27)

Anthropology has a much wider brief. It is inherently cross cultural and comparative. Because anthropology is more concerned with a whole society, in comparison with other 'whole' societies, the focus tends to be that of the identity of society. Thus the social anthropologist Lewis defines culture as:

"The sum of learned knowledge and skills that distinguishes one community from another." (Lewis, 1976, p. 17)

and more strongly:

"Culture is thus the protective shell of a community and cultural distinctions become, to some extent, an index of social identity," (Lewis, 1976, p. 16)

The emphasis in anthropology is differences between societies. Culture is thus the symbols by which small, large groups or societies identify themselves as distinct from other similar social groups. The term 'culture' in anthropology is almost a synonym for the term 'society' in sociology with the difference that the anthropological perspective gives priority to the role of group identity. One of the ways in which sociology and anthropology differ is in the emphasis that they place on identity. Sociology, with its preoccupation with internal organisation, tends to look at identity between the sub groups of society, whereas anthropology is more concerned with the external identity of society as a whole.

The present study follows an anthropological perspective in that it is preoccupied with looking at 'whole' societies, how the identities of England and France are defined, and how the differences between the two countries establish their separateness and thus their identity. In this study the terms 'country', 'national context', 'society' and 'culture' are also often used synonymously as what is considered to be important is that there is an underlying assumption of a cultural expression of identity in all these terms. It is this role of identity¹⁰, or difference between countries which allows nationals to feel that they are 'English' or 'French', that this study sees as the most important feature of cultural differences. In more concrete terms the focus of this study is to explore national 'ways of thinking' as they exist in the domains of: the history and the educational systems of the two countries, classroom contexts, pupil perceptions and pupil performance, in order to learn more about the identities of the two countries. Hence the indebtedness of this study, and the tribute paid by anthropologists, to Durkheim, who was the first social scientist to draw attention to the concept of identity in society.

Despite the present study's focus on two Western industrial countries it can still claim to be anthropological. Anthropology has traditionally been concerned with the variously termed 'primitive', 'tribal', 'non-industrial' or 'exotic' societies and because these societies tend to be small scale and relatively undifferentiated, anthropological studies tend to look at how kinship, religion, politics and economics are intertwined and make up the whole. But in more recent years anthropology has expanded into studies of industrialising and industrial societies and has also taken on the challenge of looking at cultural conflict and cultural change. This study follows this development of the discipline into other fields of enquiry. It takes what are assumed to be familiar, the cultures of England and France, but looks at them as though they were 'exotic' cultures. As Bourdieu has pointed out, this is not an easy task as the researcher's own cultural characteristics are

¹⁰ A definition of identity was previously given in Section 1. 1. Identity and 'pensée' are thought to be held both consciously and unconsciously.

“coextensive and consubstantial with his consciousness” (Bourdieu 1976, p. 192-193). It is perhaps easier where the researcher is bicultural as biculturalism tends to encourage the conscious awareness of cultural differences. Secondly, although it is clearly beyond the limits of this study for it to explore in depth the interrelationship between education, religion, economics and politics in England and France and how these constitute English and French society, this study does take an anthropological perspective in looking at how education relates to society and the development of its cultural identity. It explores what Bruner calls, “the institutional ‘anthropology’ of schooling”, or, *“the situatedness of education in the society at large”* (Bruner, 1996, p. 33). It is in this sense that it can claim to be anthropological.

Two more meanings associated with the term culture need to be looked at. The first is the role that education has to play in culture. Education is seen as not only to transmit culture and cultural identity but because, as Bruner says:

“Education is a major embodiment of a culture’s way of life, not just a preparation for it.” (Bruner, 1996, p. 13),

education is culture. Secondly, Bruner also makes the point that culture is concerned with power (Bruner, 1996, p. 28). the more societies are internally differentiated the more culture itself is differentiated and hierarchised so that it is not equally shared by all the subgroups of society. It is beyond the bounds of this study to look at and compare the degree to which culture is differentiated and unequally shared in the two countries. However it is considered that this line of research would be interesting and fruitful. It could throw light on the relative importance of inter- and intra- national differences¹¹.

A cognitive definition of culture

Another major contribution of anthropology to this study is the concern that both share with a cognitive definition of culture, that it is how you think that determines what group you belong to. It has already been claimed that this view is Durkheimian in origin. The anthropological definition of culture includes ways of thinking but the concern with thinking developed much further in structural anthropology which looked at the logical

¹¹There are however parallels between this study’s main focus on how culture affects pupil learning and studies which have looked at how the differentiation of culture affects subgroups within society. For example, Bernstein’s analysis of the association of language codes with the group identity of social classes (Bernstein, 1965) is an example of the effect of one aspect of culture on society. Bourdieu’s work on cultural capital and the inequality of its possession (Bourdieu, 1977) is another example of how culture affects society. Studies such as Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Willis (1977) although also primarily concerned with how schools transmit inequality are also influential to this study as they are in essence exploring the role played by the hidden cultural agenda of schools in creating the cultural identity of society.

relationship of ideas within culture. Structural anthropology thrived in the climate of French intellectualism from 1900 to the 1970s (in the same way as social action theories thrived in the climate of American individualism). The French anthropologist Augé defines the subject as:

the object of anthropology is to elicit social and historical logics." (Augé, 1979, p. 90) (where 'logics' is a poor translation of "logique", which really means a system of interrelated ideas).

Stepping outside the discipline of anthropology the emphasis given to the cognitive element in the term 'culture' can also be traced to Bourdieu and Bernstein. It has already been seen that Bourdieu's concept of culture is largely unconscious. It consists of 'master-patterns'. He defines culture as:

"Culture is not merely a common code or even a common catalogue of answers to recurring problems, it is a common set of previously assimilated master-patterns from which, by an 'art of invention' similar to that involved in the writing of music, an infinite number of individual patterns directly applicable to specific situations are generated.: (Bourdieu, in Dale, 1976, p. 194).

Bourdieu drew particular attention to the patterns of thought pertaining to education, making the point that scholastic thought is different from the more everyday patterns of thought. Because the identity of the elite of society is defined by scholastic thought, it represents the ideal form of thought. He has suggested that thinking patterns could be used to define cultural communality in the same way as linguists use inter-comprehension to define linguistic commonality. In the field of education, for example, England, Holland and Scandinavia might seem to have more cultural communality than France and its immediate continental neighbours. In terms of intellectual thinking patterns he has suggested that this would work diachronically as well as synchronically, so that in the same way as fossils are used to date prehistoric eras, so subjects of intellectual debate could be used to date intellectual and historic periods of time. Bourdieu also draws attention to the type of 'mentalité' that is associated with institutions of higher education in Paris. Graduates of the Ecole Normale have been 'formed', that is their ideas have been formed, they are 'normalien'. Leaving aside Bourdieu's interest in the hierarchical nature of different types of thinking within society, it is Bourdieu's emphasis on "*patterns of thought*" and their relationship to cultural identity which is important to this study as one of the aims of this study is to try to define some of these "*master-patterns*", the "*cultural unconscious*", or ways of thinking, that are deeply embedded in English and French education and society. It will be shown that primary school pupils in the two countries

exhibit 'English' or 'French' identities, because the ways of thinking that they hold are characteristic of the national culture of their institutions. It is fundamental to this study that one of the effects of education in any society is the influence that it has on the ways of thinking of many of its pupils. As Bourdieu says:

"Programmed individuals - endowed with a homogenous programme of perception, thought and action - are the most specific products of an educational system." (Bourdieu in Dale, 1976 p. 193)

Bourdieu has also had an influence on the way in which this study sees the role of schools (in theory) in promoting national culture:

"Consciously (and also in part unconsciously) to transmit the unconscious, or, to be more precise, to produce individuals equipped with the system of unconscious (or deeply buried) master-patterns that constitute culture." (Bourdieu, 1976, p. 195)

or,

"To transform the collective heritage into a common individual unconscious" (Bourdieu, op cit. p. 196)

even if practice the above does not always occur. Education was recognised by Bourdieu as having a key role to play in the construction and transmission of culture:

"Schools are the socially objectified structures which generate all other social practices." (Bourdieu, quoted by Robbins, 1998, p. 30)

Thus Bourdieu is valued in this study for drawing our attention to the relationship between systems of thought, systems of education and cultural identity.

Another important contributor to this argument is Bernstein (if, as in the case of Bourdieu, culture is taken to include social class cultures). Bernstein too is interested in how cognitive constructs underlie much of what is transmitted in education:

"I believe that the structure of socialisation is not a set of rules, but classification and framing relationships. It is these - I think, that shape the cognitive structures." (Bernstein, 1975, p. 11)

His thesis that middle class children are advantaged in the educational system because they have access to the 'elaborated' code of teacher discourse seems to suggest that these children and their teachers have the same cognitive constructs. He refers to the "*inner logic*" of pedagogic practice (Bernstein, 1990, p. 64) and concludes that the function of pedagogic practice is to relay culture. It does not seem too far fetched to therefore infer that he is recognising that there are underlying cognitive constructs in education and that these affect learning, as middle class children are more likely to share these constructs than

working class children and thus perform better. So Bernstein's work too is highly relevant to this study as it makes the same connection about the effect of culture on learning.

Cognitive anthropology and culture

This study is also influenced by cognitive anthropology which started to develop in the late 1960s. It has been defined as:

"The organised study of the thought systems of individuals in other cultures and sometimes in our own." (Gardner 1987, p. 244)

Cognitive anthropology was influenced by structural anthropology with its emphasis on not only thought rather than action, but the systemic and structural nature of thinking.

Anthropologists, such as Wijeywardene (1968), Beidelman (1961) and Milner (1969) had also become interested in the cognitive phenomena of systems of classification and taxonomies. Another major influence on cognitive anthropology was the development of computer science and its application in structural linguistic analysis. A branch of anthropology grew up which maintained that 'idea systems' or 'symbolic systems' could be analysed according to mathematical and logical processes and that paradigms, schemas and trees could then be constructed. Whilst this study takes issue with the more extreme forms of cognitive anthropology (Tyler, 1969 p. 14) and the proposition that logical methods of analysis can be applied to what are held to be the essentially non-logical systems of cultural ideas, it is nevertheless a field of study to which this study is indebted. For, to put it at its most simple cognitive anthropology is interested in cultural knowledge:

"It investigates cultural knowledge, knowledge which is embedded in words, in stories, and artefacts, and which is learned from and shared with other humans."

(D'Andrade, 1995, p. 1)

Both this study and cognitive anthropology (D'Andrade 1995, p. 146, Gardner 1987, p. 244) share an interest in systems of thought and the role that they play in defining culture:

"the object of study is not these material phenomena themselves but the way they are organised in the minds of men. Cultures are not then material phenomena; they are cognitive organisations of material phenomena." (Tyler, 1969, p. 3)

Thus this study's cognitive definition of culture is in keeping with that given by cognitive anthropologists. Furthermore there is a shared assumption that systems of thought, or 'idea systems' affect social life.

Another shared proposition, which belongs more to philosophy, is the observation that human minds do not seem to like chaos and disorder and so seek to organise the world into categories or systems of classification:

"It is as if the human cognitive systems were a structure seeking device."

(D'Andrade, 1995, p. 120).

but that the categories themselves are culturally variable. This is the assumption in this study's analysis of English and French pupils' perceptions of schooling; that pupils' shared constructions of how they categorise what they experience in the school context are the result of their minds imposing order over chaos and that this order is culturally determined.

It is also held that systems of thought operate at a deeper level than language and influence language, as Boas (1916) and Bloch¹² (1991) argue. The traditionally accepted view that : *"language powerfully conditions all our thinking"* (Sapir 1929, p. 162) is not thought to present the whole picture of the relationship between thought, language and culture. The author would argue that thought plays a more important role than is generally accepted¹³. Language is taken to be an example of cultural identity which captures underlying differences in cognitive constructs. So that although language is seen as a crucial access point into a culture it should not be regarded as the determiner of cultural differences. This point requires further study, but it is argued that that role belongs to the systems of thinking that lie behind language classifications.

Finally there is some commonality between the methods of analysis used in this study and those of cognitive anthropology (which will also be looked at in more detail in the section on methodology). Whilst some cognitive anthropologists devise mathematically complex models to attempt to set down on paper the 'idea systems' of a particular domain in any one culture which the present study neither commends nor seeks so to do, it does try to establish what cognitive anthropologists call cultural schemas. The concept of a schema goes back to Kant (D'Andrade, 1995, p. 122) who used the example of a dog to show that people share a cognitive construct of the definition of a dog without thinking of any particular dog. D'Andrade defines a schema as:

"An organised framework of objects and relations" (D'Andrade, 1995, p. 124)

"An abstract organisation of experience" (D'Andrade, 1995, p. 150)

The term 'construct' is preferred here to that of 'schema' as it has more structural and less visual overtones but the definition is similar. Thus in the same way as Moffat (1995) draws up a schema of American students' concept of friendship so this study presents the

¹² - According to Bloch (1991) observations of cultural learning in pre-industrial societies show that it is often non linguistic. Our assumptions about learning and cognition are perhaps coloured by the literary culture in which we live.

¹³ If thought is taken to precede language, then a more satisfactory explanation of change can be given. Change, which would be blocked in the Sapir Whorf hypothesis as developments could not occur before the language was there to describe them, could be seen to occur first in thought and then secondarily, either deliberately or unconsciously, in language.

constructs that English and French pupils have, for example, of teachers and work. One aim of both this study and that of cognitive anthropology is thus to produce as accurate and comprehensive a picture as possible of constructs in one domain. Thus this study will use a cognitive anthropological perspective in relation to culture.

The comparative approach and anthropology

Many of the basic assumptions of comparative education derive from anthropology; firstly the concept of comparison. The main aim of this study is to understand more about how children learn. It is held that 'facts' (in this case educational facts) have little meaning unless they are compared with similar 'facts', either within systems (for example, pupil attitudes from different socio-economic areas within a national system of education) or, as in the case of this study, similar educational 'facts' across different national educational systems. In order to carry out cross cultural research it is necessary to study the educational context of each system in order to understand the meaning and function of those educational 'facts'. In this way a cross cultural study has to distil out of the comparison what are essentially cultural 'facts' if any real understanding is to be gained about 'how children learn' in general. It is almost as a by product of this sort of analysis that a picture of a national culture emerges, a picture which has links with Weber's ideal types and some of the aims of American cultural anthropology:

"Anthropology's task is therefore seen as that of understanding the irreducible character of a given culture, or of its 'dominant tendencies', to revive a term from Ruth Benedict's study." (Augé, 1979, p. 18)

Although it is beyond the bounds of this study to understand 'how children learn' in general, it is hoped that this study will result in both greater knowledge about the role of culture in children's learning and greater knowledge about the differences between English and French culture.

A key reason for using the anthropological perspective in comparative education is that cross cultural comparison is the basic building block of anthropology. The aim of social anthropology is to learn more about people (humankind) by looking at peoples (cultures, societies). It takes as its starting point that the clue to understanding culture or society in general and one's own culture or society in particular, is to understand 'other' cultures and societies. In outlining the preoccupations and assumptions of the anthropological perspective Lewis quotes Rousseau:

“One needs to look near at hand if one wants to study men: but to study man one must learn to look from afar: one must first observe differences in order to discover attributes.” (Lewis, 1976, p. 16)

The job of the anthropologist is thus first to translate culture, or to make exotic culture comprehensible before comparisons can be made. One of the tasks of this study has been to make the ‘not quite so exotic’ culture of France understandable to an English person, and vice versa.

Thus in the same way as this study was located within the sociological tradition so it may be seen to belong to the anthropological tradition. It makes basic anthropological assumptions about the definition of meaning through comparison and uses a cognitive anthropological definition of culture. In looking at the effect of culture on learning, using in this case the English and French primary school context, this study uses an anthropological perspective to explore the meaning of culture in the two societies.

1.3. Learning theory, part one

The first two sections of this chapter have set the sociological and anthropological background of this study. They have shown that variations in human behaviour require social explanations and not individual explanations. The latter is an approach generally associated with the discipline of psychology. Although this study is not directly concerned with individual explanations of behaviour, nor does it support the methodology used in some areas of psychology, it nevertheless does reflect some of the concerns of the subject. It is held that social and cultural theory are not sufficient for a thesis in the field of education. What goes on in the mind must also be looked at, particularly with the emphasis that is given here to cognition in the understanding of culture. Looking at the problem from the discipline of psychology it is similarly held that the psychological explanations of learning which depend on the key variables of intelligence, personality, motivation and affectivity are not sufficient either, as each of the above variables is itself affected by culture. This study takes the view that education and learning are a process which combine what goes on in the brain and culture.

There are two main reasons why learning theories are relevant to this study. The first, is that analyses of empirical data in the field of education cannot be carried out without reference to theories of learning. For example, in the area of classroom contexts in England and France, more understanding can be gained from a comparison of the process of learning and its outcomes in the two countries if these are analysed in terms of implicit

and explicit learning theories. Thus in Chapter 4.1. this study will look at the degree to which different theories of learning and teaching are espoused in English and French education. It will consider to what extent the classroom processes observed in England and France reflect behaviourist, developmental, connectionist and socio-cultural theories of learning. Secondly learning theories need to be looked at because this study, as an exploration of the relationship between culture and learning, must presuppose a theory of learning. The theory of learning needs to be identified and clarified, which is the aim of this and the following section.

Learning theory has been divided into two parts in order to concentrate on individualist explanations in this first part, and socio-cultural explanations in the second part. However even in this first part social and cultural factors are seen to be important variables in learning.

Learning

What is learning? It seems to be a difficult concept to pin down. Bower describes it as:

“One of those loose, open concepts that include diverse sub types ... (it) is more like a chapter heading than a technical term in contemporary psychology.” (1981, p. 15)

In a general sense learning involves a change (which could be in either a negative or positive direction) as an individual's existing knowledge and experience react with new situations. The change that occurs is a mental phenomenon, in other words there has been a change in the 'way of thinking', but it may sometimes be 'seen' in the individual's behaviour. There are two main problems here, firstly the theoretical issue of the degree to which an individual's learning is affected by innate 'ability', developmental patterns or by environmental experience (and the extent to which this is social experience) and secondly the problem of how learning is to be measured. Learning can only be *inferred* to have taken place through performance. Thus performance is not synonymous with learning, it is an indication of the learning that might have taken place. As regards the first problem this study takes the view that social experiences are the dominant input in learning. It follows Bruner's view of learning which is that it involves the generalising, checking and restructuring of ideas and that this is carried out in social situations with others who know more. For the second problem this study does not use performance to infer particular learning in an immediate before-after situation but regards pupil performance as an indication of how learning has taken place over years of schooling and thus reflects the cultural context of that learning.

Learning and motivation

Psychology has greatly increased our understanding of the role that motivation plays in learning. McMeniman who defines motivation as *“that which energises and directs behaviour towards a goal.”* (McMeniman, in Langford, 1989 p. 215) outlines three main types of motivation: intrinsic, achievement and extrinsic. It can be hypothesised that there will be variations between cultures as to the relative importance of these different types of motivation. But culture even has powerful influence within each type of motivation. Looking first at intrinsic motivation, the concept of ‘self motivation’ includes notions of ‘ownership’, ‘control’, ‘choice’ (de Charms’s ‘origin’, 1968, 1976) in the classroom. It is maintained that *“‘personal causation’ is a powerful motivating force directing future behaviour.”* (McMeniman, 1989, p. 217). The empirical evidence from French classrooms in Section 4 challenges this narrow and culturally bound view of personal causation. Intrinsic motivation also includes the construct of self-efficacy (Bandura 1977), where the individual’s investment in a task is said to vary with his or her past experience of success or failure. There is however evidence to suggest that the linked concept of self-esteem is a cultural variable. (Robinson, 1990). Robinson found that low achieving Japanese and French pupils were still motivated towards school unlike English low achieving pupils. Secondly, achievement motivation, which is also associated with attribution theory, is culturally variable. Weiner (1984) identifies four main causes that pupils attribute to success or failure in a given task: ability, effort, luck and perceived difficulty of the task itself. Chapter Four will illustrate cultural variation in pupils’ attribution to the first two causes. Finally extrinsic motivation is also a culturally variable concept. Kozeji (1985) looked at the role of teachers and parents in extrinsic motivation. American and Asian cross cultural work (Stevenson & Stigler 1992, Stevenson & Lee 1990) and the comparison of British and Chinese learners (Salili 1993) has shown the difference in parental attitude between Western and Asian cultures.

Theories of learning

Thus returning to the original equation that education and learning are made up of a combination of what goes on in the brain and culture it has been suggested that culture or social experience is a dominant factor, and this will be returned to in the next section, (affective factors are also clearly fundamental but are not part of this study) but what can the discipline of psychology contribute to the understanding of learning? Philosophers and psychologists have been intrigued since the Ancient Greek period by the nature of the mind and the mental processes involved in learning. There has been a spiral development of

understanding as theories have emerged, only to be criticised and then replaced by alternative theories. This study takes the view that the learning process cannot be adequately explained by any one theory, but when the different theories are considered as a whole then there is considerable accumulated understanding of the learning process.

Briefly, the main learning theories used to explain learning are first, developmental psychology. Piaget (1950) demonstrated that there are stages of learning which are associated with the age and development of children. He defined four main stages: sensorimotor (0-2 years), pre-operational (2-7 years), concrete operational (7 years) and formal operations (11 years). Piaget's work led to the concept of the child's 'readiness' to learn, and an emphasis on 'discovery' learning rather than teacher instruction.

Behaviourism brought to psychology the theory that learning depended less on what went on in the brain and more on behavioural adaptation to repeated stimuli. Behaviourism developed from Pavlov and other Russian scientists' work on animal conditioned reflexes (Boring 1957). Skinner (1953, 1954) applied behaviourist theories to learning. It was held that learning was enhanced by repeating stimuli and that learning was reinforced by reward and/or punishment. Connectionist models have added to the understanding of learning in that it can be rule based as in symbolic processing (D'Andrade 1995, pp. 136-149) or that it can evolve from multiple experience or parallel processing. Cognitive psychology of the 1960s looked at learning as the processing of information (Newell and Simon, 1972).

Neisser defines cognition as:

"The activity of knowing: the acquisition, organisation and use of knowledge."

(Neisser, 1976, p. 1)

The central importance given to the domain of thought or 'ways of thinking' in the present study has been shown in Sections 1.1 and 1.2. Cognitive psychology, which prioritises thinking, is seen as the most relevant theory of learning to this study. Cognitive theory needs to be looked at in more detail to make this clear.

A cognitive theory of learning

Cognitive theory tries to explain behaviour in terms of how the mind¹⁴ processes information. Cognitive psychology is much preoccupied with the methods of the mind, for example, it has been defined as:

"A method of processing information." (Rosenthal, 1978, p. 1)

In its origins it was influenced by the development of computer processing. It is a branch of cognitive science, which has been described as:

"The convergence of interests in psychology and artificial intelligence."

(Schank, 1977, p. 2)

However cognitive psychology goes beyond information processing and it has important theoretical implications for this study. Cognitive theory maintains that we have mental sets and that the mental phenomena of abstraction, transfer, perception and interpretation are influenced by what has already been stored in the mind and that this in turn affects behaviour:

"Cognitive theorists saw processing of new information as dependent on a learner's prior knowledge and processes." (Wahlberg, 1992, p. 12)

Although the nomenclature applied to the concept of a mental set (or 'prior knowledge and experience' or 'pre existing structures'): varies from one psychologist to another: Neisser (1976) uses the term 'schemata', Schank¹⁵ (1977) uses 'schemata' 'scripts' and 'frames' and Miller (1960) uses 'images and plans' the general meaning is the same. For Neisser perception depends on what we already know:

"We can see only what we know how to look for, it is these schemata that determine what will be perceived." (p. 20) *"Schemata are anticipators, they are the medium by which the past reflects the future: information already acquired determines what will be picked up next."* (Neisser, 1976, p. 22)

Similarly Schank talks about a 'script' which he says is:

"A structure that describes appropriate sequences of events in a particular context. A script is made up of slots and requirements about what can fill those slots. The structure is an interconnected whole, and what is in one slot affects what can be in another. Scripts handle stylised everyday situations. They are not subject to much change, not do they provide the apparatus for handling totally novel situations. Thus a script is a predetermined, stereotyped sequence of actions that defines a well known situation.. Scripts allow for new references to objects within them just as if these objects had been previously mentioned: objects within a script may take 'the' without explicit introduction because the script itself has already implicitly introduced them." (Schank, 1977, p. 41)

He explains how they influence our understanding:

"Understanding then, is a process by which people match what they see and hear to pre-stored groups of actions that they have already experienced. New information is understood in terms of old information." (Schank, 1977, p. 67)

¹⁴ 'Mind' is used as a general term encompassing what goes on in the brain as well as socio-cultural input

¹⁵ Schank (1977, p. 10) traces the development in social psychology of the concept of a mental set.

What is not altogether clear in cognitive psychology is the degree to which the variation between 'scripts' is based on cultural rather than individual variation. Gardner (1987) in his pursuit of what he calls the "heartland" of cognitive science, how all humans think, is not interested in affective and cultural factors which he describes as "fuzzy" areas and which to him confuse the main issue. He is concerned with innate and universal 'frames' of mind, a Chomskian deep structure type of thinking. This study, whilst not disagreeing with the proposition that there must be some sort of commonality in the way we all think, is however given over to exploring those very same "fuzzy" areas which Gardner refers to. Not all cognitive scientists, as will be seen, take the same extreme position as Gardner. There is an acknowledgement that culture must play a part. For example, Miller using the terms 'images and plans' and looking at the extent to which these cognitive features determine behaviour, recognises that the term image includes:

"All the accumulated, organised knowledge that the organism has about itself and its world ... it includes everything that the organism has learned - his values as well as his facts." (Miller, 1960, pp. 17-18),

and that:

"Differences in plans would seem to characterise different cultures as well as different personalities." (Miller, 1960, p. 123)

Neisser too, warns of the danger of ignoring the cultural context. He argues that there is considerable congruence between schemata in any one culture:

"To the extent that we live in a coherent culture, we have encountered a more or less standardised set of social experiences." (Neisser, 1976, p. 188)

There is thus a suggestion from some cognitive scientists that cognitive frames might have cultural input. Perhaps the universals of how we think are at a deeper level still and the frames that cognitive scientists have looked at are in fact cultural ones? It is argued that cognitive psychology is due for a revival if and when it is explicitly used in conjunction with socio-cultural theories, as it will be seen to be used in this study.

Conclusion to learning theory, Section 1. 3.

Cognitive theory is an attractive, if partial, theoretical explanation of learning. It explains how we visually perceive objects in terms of prior knowledge. It explains our understanding in terms of prior knowledge. Cognitive theory provides a theory of learning for this study provided there is an added input from the social and cultural context (as will be seen in Section 1. 4.). Cognitive theory can then explain how English and French children enter school with prior cognitive sets of understanding. The understanding they

already have allows them to understand the knowledge and experience of the classrooms' national contexts. Cognitive theory will be used to explain the relative success of the different teaching approaches used in the two countries as teaching styles are more likely to match the existing "*schemata*" of the two samples of pupils. As will be seen it also provides a theoretical basis for the perceptions held by pupils about schooling from different cultures. Pupil perceptions can be thought of in terms of "*schemata*", or cognitive constructs of understandings and expectations. Furthermore in the area of children's output or work the theoretical contribution of cognitive psychology will be seen to be fundamental. It provides an explanation of why pupils in different cultures tend to produce work which conforms to a cultural type. Pupils have 'learned' a cognitive construct and their work shows instances of the cultural definition of that frame, whether it be the definition of a 'good' story in language or the 'correct' approach to computation in mathematics.

Section 1. 3. has looked at the input from psychology to this study. The role of motivation in learning and the relevance of cognitive theories have been seen. However it is clear that a cognitive theory of learning needs to be combined with a socio-cultural approach in order to explore the relationship between learning and culture. Section 1. 4. examines a final input from social psychology before suggesting that what is required is a theory which combines the social, cultural and cognitive.

1. 4. Learning theory part two, towards cognitive social constructionist theory

So far in this chapter the contributions that have been looked at from the three disciplines of sociology, anthropology and psychology have all concerned cognitive and cultural phenomena. More specifically when contributions from the discipline of psychology, concerning learning, were considered, it was recognised that culture had an important role to play. This theme will now be pursued in another area of psychology that makes more specific links between cognitive constructs and culture. Given the umbrella term of social constructionism, it gives pre-eminence to social and cultural factors in learning.

Social constructionism

Social constructionism covers such approaches as socio-cognitive-developmental theory, the socio-historical approach, the cultural historical, and the socio-cultural approach. Mercer (1992, p. 61) and Ingleby (in Richards and Light, 1986) provide a brief

guide to the terminological variety. More useful is a description by Mercer, on the above mentioned page, of what social constructionism is:

“The essence of this approach is to treat human learning and cognitive development as a process which is culturally based not just culturally influenced; a process which is social rather than individual; a communicative process, whereby knowledge is shared and understandings are constructed in culturally formed settings. It does not, in principle, oppose the idea of innate elements in cognitive development but it does suggest that cognitive development is situated by culture.”

The importance of this theoretical approach to this study should be clear as social constructionism is both cross disciplinary in nature and gives priority to socio-cultural factors in its explanation of learning. Social constructionism introduces another discipline, that of linguistics, as language is seen to be the main conveyor of cultural meanings. Language is seen to have an active role. It not only reveals meanings in interaction but can also be used to construct meanings:

“Our culturally adapted way of life depends upon shared meanings and shared concepts and depends as well upon shared words of discourse for negotiating differences in meaning and interpretation.” (Bruner, 1990, p. 13)

“How does language interaction serve to ‘scaffold’ the child’s efforts at expressing and understanding both events and utterances? How are categories, explanations and representations embodied in interactive discourse? How are underlying intentions of the speaker expressed and interpreted in discourse?” (Bruner, 1987, p. 11)

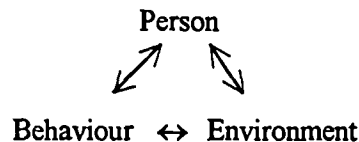
Thus language analysis is also an important feature of this study as will be seen later.

Social and cultural psychology

In order to understand the dominant role of social constructionism in the approach adopted for the present study it is necessary to look at the different perspectives that the term conveys. The emphasis varies with each approach as does the relevance to this study. The first perspective to be looked at, which connects culture and cognition, but not language, is that of social learning. It was recognised in the late sixties in American psychology (Bandura, 1969) that internal or developmental factors were not sufficient to explain behaviour but that there must be a reciprocal relationship between external and internal factors, or, cognition and experience, as the following quotations exemplify:

“Children’s thoughts are moulded from birth by the social milieu in which they are raised Socially mediated experiences greatly expand an individual’s fund of knowledge.” (Bower, 1981, p. 31)

Bower (1981, p. 28) provides a useful diagram to explain Bandura’s view of the relationship between behaviour, cognition and experience:



It is seen as useful as this study maintains at a general level that pupil behaviour is to be explained by a combination of cognitive constructs and socio-cultural experiences. In other words what pupils think about given situations influences their perceptions and understandings (which in turn influence their cognitive constructs) and that this causes them to respond and behave in certain ways

Much earlier reference to the influence of the social on behaviour can also be found in the psychology literature. First Wertsch refers to a call by Dewey in 1901 that explanations of human behaviour in terms of individual behaviour were not sufficient:

“In his view psychology would have to come to terms with how individuals are culturally and historically situated before it could understand many aspects of mental functioning.” (Wertsch, 1991, .p. 3)

Secondly there is an early recognition of the importance of the social from the literature of cultural psychology. Jahoda (1993, p. 133) cites a reference by Wundt in 1920 to a statement that that the main task of psychology must be based on *“the phenomena of social life”*. Cultural psychology is also important to this study as it attempts to combine the theoretical approaches of two disciplines, that of anthropology and psychology, as Wertsch makes clear in his quotation from Shweder (1990):

“(Cultural psychology is) an interdisciplinary human science.” (Wertsch, 1995, p. 3)

Perhaps the most influential figure to emerge from cultural psychology in terms of this study’s theoretical position is that of Bruner. This is because Bruner takes what he calls the ‘psycho-cultural approach’ into the field of education. Education , he says,

“is a complex pursuit of fitting a culture to the needs of its members and of fitting its members and their ways of knowing to the needs of the culture.” (Bruner, 1996, p. 42)

Bruner recognises the ‘no man’s land’ situational problem of learning, or education (also referred to by Daniels, 1998):

“I shall commute back and forth between questions about the nature of mind and about the nature of culture, for a theory of education necessarily lies at the intersect between them.” (Bruner, 1996, p. 13)

This approach is very important as it shares the same under standing adopted in the present study that, education and learning are a combination of what goes on in the brain and culture. When Bruner’s work is looked at in more detail it shows that cultural psychology has other very significant contributions to make to this study. Bruner (like Lévi Strauss) suggests that although we all share the same basic apparatus for thinking (that is our brains work in similar ways) we use it differently, that:

“Different cultures place different emphasis upon the skilled use of different modes of thought.” (Bruner, 1996, p. 26)

This approach will be seen to underlie the analysis of the differences between learning in English and French classrooms and the output of pupils’ work. It will be seen that English and French culture emphasises different modes or models of thinking. Another major Brunerian influence on this study is Bruner’s cultural definition of ‘Self’, ‘Selfhood’ and ‘Self-esteem’. Bruner argues that culture provides an ‘ideal’ type of ‘Self’:

“Different cultures both shape it (selfhood) and set its limits in various ways. Some emphasise autonomy and individuality, some affiliation, some link it closely to a person’s position in a divine or a secular social order, some link it to individual effort or even to luck.” (Bruner, 1996, p. 35),

and as we assess ourselves relative to this ideal so it shapes our perception of ourselves, our ‘self-esteem’. Thus:

“How self esteem is experienced (or how it is expressed) varies, of course, with the ways of one’s culture.” (Bruner, 1996, p. 37)

In practice there exist several different types of ‘ideal self’, but this study is only concerned with an abstracted national construct of self. Bruner thinks culture, and in this case school culture, also provides different ways of managing self esteem:

“The chance for discourse that permits one to find out why or how things didn’t work out as planned.” (Bruner, 1996, p. 37)

This has direct relevance to the influence of culture on learning as it provides a theoretical basis for understanding the cultural difference in motivation found in this study between English and French pupils.

Bruner, influenced by Vygotsky, was also interested in the role of language in learning. He considered that language and culture form symbolic systems and that children learn by communicating or participating in the public process of negotiating within a symbolic system. This is significant for this study as it reinforces conclusions reached in the sections on social and cultural theory that as children learn they are at the same time internalising cultural values. Several studies have explored this theory empirically, particularly in one to one mother-child social interactions. For example, Rogoff (in Foreman and Whiting, 1993) showed how Guatemalan Maya mothers favoured demonstration and unobtrusive direction in their interaction with their offspring compared to American Salt Lake City mothers who were more didactic in their interactions and conveyed a cultural message about individual worth. Seymour (in Blyth and Whiting, 1988) in the Indian context of mother to child observed the transmission of 'dependency'. Wertsch (Wertsch, 1991, p. 139) too recognised that children from different cultures learn different patterns of cognition and that this process can be observed through the language used. The present study follows in the same tradition as these studies, the difference lies in the choice of focus. It is based on the specific empirical context of classroom settings and interaction between teacher and pupils. However this study is not only influenced in the area of social constructionism by social and cultural psychology, another major input is the socio-historical approach.

The socio-historical approach

The next approach to be looked at is socio-historical theory, which is most often associated with the name of Vygotsky. The term socio-historical is used because it conveys a historical perspective. Cole (in Wertsch, 1995) prefers to slightly play down the historical aspect by introducing the extra term of 'cultural' as in 'socio-cultural historical psychology'. As a Marxist, Vygotsky, and other psychologists in Russia such as Leontev and Luria, were preoccupied with providing a theory which would explain the relationship between human culture and history in terms of both evolutionary progress and conflict or sudden change. Although social behaviour or practice thus had a more historically explanatory meaning for Vygotsky, it was his emphasis on the primordial influence of the 'social' on cognitive constructs and behaviour that made his theories have such an impact on the Western world: with its more individual psychological explanations.

"All the higher mental functions are interiorised relations of a social order Their composition, genetic structure and mode of action, in a word all of their nature is social." (Vygotsky quoted by Leontev in Light (1991, pp. 40-41),

and, *"Verbal thought is not an innate, natural form of behaviour but is determined by a historico-cultural process."* (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 94)

The 'social' was also seen to have an influence on learning where social was taken to mean social interaction. In contrast to contemporary western psychologists' understanding of learning where children were seen to be programmed to progress almost naturally through developmental stages:

A child is "a natural seeker after, and architect of his own understanding."

(Piaget quoted by Wood in Richards and Light, 1986, p. 101)

so that the teacher's role could almost be limited to providing the correct environment, Vygotsky thought that it was the social environment and social interaction which promoted development. Instruction therefore had to be ahead of the child's level:

"The only kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it, it must not be aimed so much at the ripe (the stage the child is at) as the ripening functions." (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 188),

as learning preceded development: *"The developmental process lags behind the learning process."* (Vygotsky, 1986 p. 188)

In this paradigm intelligence could be defined as *"The capacity to learn through instruction."* (Wood, in Richards and Light, 1986, p. 101). The role of the teacher or person with whom the child is interacting was thus maximised. Learning was thought by Vygotsky to consist of two levels: first the level which corresponds to what the child has already learnt and second a level of learning which the child could reach if aided by instruction or interaction with others, otherwise known as the zone of proximal development, or ZPD. The link between learning and the social was made clear by Rogoff:

"Vygotsky defined the ZPD as a dynamic region of sensitivity to learning experience in which children develop guided by social interaction" (Rogoff in Light, 1991, p. 68)

Although this study does not set out to carry out a Vygotskian analysis of children's learning (it will however make parallels between a more Vygotskian theoretical view of learning in France compared to a more Piagetian model of learning in England) it is important to look at his theory of learning as it provides another example of a theoretical perspective which combines cultural and mental phenomena. Both Rogoff (op. cit.) and Cole, quoted by Serpell (in Wertsch, 1985), make the point that the ZPD is the point where culture and cognition meet. As in cultural psychology, language is thought to play a fundamental role. It is regarded as playing an important part in the development of cognition. Whereas Piaget saw language as an indication of a learning stage, for Vygotsky

language was the tool which enabled learning in a social environment to take place, language comes to be seen the formative part of a child's growth:

"The child's intellectual growth is contingent on his mastering the social means of thought, that is language." (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 94)

This study's position regarding the role of language will be looked at later.

Thus the present study is also influenced by the socio-historical perspective of learning, as it also connects cultural and mental phenomena. A final social constructionist influence on the present study to be examined is that of socio-culturalism.

Socio-culturalism

Socio-culturalism is the term favoured by Wertsch (1995), Zinchenko (1985), Bronckart (1995), Olson (1995) and others as by leaving out the term 'historical' it does not convey the same evolutionary assumptions about society as the Soviet approach. Nevertheless socio-culturalism is rooted in Vygotsky's work. Human behaviour is again seen to be largely explained in terms of cultural patterns:

"The structuring of human activity is of a socio-cultural nature." (Bronckart, 1995, p. 76)

The part played by cognitive constructs, which is seen as fundamental in this study, is also recognised in the socio-cultural approach. Wertsch (1995, pp. 56-57) sees that socio-cultural research is looking at the relationship between mental processes and socio-cultural settings. The basic unit of analysis in this approach is not individuals or society but action and in particular 'mediated action'. What is meant by this term is how people behave using such 'tools' and symbolic systems as language and writing. In this sense the individual is not considered to be a free agent as he has to express himself using a symbolic system which is itself a product of the historical and cultural context. This study does not make use of the term mediated action as it does not want to be over associated with any one socio-constructionist approach. Nevertheless the units of analysis in the present study, which are teacher discourse in the classroom, pupil discourse about schooling and pupil expression in written form could be accurately described as mediated action.

The position of this study regarding language needs to be re-visited before concluding this section of social constructionism. The basic argument in this study is that language is not culture free. However unlike the already mentioned Sapir Whorf hypothesis this study does not agree that it is language that is constraining thought. It is argued that the relationship between language and thought is more two sided and symbiotic. Following Bloch (1991)'s conclusions that learning is not only often beyond but

above language this study holds that cognitive constructs can influence cultural patterns. The way that language is used is seen as part of culture and thus it not only helps to build culture it also reflects culture and cognitive constructs. In the same way as ethnic dances are a visual form of culture so language use, it is argued, can be the sound medium of culture.

Language plays two main roles in this study. First it is used as a 'way in' to cognitive constructs in this study's three types of data. The language used by teachers and the meanings about cultural learning thereby conveyed are fundamental to the observation of classroom processes. The analysis of the language used by pupils in their perceptions is essential to understand their cognitive constructs. Finally it is the language that pupils use in their written work which suggests the underlying acquired cultural models of thinking. Secondly language is seen to play an active role in the pupils' formation of these cognitive constructs. Linking together Bakhtin (1986) and Bernstein (1990) it is recognised that pupils have first to accept the 'mediational means', which consist largely of language, before they can progress through their country's national educational system. As Bernstein has shown there is not but one language in the school environment but several discourses or codes ('voices' in Wertsch 1991, Bernstein, 1990). Teacher discourse is the most important 'voice' in school. But as all discourse contains latent social messages so teacher discourse is a reflection of the social and cultural context. Bernstein expresses this idea in the following way:

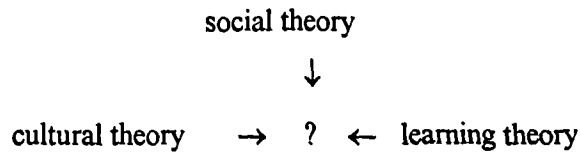
"Pedagogic discourse has no rules of its own, it is embedded in regulative discourse." (Bernstein 1990, p. 184)

where regulative discourse is defined as *"the dominant principles of a given society"*. Furthermore this study holds that regulative discourse is itself a product of cognitive constructs so that pupils are not only acquiring the language of teacher discourse but the cognitive constructs that underlie it. This idea can be found in Wertsch:

"Teachers want to organise intermental functioning so that its patterns can be mastered and internalised by students." (Wertsch, 1991, p. 112)

Thus language is readily available and analysable data which contains within it messages about cultural cognitive constructs.

Social constructionism has been looked at in some depth as it provides the background theoretical perspective of the current study. In exploring the relationships between education and learning, and the socio-cultural setting it is, like this study, multi-disciplinary, seeking to fill in the gap between several disciplines:



Moreover social constructionism adds a further dimension, that of language. The term social constructionism was described earlier as an umbrella term because it embraces several different approaches. These differences stem mainly from whether the approaches are setting out from the disciplines of psychology or sociology. As this section on theory has demonstrated this study is not associated with any one discipline in particular but instead firmly occupies the middle ground between several disciplines. Wertsch (1995, p. 30) even questions whether social constructionism should not be non-disciplinary. A game analogy might be useful here. The players in this game would be units of society. They could comprise individuals, or groups, or institutions or on a larger scale, national cultures. Their actions could be looked at in terms of moves in different skill zones. These zones would be social, language or cognitive ones. Society could be represented as a board game with players making moves from one interrelated skill zone to another.

This study belongs to the social constructionist perspective because social constructionism joins the three fundamental concepts of society, culture and learning which were explored in Sections 1. 1., 1. 2. and 1.3. into one theory. Social constructionist theory provides a socio-cultural theory of learning. It holds that children learn in a social context when they are interacting with peers, adults and teachers. Social constructionism sees that children are ‘scaffolded’ through learning by these social participants. Language plays an important part in mediating learning from the transmitter to the receiver. Learning has taken place when there has been a change in the child’s cognition. This change is seen as fundamentally social in origin as it was acquired as a social package containing explicit or implicit social assumptions and was conveyed by language which is also socio-culturally loaded. This theory of learning could be represented as:

$$\text{Learning} = \text{socio/cultural + language} \rightarrow \text{cognition}$$

This is not explicitly stated anywhere but underlies such studies as Rogoff (1993) and Chan (1979). It accords with this study’s view of learning and the dominant position given to the effect of culture and cognitive constructs on learning.

Conclusion to Chapter One

This chapter has had two main aims: to set down the building blocks of a theoretical model which is required for this study; and to trace these back to their original sources in social, cultural and learning theory. This study has worked towards a theoretical basis which encompasses issues such as societal identity, socialisation, individual interaction, cultural relativity, learning, and cognitive constructs. It was seen that what was required was a combination of theoretical concepts whose sources were to be found in the three disciplines of sociology, anthropology and psychology.

First to be considered was social theory in terms of structure. To Durkheim is owed the concept of society as a social fact, that society has an identity, and that this identity is expressed in shared ways of thinking. It was suggested that 'ways of thinking' were both consciously and unconsciously held. The role of education in embodying societal identity and the part that it plays in socialisation was also seen to be Durkheimian in origin. Weber's concept of an ideal type was held to be of central importance as it provided the justification for claiming the existence of abstracted ideal cognitive constructs associated with particular countries. Secondly the contribution of social theory in terms of social action and agency was considered. In order to explain the reality of conflicting pressures in society and change, and the need to explain meaning from the individual's point of view, social action theory was also required. Thus individuals were seen to make experiences meaningful through social interactions. Structure and agency were not seen as conflicting explanations but rather as complimentary ones, which together could more accurately describe social reality.

The 'holistic' and comparative approach of this study were seen to come from the anthropological preoccupation with looking at whole societies and comparing them. Further justification for a cognitive definition of culture was also found in the anthropological tradition. The concept of a cognitive construct was seen to derive from the influence of cognitive science on anthropology and on psychological theories of learning. The concept that cognitive constructs can influence social practices was also seen to be rooted in anthropology. Psychological explanations of learning and motivation, where they involved social and cultural factors were examined.

It was concluded that social constructionist theory provided the closest existing explanatory framework as it offered a ready made package linking social, cultural and learning factors. A different route might have been to refer directly to social constructionist theory. The approach used here, of delving into each discipline in turn, was

chosen for two reasons. Firstly because it was thought important to show the development of the theoretical perspective. Social constructionist theory is presented as part of the development of this study's theoretical background. It is hoped that the relevance of social constructionism is more obvious using this approach. Secondly it is argued that social constructionism is not in itself a sufficient theoretical explanation for the study's findings. It lacks the strong cognitive element that it has been suggested is required here. This chapter has thus taken us to the point of seeing that what is needed is a theory in the social constructionist tradition but one which gives more emphasis to cognition. The proposed solution, that is cognitive social constructionism, will be presented in Part Three, Chapter Seven, following the presentation of the empirical research and substantive findings.

Chapter Two

Methodology

In Section 1.1 attention was drawn to Theisen and Adams' (1990) demand that comparative research, whether of qualitative or of quantitative design could only be deemed 'scientific' if it were planned, problem focused, driven by theory and carried out with an explicit methodology. Chapter One has gone some way to meet the first three demands, this chapter will cover the last demand of an explicit methodology as well as continue to demonstrate the degree to which this research was planned and problem focused.

2. 1. Ethnography

This study uses the term ethnography in an anthropological sense of an in depth study of a given society or culture with the aim of gaining insight not only into how the society is organised but also into the informants' values and beliefs in order to understand the underlying values of that society. One of the problems of the use of the term ethnography in the field of education is, as Pepin (1999) points out, that it is often confused with the methods that it uses. For example Delamont and Atkinson (1980 p. 139) give a solely methods based definition of the term. This chapter will look at some of the theoretical implications of ethnography. Other issues, which are mentioned in Hopkin's (Hopkin, 1992, p. 134) description of the qualitative approach, such as: ecological validity, ante or concurrent hypothesis formulation, researcher influence on participants, researcher influence on findings, integrity and the way in which qualitative and quantitative methods are mutually supporting will also be examined.

One of the problems of ethnographies is that their scientific status needs to be defended. This is the main aim of this chapter. However it is worth at this point considering to what extent the aims of an ethnography need in fact to be 'scientific'. Gardner (1987, p. 111) has argued that anthropological analysis uses strategies from the arts rather than sciences, because the aim is to understand meaning. He even accepts that 'imagination' is a required skill in that the researcher needs to take an "imaginative leap" into the informant's mind. Bernstein (1975) too refers to the "sociological imagination". In this study the term 'intuition' is preferred to that of 'imagination', but it is in basic agreement with the idea that ethnographic work, especially in the area of semantics, must rely to a great extent on the researcher's intuition and interpretation of the data. Hence the importance of the researcher's prior and deep understanding of the cultures concerned

(Hopkin's 1992, p. 140 concept of the 'indigenous' researcher) and the relatively large investment of personal experience in the research (Woods, 1986). Furthermore in this study data analysis did often resemble that of Gardner's "*literary critic trying to understand a text*", but would contest that this diminished its validity.

As a cross cultural ethnography there are also other specific issues which need to be considered. These were first outlined by Warwick and Osherson in 1973, and have since been reiterated by Broadfoot and Osborn (1993) and Pepin (1999). They include conceptual equivalence, equivalence of measurement, linguistic equivalence and sampling.

Reasons for choosing an ethnography

The ethnographic approach was chosen firstly because it matched the research questions, as advocated by Hopkin (1992, p. 134), Patton (in Fetterman, 1988), Crossley and Preston (1987, p. 74), and Trow (in Filstead, 1970). To recapitulate from the introduction these research questions developed from:

What are the differences between primary classrooms and learning in the English national context and the French national context?

to:

What can the perceptions of the pupils reveal about how they, and their attitude to learning, are affected by these differences?

and:

Do the cultural learning characteristics of England and France affect pupil learning in England and France and if so in what ways?

It was because this study was looking at in-depth questions about classroom contexts and pupil experience that it needed to use a zoom lens type of methodology, to use Warwick and Osherson (1972)'s effective analogy of comparing different research methods to camera lenses. Returning to Theisen and Adams's advocacy for comparative research this study had the aim of '*knowing something well*'.

Not only were the research questions a deciding factor in the choice of an ethnography but there was also the fact that it was to be carried out in what were at the time relatively uncharted waters. Comparative English French work had been carried out by Broadfoot and Osborn (1987), in the domain of the national context, teacher perspectives and classroom contexts. There was at the time virtually no work on pupils in the French context though there was a fairly extensive body of work on the English pupil perspective (see Chapter Five). There was no work on the comparative English French

pupil perspective. Similarly there was little previous research in the learning output of English and French primary pupils.

Spradley (1980) equates the choice of qualitative or quantitative methods with the amount of pre-existing knowledge. He thus compares the quantitative researcher to a petroleum engineer, who has a clear idea of what he is looking for, with the qualitative researcher, who he says is more like an explorer. This study needed the in depth data that is associated with qualitative methods because it was to a large extent “*mapping an uncharted wilderness*” (Spradley, 1980).

Thirdly because of the comparative nature of the research question it was important that the method chosen should be sensitive to context. It needed to have ‘ecological validity’ Crossley and Preston (1987, p. 74). Finally as described in the biographical details given in the introduction, the author was bicultural and thus as Hopkin (1992, p. 140) recommends ‘*indigenous*’ to both cultures and furthermore already trained in anthropological field techniques.

2. 2. The national context as a unit of comparative analysis

From the outset this study has been a comparative one. The research questions arose as a direct result of the author’s experience of French primary education following on from the experience of English primary education. It has already been seen that this study’s comparative stance follows the anthropological perspective. It has also been argued by Theisen and Adams (1990 p. 270, quoting Swanson) and others (Hantrais and Mangen 1996) that without comparison thought is impossible. Comparison gives better understanding and can reveal what is taken for granted. As Theisen and Adams (1990, p. 277) explain:

“We compare to make choices, to engage in debates, to better understand ourselves, our lives, and the environment about us. Comparison can help us to understand, to extend our insights, and to sharpen our perspectives. If we wish to know something well, many writers tell us, we must examine it in comparison.”

The units of comparison in this study are two countries. What is the justification for taking a country as a unit of analysis? Returning to Broadfoot’s (1999, p. 26) definition of the goals of comparative education cited in Chapter One, she refers to the location of studies in comparative education in ‘*diverse cultural settings*’. This is a usefully wide definition which by avoiding the contentious terms of ‘nation’ or ‘country’ encompasses research both within and across national boundaries. However this study takes the bull of

theoretical comparative education by the horns and makes national contexts its unit of analysis.

Clearly there are many problems associated with the term 'national context' and even more so with 'national culture'; problems such as geographical and political identity, regionalisation, multiculturalism and the complexities of the post modern world on the one hand and the effects of globalisation on the other hand, which it could be argued, destroy the concept of a national context. Nevertheless England and France do exist as national contexts which have fairly clear political and economic identities and long histories. In the field of education they each have a centralised national educational system which attempts to exert control over educational institutions and their users. It is because national educational systems exist that it is justifiable to compare them. The selection of a country as a unit of comparison follows in the tradition of Broadfoot and Osborn's work (1988) and further back to Shafer (1955, p. 265):

"As practitioners of the scientific methods scholars are bound to look for distinctions of kind, level and functions; and nationality is the most significant contemporary group distinction."

In choosing to explore the concept of national culture, as it is defined by its values, it is not denied that within each country there is a complex network of overlapping cultures concerned with ethnic, religious, regional, social class, gender, age, occupational, etc. groups. These are however lie outside the focus of this study as it is restricted to a national definition of culture. It restricts itself to a nation as its unit of analysis. Thus this study belongs to the research tradition of cross-national comparative research as summarised by Pepin, quoting from Hantrais et al 1985:

"Cross-national comparative research implies that systematic comparisons and analyses are made of two or more societies. Data is gathered about nations and about their specific conditions, and 'by illuminating, interpreting and explaining similarities and differences' the researcher seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the social world, and at the same time seeks to generalise." (Pepin, 1999, p. 3)

Perhaps because of the problems associated with the definition of 'national context' many studies side-step the issue (some exceptions besides Broadfoot and Osborn are Avalos 1986 and Pepin herself 1999), and avoid specific reference to countries, preferring the terms 'cultural' or simply 'comparative'.

In carrying out cross national research this study makes the assumption common to cross cultural and cross national studies, that as a species humans share the same physiological thinking processes (Shore's, 1996 "*psychic unity*"). It has to be assumed

that we all share the same mental functions otherwise we would not be comparing like with like.

2.3. Sample

As an ethnography seeking 'scientific' status this study needed to meet the criteria of generalisability, validity and reproducibility. The validity of a study may depend on the selection of its sample. Validity and generalisability are particularly difficult in a cross national context where sampling frames may be non comparable. Fortunately as two industrial Western economies the differences between England and France are not too great and with careful planning most problems were largely overcome. Following Warwick and Osherson's (1972) recommendations great consideration was given to the selection of the sample.

Firstly two state primary schools were selected in each country in order to increase generalisability and validity of this study with only minimal loss in ethnographic depth. State and not private schools were chosen as they account for the majority (*la masse*) of both pupil populations and they embody national characteristics and identity (Durkheim, 1956, p. 81). English and French private schools would have complicated the main issues with their own specific characteristics.

Secondly the four schools concerned¹⁶, situated in fairly comparable semi-rural areas in the south-west of England and the south-east of France, were matched as closely as possible, firstly in terms of pupil socio-economic background. This information was arrived at by talking to headteachers and teachers as well as looking at the type of housing in the four areas. The schools functioned as cross national matched pairs. Thus St Paul's (English) and St Martin's (French) were more homogeneously upper working class. Cotswolds (English) and St George (French) could be characterised as more socially mixed (for further description of the schools see the appendix). Another important criteria in the selection of the schools was the researcher's role. The English school of Cotswolds and the French school of St George were also selected on the basis of the researcher's double role as parent (and helper) as well as researcher in the two schools. This gave the researcher more inside information on several fronts: as a long-standing member of two local communities; closer pre-existing relations with headteachers and teachers; closer pre-existing relations with pupils; relations with school personnel and children out of the school context; and use of the researcher's own children to corroborate the data.

¹⁶ A description of the two English and two French primary schools can be found in Appendix 2.

The selection of the second English and second French school proved more difficult. Four other French primary schools were considered and then rejected as a third criterion used in the selection was that both the English and French schools chosen should contain elements of what could be termed a 'traditional' or 'progressive' outlook. Thus in England, Cotswolds was chosen as it was a school with a child centred ethos (no uniform, anti selective grammar schools, and known as a 'green' school) . St Paul's had a more traditional ethos (strict uniform, setting in Years Five and Six, supported selective grammar schools). In France St George was less traditional and formal than St Martin. It was more open to the outside community and more child centred. This intra national contrast in the sample of schools increased the generalisability and validity of the sample as it minimised and maximised differences (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 68). Another important consideration was that of proximity and practical convenience. (Hammersley, 1979, p. 41). The last problem to be encountered in the choice of the sample of schools was one of access. Unexpectedly this proved to be more difficult in England than in France. The researcher's role in the second English and French schools was that of a researcher and foreign language teacher.¹⁷

Two classes were selected from the lower and the upper end of the junior age range in each school, in order to also explore the variable of age difference in socialisation. Ages could not be matched exactly as the English schools combined age groups and the ages of the French children varied with the effect of year repetition. At the lower end of the schools a Year 1 and a combined Year 2/Year 3 class (English children aged 5-8 years) were matched with two CP ('*cours préparatoire*') classes in France (children aged 5-7 years). At the top end of the junior age range, two combined Year 5/Year 6 classes (English children aged 9-11 years) were matched with one CM1 ('*cours moyen*') class (St George) and one CM2 class (St Martin) (French children aged 9-13 years)

	England		France	
Schools	Cotswolds	St Paul's	St Martin	St George
Classes	Year 2/Year 3 and Year 5/year 6	Year 1 and Year 5/Year 6	CP and CM2	CP and CM1
Age in years	5-8 and 9-11	5-6 and 9-11	5-7 and 9-13	5-7 and 9-11
Dates	October/November 1993	May/June 1994	January/February 1994	March/April 1994

Figure 4 School and class sample for main period of fieldwork

¹⁷ I later heard through the childminder employed by one of the French school's teachers that the pupils referred to me as , "*La gentille dame qui est prof d'anglais*".

Another consideration in the selection of the classes involved (where there was a choice) was the attitude of the teachers or 'gatekeepers' to this study and the presence of the researcher.

Field work was carried out in two phases. The first phase took place during the academic year of 1993-1994. Each school was allotted a minimum slot of six weeks or half a term, although the researcher was only present in each school for two days of each of those six weeks, i.e. 12 days per school but over a six week period. This timetable, though dictated by practical reasons, was found to be beneficial for: observing developments in the school and the class as a whole, following pupils and pupil teacher relationships, the development of the pupils and their work, as well as for reflection and continuous analysis of data observing developments in the school and the class as a whole as well, which would not have been possible if the fieldwork had been carried out over a continuous period of six days. The order of the field work, followed a 'sandwich' system, of one of the English schools (in the second half of the autumn term of 1993), the two French schools (in the spring term of 1994), and the second English school in the first half of the summer term of 1994. This 'sandwich' system provided maximum immersion in the two educational cultures at the same time as giving maximum comparability. The return to the English context in 1994 and the second English school, was particularly valuable for the establishment and confirmation of categories.

Following preliminary analysis of the data, additional fieldwork of a shorter duration (one week in each school) was carried out at the end of the spring term of 1995, in order to progressively focus on pupil attitude to school and learning.

	England	France
Schools	Cotswolds	St George
Classes	Year 5 (part of a Year 5/Year 6 class)	CM1
Dates	March 1995	April 1995

Figure 5 Additional fieldwork

Data gathering was not however restricted to the these two formal periods of fieldwork. Close contact was maintained with Cotswolds and St George from the start of this study until 1998. Further informal data was collected from both within the schools and outside the schools in English and French society, either directly or through the media.

In this way practice and reflection formed an ongoing process . Close contact over a long period also allowed the researcher to check the validity of cognitive constructs arising from the analysis with English and French adult and child informants. This process has much in common with Wallace's (1968, p. 537) methodology for ethnosemantics. The informant's confirmation to the researcher's proposition - "*That's right; that's good; now you've got it.*" was an essential part of the author's tool in deciphering cultural values and mentalities.

Data was also gathered both beyond the dates of formal data gathering and beyond the sample in that it followed Sadler's (Crossley, 1984, p. 196) view that the clues to a country's educational system also lie outside education in society itself. Accordingly quotations are used from the media, as has already been seen in Chapter 1, in order to supplement and triangulate the data. Chapter 4 also uses data in the form of anecdotal evidence and conversations with teachers and parents from within or outside schools. The latter can be justified as conversations have an underlying function of establishing shared meanings (Berger and Luckman 1966, p. 172). This study uses data wherever it is applicable to the research question. It accepts that in the absence of a rigorous natural scientific method, the researcher's reflexivity and integrity are fundamental to maintain validity and that, in keeping with Bourdieu (in Grenfell and James 1998, p. 172) in the final analysis it is not the type of method that is used that is important but how it is used and to what ends.

Furthermore the problems of generalisability associated with sampling in ethnographic work are reduced in this study because of the degree to which the findings can be triangulated by other later studies. The findings of this study were confirmed by the quantitative findings of the QUEST project¹⁸ on classroom contexts and pupil experience (gathered through systematic observation in the classroom contexts and pupil questionnaire responses). This suggests that the school, class and pupil samples used in this study were representative of the two countries.

Whilst it has been seen that all efforts were made to ensure a valid sample and thus increase generalisability this study remains open to the criticism of lack of generalisability. In its defence the latter criticism can also be aimed at social science in general as Weber noted before even the advent of ethnographies:

¹⁸ Details of the QUEST project, in which the author was a member of the research team, can be found in Appendix 1. 3.

“As in the case with any generalising science, the very abstract nature of the concepts of sociology means that they must be relatively lacking in content as compared with the concrete realities of history. What sociology can offer in return is greater conceptual clarity. This increase in clarity is achieved by ensuring the greatest possible degree of adequacy on the level of meaning, and it is to this that the sociologist aspires in the formation of his concepts.” (Weber in Runciman, 1978, p. 23)

Thus the real goal of the social sciences is clarity of meaning. Ethnographies in particular, with their emphasis on ecological validity rather than population validity, excel at providing depth of meaning, which is the aim of this study.

2. 4. Empirical research methods used

The reasons for choosing a cross national ethnography in this study have been looked at, as has the issue of sampling. What were the research instruments used and on what basis were they chosen? What theoretical perspectives underlie the methods used? In order to explain the choice of methods used in the empirical work the research questions need to be referred to once more.

2. 4. 1. Observation

The first research question was:

What are the differences between primary classrooms and learning in the English national context and the French national context?

The focus was to be in-depth, not only on the teacher but the pupils, their relationships to each other, their relationships with their teacher and their attitude towards schoolwork (it was initially hoped that observation of pupils in the classroom setting would also help in the understanding of their perspective, how they felt in a given situation). The aim was to explore the similarities and the differences between the two contexts in this domain.

Observation was carried out in each of the eight classes for one day a week over a period of 6 weeks for each class. This gave a total of 24 days of observation in the 2 schools in England and 24 days of observation in the 2 schools in France. As the two classes from each school were observed over the six week period, the author was in each school for two days a week over that period. The days chosen for observation in each class were varied from one week to another in order to avoid timetable limitations and thus see a wider range of activities.

Participant observation

Because the research aims were in-depth, complex and open ended they needed the qualitative method of participant observation. Participant observation has been defined as:

A process in which the observer's presence in a social setting is maintained for the purpose of scientific investigation. The observer is in a face to face relationship with the observed, and by participating with them in their natural life setting, he gathers data. Thus the observer is part of the context being observed, and he both modifies and is influenced by the context" (Schwartz and Schwartz in Mc Call and Simmons, 1969, p. 79)

There was a difference in the researcher's role in some of the schools. The researcher's role at Cotswolds and its matched French counterpart St George's was that of a participant observer, veering slightly more towards Gold's (Mc Call and Simmons, 1969) participant as observer in these two schools than it was at St Paul's and St Martin's. Participation at Cotswold took the form in school of subject work with groups. At St George participation took the form of responsibility for the class in the teacher's absence. Out of the school site participation in both schools took the form of providing adult support on outside school trips (notably a skiing trip with St George). In both St Paul's and St Martins schools the researcher was not known at the school or in the area and the role was more clearly defined as an observer with less participation. Thus although it was acknowledged that the researcher's presence affected the classroom and school context (Hopkin, 1992), this was built into the research design. As the researcher effect was consistent across the national samples it should not have substantially influenced the findings.

What was observed?

The main focus of the classroom observations were originally intended to be that of "*actions and behaviour*", deeds rather than words (Crossley and Preston, 1987, p. 64). However in the event the data from the observations concentrated on teacher and pupil discourse. There were several reasons for this. Firstly it was not possible for one researcher to concentrate adequately on the teacher, pupils, relationships between teacher and pupils, and the nature of the learning tasks simultaneously. Secondly pupil behaviour, particularly in France, gave very little information about pupil experience. It was not possible to discern how French pupils reacted to the "*relatively sterile/harsh environment*" of the French classroom, (as described by the rapporteur to the QUEST ESRC report) as their stance was often impassive and unreadable. Thirdly and most importantly it was the teacher discourse and the type of learning it implied that was most

significant in terms of answering the first research question about the differences in the national learning context. As others have noted (Stubbs, 1976) classroom discourse goes beyond linguistic utterances. It is based on 'ground rules' or "*common knowledge*" (Edwards and Mercer, 1987, p. 59) without which teacher utterances would lack meaning. It is these ground rules which this study tries to explore. Teacher discourse was also revealing for the understanding of teacher control in the classroom (Barnes 1976). Following Bernstein (1996, p. 48), teacher instructional discourse is embedded in regulative discourse. This study sees that the two discourses are inseparable and reflect the mentalities of the national context. Furthermore teacher and pupil discourse in the classroom were found to be extremely significant for the understanding of the important question of what teaching and learning mean in different cultural contexts. Since Vygotsky's (1986) theory that language plays an important part in the intellectual development of children is widely accepted it was important to look at teacher and pupil discourse in order to understand not only how the teacher taught but how the child learnt.

Coding and location of observation

Because English and French classroom contexts were only a relatively '*uncharted wilderness*' empirical observation followed the signposts of the key research themes (see Appendix 5). Ethnographic notes, consisting primarily of teacher discourse, were taken down at speed. Examples from classrooms in the two national contexts can be seen in Appendix 6 and Appendix 7. They were coded according to the coding scheme of the key research themes (Appendix 5). Coding generally took place in the evening or the following day, although with practice and memorisation simultaneous writing and coding did develop. Observation was not restricted to the classroom setting. It was carried out: during English assemblies, parents evenings, school trips. Furthermore it also took place outside the school context, as has already been stated. Ethnographic material was also collected wherever it was relevant to the research aims, whether in the form of examples from text books, or pupil work, photographs, school notices or information sent out to parents. Thus in accordance with Hopkin's outline of qualitative strategies the collection of data was an ongoing process.

This study did not contain a specific instrument that would have explored the teachers' perceptions of their teaching and the classroom context. This was firstly because it was felt that Broadfoot and Osborne's existing work had already covered this area and secondly because data on teacher perceptions was gathered ethnographically in this study.

as part of the observation notes. Much informal discussion took place with teachers during morning and afternoon breaks and even occasionally during class times.

Validity

Returning to the argument put forward in Section 2. 3. defending the validity of this study it is maintained that the data on classroom observations is particularly valid because “*the experience was lived*” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 67), in other words the researcher lived through the classroom data. Validity is further increased by the presence of only one researcher resulting in greater consistency in the field work, as Filstead says:

“Why does the researcher trust what he knows? If there is only one sociologist involved, he himself knows what he knows about what he has studied and lived through. They are his perceptions, his personal experiences, and his own hard won analyses.”
(Filstead, 1970, p. 294)

The ‘flip side’ to this position is that the researcher’s perceptions, experiences and analyses are more open to personal bias. This issue is examined more closely in Section 2.4.2., which follows, but the author argues that integrity and reflexivity guard against bias.

2. 4. 2. Pupil interviews

The second research instrument used was that of pupil interviews. Interviews were selected as a method in order to explore the second research question:

What can the perception of the pupils reveal about how they, and their attitude to learning, are affected by these differences?

The decision to use qualitative methods was once more taken on the basis that the comparative English French field of pupil experience was an unknown field which needed a sensitive an open ended framework.

All the children in each of the four classes in each country were interviewed. Interviews were carried out in groups of three or four with pupils choosing members of the group. This gave 55 groups in 1993-1994. Progressive focusing was carried out in 1995 (see Figure 5) when a further 13 groups were interviewed. This gave a total of 240 pupil interviewees.

Implications of interviews

Interviews, which have been defined by Cannell (in Cohen and Mannion 1983, p. 307) as:

“Initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation”

were chosen as the most appropriate method to gather data on pupil experience.

Malinowski (1922) was one of the first to recognise that the importance of talking to informants in order to *“grasp the native’s point of view”*. The aim of gathering interview data was, as Spradley (1979) expressed *“To make cultural inferences from language samples”*, to gain understanding from pupils’ expressions and accounts (Woods 1977, p. 14), in other words to try to understand how English and French children made sense of their school experience from what they said about it. There is an element of ethnomethodology here as what the study wanted to find out was the cognitive constructs that underlay the approach, if not the methods, of English and French pupils to their everyday lives. In this sense this study has something in common with Garfinkel’s (in Bogdan and Biklen 1982, p. 37) definition of ethnomethodology, how:

“People go about seeing, explaining, and describing order in the world in which they live.”

It was hypothesised that English and French pupils ‘ways of thinking’ about their school experience would differ.

Underpinning the aim of the interviews in understanding pupil experience is the phenomenological theoretical assumption that reality should be looked at from the pupil’s point of view. It is his/her account of his/her experiences that is important. This study accepts that:

“It is the meaning of our experiences that constitutes reality” (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p. 32).

and it accepts that reality is to some extent subjective and relativistic:

“It all depends on where you are sitting, how things look to you” (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p. 31).

Validity

The repercussions of the above relativistic view of reality is that one researcher from his/her point of view, might interpret the observed reality in a different way from

another researcher. It is the researcher who interprets the informants' views. Furthermore as Hopkin points out:

"The researcher (in qualitative research) has far greater opportunity to determine the quality and nature of the data derived." (Hopkin, 1992, p. 134)

It is acknowledged that the qualitative researcher can strongly influence both the quality and the outcome of the data. This is unavoidable as there are more demands made upon the researcher's interpretations of the informants' speech and behaviour:

"In our exchanges with others, we are bound to rely upon our subjective experience if we wish to grasp what others are thinking and feeling. We observe behaviour, the signals which others give us. But we interpret those signals, at least in part, in terms of what we ourselves feel or have felt in the past." (Storr, 1987, p. 86)

However this study would also take issue with the criticism that qualitative methods are less valid and reliable because they are more subjective and thus more open to bias.

Provided that there is also an increase in reflexivity, as it is argued occurred in this study, then there is also a constant awareness and questioning of subjectivity. To some extent problems of bias were also reduced by the author's biculturalism which allowed any cultural meaning to be looked at from two perspectives at once; that of the outsider and that of the insider.

Validity was also an issue in the choice of using an interview schedule as the interviewing method.

The interview schedule

The decision was taken to use an interview schedule (see Appendix 8 and 9 for copies of the English and French interview schedules) for the purpose of gathering data on the pupil perspective. There were several reasons for this. First there were pre-existing lines of enquiry originating from the literature and the researcher's experience (see the interview schedule design in Appendix 10 covering issues, aims and actual questions) and secondly interview schedules often produce data in a form that is easier to analyse. Thirdly it was thought important to follow a more standardised approach in order to maintain comparability in the two countries. An interview schedule would limit the cross national problem of equivalence of measurement, which Warwick and Osherson (1972) refer to. Fourthly and finally interview schedules are generally considered to be more systematic and rigorous. Their 'scientific' validity' is easier to defend.

The design of the interview schedule was only semi-structured, half way between Cohen and Mannion's (1983) structured and unstructured interviews (Gordon's (1975)

scheduled and non-scheduled interviews and Powney and Watts's (1987) respondent and informant interviews) so that pupil themes and concepts could be followed. This study recognised that it was important for the children to follow their own thinking:

"Without allowing people to speak freely we will never know what their real intentions are, and what the true meanings of what their words might be" (Cottle, 1978, p. 12)

However with the confidence that comes from experience, given the chance to repeat this study, an approach which was even more open ended and qualitative (Cousin, 1998), consisting of freer discussion between groups of pupils would have been preferred. Later personal experience in cross national research showed this method to be more effective for the collection of data which is aimed at understanding pupil meanings, without losing out on validity.

Potential problems of a cross cultural interview schedule

The cross cultural problems of conceptual equivalence and linguistic equivalence have already been referred to. They were to a large extent resolved by the author's biographical cultural duality. The interview schedule design (Appendix 10), though written in English was conceptualised in both languages. The use of the terms 'languages' also implies both cultures. Thus when an issue was considered, for example that of pupil understanding of the causes of achievement ('effort and ability in achievement', p. 5 of interview schedule design) and the research questions were posed (p. 5 of interview schedule design, Aim 5), it was considered in its cross national setting from the outset. The researcher's indigenous knowledge of the cross national conceptual equivalence of achievement allowed its causes to be explored. Following the same example, it was the researcher's understanding of not only the two languages but also of the two cultural contexts that enabled the problem of linguistic equivalence to be resolved. The exploration of achievement in the cultures resulted in the English interview question (Appendix 8, English interview schedule, p. 9, C51) of *"Why do you think some children do better than others?"* and the French question (Appendix 5, French interview schedule, p. 9, C51) of *"A ton avis pourquoi il y en a qui réussissent mieux à l'école que d'autres?"* The use of the phrase *"do better"* in the English context and *"réussissent"* in the French context is related at a much deeper level to the concepts of achievement in the two countries. In England achievement is individual, it is based on an individual's perceived abilities, each child does his 'best', but it is clear that some children 'do better' than others. In France there is a common standard to which all aspire (for each year, but

also culminating the ultimate universal measure of the baccalaureate) hence children are thought to either succeed or fail.

The method adopted by this study in the setting up of an interview schedule uses conceptual understanding before attempting to posit questions in the target languages. It is closely related to William's (1994) (and Poortinga, 1993) method of 'parallel development' where:

"Items are proposed, they are rendered into both languages simultaneously, and potential problems are identified. Each version influences the other, and the experience of teams that have used parallel development to generate items in two languages is that both versions benefit from the process." (Williams, 1994, p. 25)

This problem of conceptual and linguistic equivalence and its resolution has been dealt with at length because this study considers that it is of fundamental importance to the validity of cross national and linguistic work. The interview schedules were piloted in out of school settings in both countries to further confirm their meaningfulness and equivalence.

Why group interviews?

Group interviews were chosen rather than individual interviews because it was hoped the children would feel more relaxed and informative in the company of their peers, and that this would outweigh the possible disadvantages of peer group pressure. Others (Corsaro, 1981; Davies, 1982; Woods, 1986) have noted that children in groups are less removed from their everyday experiences and are therefore likely to respond more characteristically and validly.

Furthermore because the children were relating to each other as members of a group during the interviews the process of establishing shared meanings was occurring during the interviews.

In order to maximise comparability, interviews were generally held in the afternoon in both countries and they were always held in a separate room. In order to mitigate against the danger of interview bias and the researcher making the data fit the hypothesis:

"(Researchers may) use pupil data to fit their own pre existing categories and theories." (Powney and Watts 1987, p. 39)

the children's responses were summarised and repeated to the children during the interview for confirmation that the meaning had been understood; a method resembling that employed in back translation (Brislin, 1976).

Children as interviewees

Interviewing children poses problems for validity. The possibility of interviewer influence over interviewees is particularly acute as

"A person only gives such information in an interview as is compatible with the relative status of interviewer and interviewee." (Powney and Watts, 1987, p. 46)

Since the adult child relationship is inevitably an unequal one, interviewee responses will be conditioned by status. The unequal status between adult and child and the location of the interview within a school may have influenced children to treat the researcher (although not presented as such) as a teacher. This could have led to both English and French children to "cue seek" the answers (Hammersley, in Woods and Hammersley, 1977) (Henry's 1968 "*signal and response*"). The general problem of the degree to which the children were telling the truth (Dean and Whyte, 1969) could only be assumed by checking with other children, adults and through observation.

The problem may be exacerbated in a cross cultural study. Although the researcher maintained the same role in both countries (adult dual-national researcher, parent and helper in one English French pair of schools, purely researcher in the other pair) there is still an issue that is not resolved in this study of the extent to which the roles between interviewer and interviewee were completely compatible in the two countries. This is an issue because it is not altogether clear if the roles of adults and children are the same in both countries. It is possible that there is more distance between adults and children in French culture, that French children hold adults in more respect and give them a more superior role than do the English children. If this were the case then French pupils' responses might reflect this greater distance and be less 'truthful'. Were French children more likely to reply in terms of what they thought was wanted of them? To some extent this effect on the data can be triangulated by the data gathered by the author outside the more formal school interview situation.

Furthermore the finding that French children conform more to a traditional mentality, compared to English children who exhibit a more individualistic mentality, might also have caused the French children to give more positive responses to their schooling compared to the English pupils' more negative attitude.

These two points are not fully resolved. They do however highlight an issue in cross cultural interviewing of children. If the incompatibility of the adult child role in the fairly similar cultures of England and France is problematic in an interview situation, this might pose real problems for data validity in cultures which differ even more in terms of traditionalism and individualism, such as the Far East and Anglo-Saxon countries.

It has to be accepted that interviewing as a cross cultural method in the context of schools is problematic. This study would again argue that for this issue reflexivity and integrity are important tools in maintaining validity.

2. 4. 3. Theoretical perspectives

The theoretical perspective underlying the empirical research in the classroom and in the pupil interviews is that of symbolic interactionism in that the research is interested in how pupils react together, and interact with their teachers, in order to reach shared meanings (as the fieldnotes in Appendix 6 and 7 show). It is argued that pupils encounter often conflicting messages from different cultural groups of parents teachers and peers, embodying differences in social class, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc. It is from these encounters, some of which were observed in the classroom, and some of which were observed in the group interviews, that pupils made meaning out of their social world. The processes by which these meanings are established are not however dwelt upon as this was considered to be outside the main focus of the research. The primary aim was to define what those meanings were, and to see how they differed for one classroom and one country to another, rather than understanding the processes by which they occurred.

Thus this study used classroom observation, with degrees of participation, and group interviews with pupils, based on a semi-structured schedule in order to collect data . How were the data then analysed?

2. 5. Data analyses

The general approach to the research had much in common with Malinowski's (1922) concept of "*foreshadowed problems*". The initial direction had been set by preliminary observations in 1991-1992 and the findings from the existing research literature on English and French education. The understanding that had come from these two sources led to the setting up of the coding frame designed for both the classroom contexts and pupil perceptions. Although time consuming, analysis was carried out by class, by school and only finally by national context. It was thought important to bring out teacher effect and school effect before leaping to national effect, particularly in the early stages when the degree of the national effect was an unknown quantity.

Analysis of pupil responses

The pupils' responses to the semi-structured interviews were recorded and short notes were also taken (see Appendix 11 and 12 for examples of the notes). Analysis proceeded by listening and reading the data. Responses that seemed particularly revealing and illustrative of a particular concept were noted separately. Selection of pupil responses followed Woods's approach, "*distinguishing between subjective and objective data, invoking the criteria of plausibility and reliability of informants, but chiefly by triangulation and cross checking of accounts*" (Woods, 1979, p. 264). Pupil responses for each class were analysed question by question. Appendix 6 and Appendix 7 are examples of how this was carried out. However the original codes that had been drawn up for both classroom observation and pupil responses were not used as it was felt that these were too distant from the data and that it was more valid to build up categories directly from the data. There was a considerable degree of openness, the expectation that the research would go where the data led it. In this study owes much to Glaser and Strauss's 'grounded theory' (1967), in that it progressed by comparing and classifying the emerging data into categories or characteristics that were seen to emerge and be stronger in one national context than in another. Thus this study followed Malinowski's recommendation that ethnographic research needs to be problem driven and focused from the outset:

"The more problems he brings with him into the field, the more he is in the habit of moulding his theories according to facts, and of seeing facts in their bearing upon theory, the better he is equipped for the work" (Malinowski, 1922)

However it also followed what emerged from the data. The two approaches are seen as compatible.

As categories arose for the types of responses pupils were making the number of pupil responses fitting into that category were noted (also if they had been in the same group when the responses were made, in order to account for peer group pressure). As already described the data was first analysed class by class. Although the analysis did show important class, school and social class differences (gender was not included in the analysis as it was beyond the original aims of this study), it was also clear that there were cross national differences. Thus the pupil response data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative analysis revealed 'what' and 'how' pupils thought and the quantitative analysis showed the relative incidence of perceptions in the English and French pupil samples. Quoting Theisen and Adams (1990), p. 280:

"Good researchers realise that each approach is a valuable tool in the comparativist's methodological bag. Their application is not an "either-or" dilemma,

but rather an issue of suitability. Methods must be matched to purpose. Comparative research methods are not mutually exclusive: they are complementary.”

Hopkin also refers to the complementary function of qualitative and quantitative methods in his previously quoted discussion of qualitative strategies.

Perhaps a disadvantage was that the analysis lacked sufficient depth and did not bring out the social interaction between the pupils in the formulation of their understanding of meaning. With hindsight it is regretted that a greater degree of qualitative analysis was not carried out to complement the quantitative analysis.

Analysis of classroom observations

Classroom context data analysis did proceed according to the original coding design, unlike the pupil response data. The classroom observation data were coded using the pre-determined codes with however later additions during field work. Two examples are presented in Appendix 6 and 7. However there were two similarities with the pupil response data, firstly it was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively and secondly it was analysed for each class (see Appendix 13 and 14 for examples of the analysis of one English and one French class) before a national comparison was attempted. The quantitative analysis presented the most problems. This can be illustrated by the concept of ‘authoritarianism’. Teacher ‘authoritarianism’ is not always a quantifiable characteristic, it is something which both pupils and the researcher ‘feel’. Secondly although it would have been possible to quantify the number of occasions a particular teacher implied authoritarianism in his/her discourse, the resulting number would have lacked validity as a high count could indicate either strong and effective control or conversely the exact opposite, weak and inefficient control. It is for this reason that in order to reflect the researcher’s inference of teacher style and in order to compare and to convey the degree of difference between the four English teachers and the four French only approximate adverbs of ‘often’ ‘sometimes’, ‘infrequently’ are used. This study takes its lead from Hammersley in this approach to methodology:

“We must ask ourselves what precision is, and whether the most precise formulations are always the best, or indeed whether they are necessary.” (Hammersley, 1992, p. 62)

The pre coded system was not however found to be sufficient as a tool of analysis, it did not cover all the teacher characteristics that were arising from the data. Once more it was felt to be more valid to start again from the data on each teacher and extract what were the major characteristics of that teacher’s style. The analysis of each teacher was based on the

analysis of several lessons that typified that teacher's approach, the type of learning and pupil behaviour. Each line was numbered so that it could be directly referred to in the analysis of teaching style. An example of the analysis of one teacher can be found in the Appendix 13. The categories that arose from the analysis of individual teachers sometimes related to the original codes, for example, pupil or teacher control, but there were also many new categories, such as the degree of learning sequence. When the categories had been established for individual teachers it was then possible to relate them to the cross national contexts, and ascertain which styles were more characteristic of one national context than another.

Synthesis of analysis

The comparison of characteristics arising from the classroom contexts and pupil perceptions in the two countries led to the formation of categories. These categories did not occur randomly but were linked to the national context. A picture of two different cultural 'ways of thinking' started to develop. It was from these comparisons and resulting characteristics that a hypothesis about national culture affecting learning started to emerge. This was a gradual and lengthy process involving reflection and synthesis of the data. It was only some four years into this study that a hypothesis began to emerge from the data:

Pupil attitude to school and learning is affected by the national context

As a process leading to the development of knowledge hypothesis formulation had much in common with the Marxist theory of knowledge in developing revolutionary change, as advocated by Mao Tse Tung, where knowledge is seen to arise from a combination of practice and reflection:

"Discover the truth through practice, again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge." (Mao Tse Tung, 1967)

It is possible that this study might have stopped at the above hypothesis on the effect of culture on pupil attitude to school and to learning, had it not been for the author's concurrent research on the QUEST project. The QUEST project allowed this study to proceed further as it specifically explored the question of whether the national cultural context might affect pupil learning. The project included the comparison of the performance of English and French children in the key areas of language and maths

skills¹⁹. Not only did it compare overall performance levels but also the different strategies that the pupils used and the ‘ways of thinking’ that underlay them. This area of the project was the particular responsibility of the author. The finding that there was indeed a correlation between national context and pupil performance, which furthermore was related to the ‘ways of thinking’ found in pupil attitude, enabled this study to be taken a step further into the domain of cognitive constructs and pupil performance.

As insights and understanding proceeded the initial reading carried out during the first year of this study was revisited. The preliminary findings and what was emerging from the analysis that not it was not only cultural but, more interestingly, cognitive characteristics that were associated with each country, brought new meaning to the background literature. The literature in turn further informed and seemed to confirm the findings. This was particularly true of Durkheim’s work. Thus it was with the hindsight of the empirical findings that Chapter Three on the two national contexts was written. An earlier version, written before the fieldwork had suggested some of the directions of the research but its content required major alterations. Thus the research process was more cyclical than unilinear, revisiting both the existing literature and theoretical implications as the symbiotic relationship between practice and reflection developed in the pursuit of understanding. Figure 6 overleaf portrays this aspect of the research process.

¹⁹ Since the data on pupil achievement in maths and language was outside the original aims of this study the methodology and findings of this empirical work can be found separately (Chapter Six).

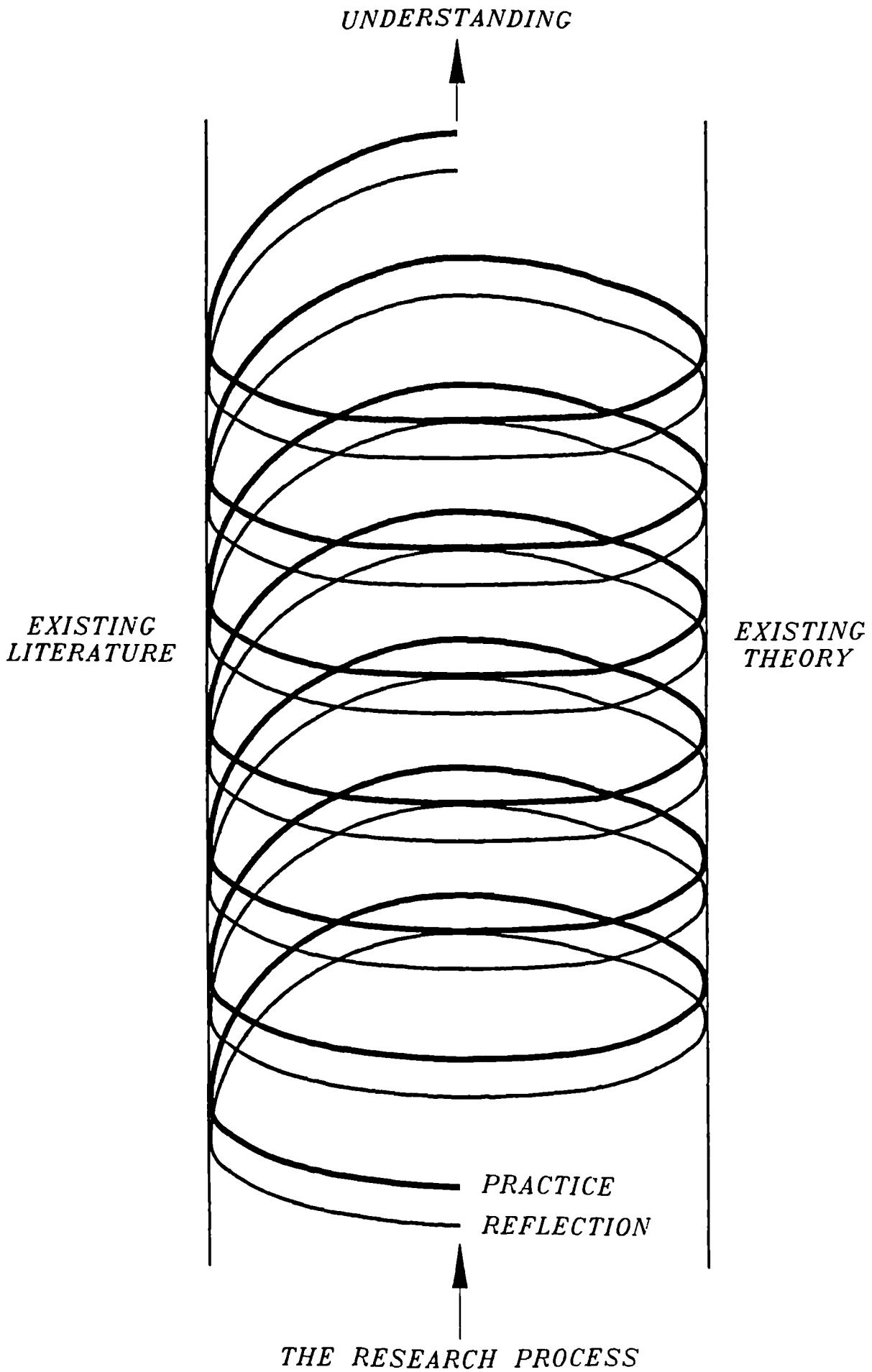


Figure 6

Figure 6 may present a picture that is too individualistic and solitary compared to the reality of what actually occurred. The importance of research as a social process (Burgess, 1994, p. 2) is also considered fundamental. However it is through such a spiral analysis of practice and reflection that this study's conclusion, that cognitive constructs are associated with national contexts and that these affect pupils' attitudes and performance in learning, was reached.

2. 6. Evaluation of methodology

Looking back on a research project it is always easy to criticise research design and this study is no exception. It is felt that the sampling could have been done with more rigour. The insider knowledge of the four schools that developed from the research, revealed that fortuitously the four schools were in fact well matched. Turning to the instruments used the classroom notes were felt to be successful. A possible refinement might have been the use of video to record and analyse specific lessons. The semi-structured interview schedule was perhaps less satisfactory. However it did provide a useful learning experience. Numerous improvements could have been made. The schedule should have been presented to class teachers, not as occurred, for the teachers to use in order to decide whether to allow the researcher access or not, but for them to input ideas and suggestions based on their experience. The structure of the questions could have been simplified and long sentences avoided, for example, Appendix 8, C7 Q3, though since the questions were posed in an interview situation meanings could always be clarified by the researcher. A more fundamental improvement might have been not to use an interview schedule at all but instead, as has already been suggested, use a more ethnographic approach (Cousin, 1998), consisting of freer discussion between groups of pupils. Data analysis seemed slow and cumbersome at the time but this was more a consequence of maintaining ecological validity and not distorting the data. It is accepted that it is a difficult and long process in ethnographic research.

2. 7. Conclusion

As an ethnography, and in particular as a cross national ethnography, this study has had to defend its 'scientific status'. One way in which this can be achieved is to provide a clear description of the methodology used so that the research process could be reproduced. Thus sampling, the research instruments used and analysis have been looked at in detail, and strengths and weaknesses have been considered.

Another frequent limitation of ethnography is the problem of relating a small scale study to macro or wider issues. As Ouchi and Wilkins (1988) suggest:

“Rarely do (studies) attempt to explain the relationship between an organisation’s internal culture and its larger cultural or socio-economic environment.”

This study attempts to bridge that gap and explicitly connects the micro issues of classroom contexts, pupil perceptions, pupil learning, with the macro issue of the national context, by identifying ‘ways of thinking’ which are seen to underlie both micro and macro levels.

Relating micro issues to macro issues in the one study has theoretical implications. Micro issues or understanding ‘internal cultures’ are generally associated with interpretivism and qualitative methods, whereas macro issues are more associated with structure and quantitative methods²⁰. However the focus of this study is how pupils are influenced by the cultural characteristics or the structure of the society in which they live. It is held that social actors are not free to negotiate meanings with others (Woods, 1976, p. 15) they are influenced by historical and cultural factors. In fusing micro and macro issues this study takes a theoretical position that combines structure and agency. It recognises that macro issues in the form of national values are structural factors with which individuals have to negotiate the micro issues of meanings.

²⁰ Bryman (1984) and others (Miles and Huberman, 1988; Patton, in Fetterman, 1988, p. 129), have argued there does not need to be one to one relationship between theory and method. Even Guba and Lincoln (in Fetterman, 1988, p. 111), who use the simile of ‘oil and water’ to describe the fundamental difference between positivism and interpretism, accept that research methods can be interchanged, even though those would then be coloured by the associated underlying theories.

Part Two

**An analysis of cognitive and social constructs at the two
levels of countries and classrooms, both in the research literature
and in the empirical study**

Chapter Three

The identification of national values.

The background context to English and French education and society from the research literature

It is argued throughout this study that the notion of context in comparative education is fundamental (Broadfoot 1999). Therefore Chapters Three and Four set out to explore the contextual background for the present study. Chapter Three uses the definition of culture (given in Section 1. 3.) to explore its meaning in national contexts. Section 2. 2. put forward the argument that it was justifiable to take a nation as a unit of analysis in education because educational systems are by definition national. The data used in Chapter Three are the existing research literature on the contexts of England and France. Chapter Three presents England and France as illustrative examples of what is meant by 'national culture'. It explores the differences between two 'national cultures', in terms of underlying values in society and education. Education is looked at the different levels of system, teachers and pedagogy (Bronckart 1995, p. 85). Both education and society are looked at in their contemporary settings as well as in their development through history, as this study is in agreement with Durkheim that the present is very much conditioned by the past:

"If they (systems of education) are considered apart from all these historic causes, they become incomprehensible." (Durkheim, 1956, p. 66)

In examining the national and educational contexts of England and France through the research literature, Chapter Three identifies pairs of contrasting national values. Chapter Four is based on empirical work. Chapter Four continues to explore the context. It looks at the existence of national values through an empirical study of the classroom.

Thus the two chapters in Part Two analyse the existence of values or cognitive constructs at the two levels of nation and classroom. The two levels are contextual and can be regarded as 'input'. They are the cultural context, with which individuals have to negotiate.

The form and the content of this section is much indebted to Berlaks' model of teaching dilemmas (Berlak, 1981), which was originally conceived in response to differences between English and American education. The Berlaks' model (Appendix 15) depicts inherent conflicts in educational systems, hence the term dilemmas, and the extent to which contrasting national educational systems favour one alternative rather than another. The model was adapted to the English and French contexts by Osborn and

Broadfoot (1992). The present study does not however agree with the Berlaks' heading as it does not see a separation between control and curriculum issues as opposed to societal issues. The first two issues are regarded as reflections of greater societal dilemmas. Nevertheless the individual dilemmas presented in the model are seen to reflect both many of the internal debates in many national educational systems as well as some of the differences between English and French education. It is suggested that this model could usefully be adapted to other national contexts too. In order to compare educational characteristics between England and France the model has been adapted to the following form: (the values or cognitive constructs, as explained in Section 1.1, are 'ideal types' that have arisen from the analysis)

England	France
<i>Heterogeneity</i>	<i>Homogeneity</i>
<i>National diversity</i>	<i>National unity</i>
<i>Excellence</i>	<i>Egalitarianism</i>
<i>Individualism</i>	<i>Collectivism</i>
<i>Creativity</i>	<i>Authoritarianism</i>
<i>Empiricism</i>	<i>Intellectualism</i>

Figure 7 Model of national values in England and France, based on Berlak and Berlak's 1981 model.

Each of these dilemmas is not a self contained unit but is linked in a complex web to the others. Reference will be made to how these constructs are connected. These dilemmas will be seen to relate not only to education in the 1990s in England and France but also to contemporary cultural points of comparison of the two societies in general. The evidence for setting up these cultural traits needs to be looked for in the research literature. Each one will be separately examined and where appropriate the philosophical antecedents and historical influences will be traced. The first pair of contrasting national values to be examined are heterogeneity and homogeneity.

3. 1. Heterogeneity versus homogeneity

3. 1. 1. Heterogeneity versus homogeneity in the educational systems of England and France

Archer defines an educational system as:

“A nation-wide and differentiated collection of institutions devoted to formal education, whose overall control and supervision is at least partly governmental, and whose component parts and process are related to each other.” (Archer, 1979, p54)

It is a useful definition as firstly it draws our attention to education as a national system. English and French education can be compared because they are two distinct systems which are run to some degree by two distinct national governments. Secondly Archer's definition encompasses both heterogeneity and homogeneity and allows for differences in degrees of centralisation. Cohesive educational systems are perhaps a twentieth century phenomenon. The concepts of homogeneity and heterogeneity are taken to relate first and foremost to the degree of centralisation in an educational system. Centralisation tends to be linked to homogeneity and decentralisation to heterogeneity. It is difficult to conceive of an educational system which was decentralised and yet homogenous, as the intrinsic feature of a decentralised system is that it can respond to local and diverse needs, which invariably leads to a heterogeneous system. In the two countries that are the subject of this study there does seem to be a relationship between homogeneity and centralisation on the one hand and decentralisation and heterogeneity on the other. The French educational system has been characterised as espousing the following traditions:

“Principles of cultural homogeneity and administrative centralisation.”
(Hatzfield 1996, p. 166)

The English system has a long tradition of decentralisation with strong local control:

“The local community manages its own problems and it can do so because it is not merely a collection of individuals but an entity working at its own level on formulating the common interest.” (Ballion 1996, p. 194)

Thus the issue of homogeneity and heterogeneity will be examined in relation to developments in centralisation in the history of the educational systems of France and England.

The French system of education

The OECD make the point that the French educational system has only really existed in the strict definition of Archer’s term ‘system’, where one part affects another part, since the Second World War. Prior to that it was

“a number of separate entities with their own institutions, their own streams and their own logic” (OECD, 1996, p. 243)

What are the origins of the French educational system and how did it develop towards the relatively centralised and homogenous system of the post war years?

The French Revolution created the fundamental doctrine of free, secular education for all, but it took the successive laws of Guizot, 1835, Falloux, 1850, and Duruy, 1863, to implement the Revolution’s aims. Primary education was somewhat neglected and only became part of the system with the introduction of the Jules Ferry laws of 1881-1882, when free primary education became compulsory for all children aged between 6 and 12 years. Education was secular with one day set aside each week for religious instruction by the church. The Ferry laws also laid down the timetable, syllabi and teaching methods. At this time primary and secondary education were conceived of as two separate tracks, it was only with the 1975 Haby Law that the concept of primary education as the first stage leading to secondary education was introduced. A further move towards centralisation occurred in 1889 when teachers’ salaries, formerly paid under the Guizot law by local government, were paid by the state. The centralisation which is usually associated with French education has been in existence since the late 19th century, as it was since then that the Ministry of Education has not only funded education but controlled teacher appointments, and the assessment system, prescribed the curricula, school hours, and inspected school text books. Since then it has decided when school administration boards had to meet, the range of sanctions against teachers and punishments that could be meted out to pupils. The French system is organised on the basis of a hierarchical tree with the Minister of Education at the top, under whom come the 27 ‘académies’, under which in turn there are several ‘départements’, within each ‘department’ there are several

'circonscriptions', which are finally responsible for several primary schools. 'Collèges' are administered and funded by the 'départements', 'lycées' are under the control of the 'académies'. Prost's definition of French primary education as:

"Un service publique départemental, qui fonctionne dans des locaux municipaux avec des fonctionnaires de l'Etat." (Prost, 1968, p. 274),

dates from the late 19th century. However the notion of education as a public service or

"A school of duty to train Frenchmen to take over leadership in the State and to rule the Empire" (Halls 1976, p. 21)

dates from the Napoleonic period. World Wars I and II led to criticism of the educational system. The Langevin-Wallon Commission of 1947 drew attention to the divorce between the enclosed school environment and the pace of change in society in general. The development in society towards more heterogeneity was however only addressed in 1989 with the Loi de l'Orientation which could be summarised as a central directive to schools to move towards some decentralisation. In both primary and secondary education schools were required to initiate developments which would make them more responsive to the local area and its particular problems. It was an important step towards less homogeneity in the French system but it did not prevent a French guide book to France in 1994 from describing the French educational system in the following manner:

"Les structures administratives de l'enseignement français, héritées en grande partie de l'empire napoléonien, sont à l'image des structures politiques : une pyramide qui, malgré la loi de décentralisation de 1982, demeure fortement centralisée." (Michaud, 1994, p. 178).

The English educational system

In contrast the development of centralisation in the English system of education has been slow and uneven. The state began to 'provide' and not just 'assist' in the church's provision of education at the primary or elementary level with the Forster Act of 1870 when it undertook to 'fill the gaps' in the church's local provision of schools. Although this was an important step in centralised state provision of education the mentality was still one of local provision rather than national commitment. The state did not even take full responsibility for the Board schools as these were financed not only by central grants but by parental fees and local rates. Education was neither free nor compulsory. The consequence of the Act was even to institutionalise heterogeneity in education as it set up a dual system of state or Board schools and church or voluntary schools, which were themselves further divided by denomination. This created competition

and division between the denominations of the church schools and between the church and Board schools. The Church schools only received rate aid in 1902. The fact that provision for elementary education was provided for all by one system or another by 1900 was due to competition at the local level rather than state involvement (Evans, 1985). Attendance at school was of great importance as schools received central grants according to attendance and results. Thus the market force model of English state education in the 1990s has a long history.

There was much variation at the local level towards the end of the 19th century, for example, the London School Board was the only area to make education compulsory; the school leaving age varied between Boards until the 1918 Education Act laid down a school leaving age of 14 years; and between 1875 and 1900 some School Boards introduced classes for secondary aged pupils. A step towards centralisation was taken in 1889 with the Board of Education Act which set up a more homogenous structure at the centre. The former three central agencies of the Education Department, the Department of Science and Art and the Charities Commission were replaced by the Board of Education. At the local level the heterogeneity in administration of School Boards, School Attendance Committees and Technical Instruction Committees was replaced by the 1902 Education Act with 300 Local Education Authorities. This had the effect of drawing the Church schools into the system as well as providing them with a degree of state funding and rate aid. However the Church schools were not dominated by centralised power as they still had considerable self-management so that the 1902 Act was in one sense a move towards centralisation but in another it further institutionalised the dichotomy between central and local control over education. Nevertheless by 1905 education in England was seen as a public service, even though as Evans (1985) points out the discourse of central government as presented in the 1905 ‘Handbook of Suggestions for the Consideration of teachers Engaged in Work in Public Elementary Schools’ is one of ‘suggestions’ rather than directives.

The Hadow Report of 1926 marked the beginning of national primary education replacing the former elementary education, but it was only with the 1944 Education Act that secondary education as such came into being. A further move towards centralisation took place in this Act with the LEAs coming under more control and direction by the newly named Ministry of Education (the former Board of Education). However there was still heterogeneity at the local level with church or voluntary schools divided into three types depending upon their degree of integration with the LEAs. In the 1970s the then Department of Education became more assertive and following a survey in 1979 which

drew attention to the diversity at the local level there was a series of government papers which attempted to strengthen power at the centre.

Perhaps the strongest move towards centralisation has been as a result of the educational Acts of the late 1980s, principally the 1988 Education Reform Act which set up a national curriculum, national targets and in the 1990s stronger national inspection and national assessment. It has been argued that one of the aims of the 1988 Act was to deliberately reduce the powers of the LEAs with whom central government has traditionally had a difficult relationship. But even the 1988 Act contained a paradoxical strengthening of local power as it gave more control to school governors and made schools self-managing in terms of their budget. There was also a continuation in the tradition of heterogeneity in that new types of schools were set up: Grant Maintained Schools (albeit directly under central government and not LEA control) and City Technology Schools. In the late 1990s the Labour Government is also continuing to legitimise the trend towards heterogeneity in their proposals for three different types of schools (Foundation, Voluntary and Community).

Homogeneity and heterogeneity in French and English society

Peyrefitte (1976) traces the degree to which the characteristic of centralisation permeates the institutions of modern France. He describes France as a monocentric nation and explores the influence of monocentrism in such societal domains as innovation and individual responsibility. The author agrees with Peyrefitte that the centralisation of education in France is but one example of centralisation in French society. Archer too relates centralisation to societal structure and culture. Clearly the education system is not an isolate but relates to political and thus cultural values:

“The concept of education is formed in harmony with the political foundations of each society, not only through the way in which the education system is thought out but also in which it is organised and managed.” (Ballion, 1996, p. 194)

Thus it is argued that characteristics that can be found in national systems of education relate to other national institutions. To give an example, Prost (1968), Zeldin (1977) and Sharpe (1992,b) have all linked religion and education by establishing parallels between the form of instruction used in the teaching of the catechism and that which is used in contemporary teaching in French schools. Another example is Zeldin's reference to the differences between the legal systems of France, England and America:

“France used to be the most centralised despotic country in Europe ... in clear contrast to England, with its amateur, unpaid Justices of the Peace, and to America's

electoral frontier sheriff, both of them symbols of local independence.” (Zeldin, 1983, pp. 168-169)

French society

The trend towards centralisation in France, which Halls (1976) traces back to the administrative system of Louis XIV, became established with the Revolution. It created a unified state and effected all areas of society: politics and the abolition of the monarchy; social structure and the abolition of the aristocracy and the rise of the bourgeoisie; law and the ‘*déclaration des droits de l’homme*’ with a written constitution to support them; administration and the creation of ‘*départements*’, the fiscal, military and agrarian system. The Revolution thus sought “*to impose uniform rights and duties*” (Zeldin, 1983, p. 169). Centralisation increased under Napoleon, who instigated the centralised administration of the country and set out its laws in the ‘*Code Civile*’. The organisation of the educational system into 27 ‘*académies*’ each under a ‘*recteur*’ was one example of centralisation, standardisation and hierarchy that took place in the organisation of the state. Though there were attempts to restore the monarchy and return to the pre-Revolutionary order, France had become an essentially capitalist society, based on the concentration of power, and thought was liberal rather than actually democratic. Nevertheless the basic tenets of the revolution remained the overt doctrine. There was a development towards an ‘*esprit civique*’ in the Third Republic of 1875 which created more genuine republicanism. Despite conflicts and internal tensions the continuity of the state’s administration has remained stable and has helped to create cohesion. Centralisation has dominated. The 1946 constitution tells us that France is:

“A republic, indivisible, secular, democratic and social.”

Power and control have emanated from the centre. The economy has been dictated by the centre, controlling the financial markets and allocating and pricing credits. In the Durkheimian tradition the state has been seen as supreme because it was

“culturally and morally superior to a hidebound society.” (French planning commissariat, reported in *The Economist*, 1991, p. 4)

Change away from centralisation occurred in the decentralisation laws of the 1980s. In 1983 and 1986 the three levels of government: 22 regions, 96 ‘*départements*’, and 36,000 ‘*communes*’, were given more autonomy from the central state, in such areas as spending on local and regional developments, decision making in taxation, planning permission and borrowing and guaranteeing the borrowing of others. France was thus changing from the ideal of a homogenous country and a strongly centralised state into a more heterogeneous

country of competing regional urban areas. The mentality of centralisation which has pervaded French society and the French educational system over several centuries is still in evidence but it appears to be waning. For example, the educational system was particularly affected by decentralisation in 1995/1996 when capital expenditure was decentralised. The current educational system is more decentralised but it is still hierarchic in structure; central government is responsible for higher education, regions are responsible for lycées, départements are responsible for collèges, and communes are responsible for the primary sector.

English society

English society is what Peyrefitte would call polycentric. Decentralisation and heterogeneity characterise not only English education but English society too. Sadler (Higginson 1979) thought that the diversity of the English system was related to the fact that there was no uniform ideal of life in England. He also implied the existence of national character:

“Variety and freedom are congenial to the English taste.” (Higginson, 1979, p. 148)

Economic and social conditions in England and France before the French Revolution were fairly similar. However whereas the French state assumed power suddenly as a result of the Revolution, the trend towards centralisation in English society was much slower and more gradual. Trevelyan's (1966, p. 15) description of the period in England from 1793-1832 as one of *“Rampant individualism, inspired by no idea beyond quick money returns,”* could also be followed through history to twentieth century Thatcherism. Fortunately this economic individualism was partly offset by humanitarian individualism which was religious in origin. The French historian Elie Halevy maintains that it was the strength of the Evangelical movement in England that prevented the English from turning to revolution. In any event in the nineteenth century there was a heterogeneity of Conformist and Nonconformist churches and other humanitarian movements and philanthropists who were attempting to provide a public service at the local level. Trevelyan traces this slow development towards centralisation:

“Unfortunately, in the earlier years of the century (19th), State control in the interest of the working classes was not an idea congenial to the rulers of Britain. until in the evolution of a century the State has come round to his (Robert Owen's) doctrine of the control of factories and the conditions of life for all employed therein.” Trevelyan (1966, p. 47).

Concepts such as humanitarianism, 'self help' and paternalistic individual solutions to local problems, which are still in evidence in education in England today, can be traced back to the 18th century. These trends continued in the 19th century although there was also a growing movement towards more democracy and collectivism which culminated in Beveridge's Welfare State of the 1940s. It is interesting that today in the 1990s, the tide is perhaps turning again away from too much centralisation. For example, an anti-centrist criticism of a 'nanny state' is often used to justify the waning of state centralised provision for society.

Conclusion to 3. 1. 1.

A relationship between centralisation and homogeneity in the French educational system, and decentralisation and heterogeneity in the English system, has been established. Centralisation, in educational systems, is an important concept. It has been explored in relation to change (Archer op. cit. and OECD, 1973) and in relation to assessment (Broadfoot, 1984). In this study centralisation has been explored in relation to the cultural characteristic of homogeneity.

The relationship between educational systems and society in general has also been looked at. Archer provides a structural explanation for the similarities between the two. She ascribes the development of educational systems into centralised or non centralised forms to whether former religious control over education was disbanded as a result of political action, as in France, or where, as in England, competing financially powerful groups, who were from within or outside religious or government influence, became influential in education. The role played by religion in the history of education in the two countries has already been referred to and is an interesting one. Historically, prior to the Revolution in France and the 1870 Forster Act in England, in both England and France the education that was available was organised by the church on a local basis. The major difference was that the religious influence was primarily Anglican in England and Catholic, and most importantly Jesuit, in France. The parallels between contemporary French education and Catholicism, and English education and Protestantism have been explored by Peyrefitte (1976), Sharpe (1997b). Although Sharpe concentrates on religious influences in national educational systems Peyrefitte makes the connection between Catholicism and centralisation in the organisation of society as a whole. Peyrefitte links centralisation in France to the counter-reformation of the catholic church that occurred after the Protestant reform. This led to:

“une centralisation rigide des appareils gouvernementaux” (Peyrefitte, 1976, p. 169)

whereas he equates Protestantism with liberty and less centralisation.

It is held in this study that there is a close relationship between systems of education and society in general. In exploring this relationship this study is in agreement with Sharpe that Archer and Peyrefitte’s structural explanation is not a sufficient one and that it is *‘fundamental value orientations’* (Sharpe, 1997b, p. 329) which should be the focus of study. In other words the centralisation that was described in French education and society is thought to relate to the ‘fundamental value orientation’ of homogeneity in the French context. Similarly the decentralisation that was described in relation to English education and society is thought to relate to the ‘fundamental value orientation’ of heterogeneity in the English context. This study goes further than Sharpe and, as argued in Chapter One holds that these value orientations are cognitive in origin. French ‘pensée’ accepts and values centralised power and homogeneity, English ‘pensée’ accepts a certain amount of centralisation but there is a stronger pull, than there is in France, towards local control, individual effort and humanitarianism. Heterogeneity plays a more significant role in English ‘pensée’ than it does in French ‘pensée’.

3. 1. 2. Heterogeneity and homogeneity in English and French teachers and pedagogy; and schools

This section continues to explore the extent to which the two national contexts manifest the characteristics of heterogeneity or homogeneity. It has been seen that homogeneity and heterogeneity are deeply rooted in not only the history and structure of the educational systems of England and France respectively, but also in the two societies. It is now necessary to look at the research literature to see whether these values and ‘ways of thinking’ exist at the levels of teachers, pedagogies, and schools in the two countries, in order to further establish the nature of the school culture in which pupils are immersed, and which, by extension, might affect their learning.

Beattie (1996) drew attention to the continuing evidence of centrality in the appointment process of teachers in France compared to that in England. He sets the French ‘concours’ system in the French teaching context. The ‘concours’ follows strictly defined, absolute and known rules and norms which are to be found in official reports, and the obligations of a French teacher are also clearly defined. The ‘concours’ represents access into a secure position in the French civil service. The English interview system with a particular school seems to illustrate opposite characteristics of each of these features.

The comparisons Beattie makes between the two systems of appointment are an illuminative illustration of the homogenous French situation and the heterogeneous English situation where each interview situation is largely dominated by the particular school and the headteacher and governors.

How might the contrasting relationship between teacher and employer in the two countries affect teacher perceptions and values? It had already been established by Broadfoot and Osborn (1988) that French primary teachers felt more responsibility towards a central and more uniform set of criteria, whereas English teachers felt accountable to a wide and diverse set of criteria:

“The (French) teacher perceives herself as an independent professional, carrying out instructions produced from elsewhere, but owing responsibility only to the pupils in her care. By contrast, whilst teachers in England have an equally great commitment to the children in their care, they are more aware of an obligation to colleagues, parents, the headteacher, and their employers..... Far from being autonomous in their classrooms, they may be conceived more as partners who, along with colleagues and relevant non-professional, attempt to realise a very wide range of goals.” (Broadfoot, 1988, p. 270)

It was because French teachers were working in a more centralised system that they were able to express a more ‘axiomatic’ conception of teaching, compared to the ‘problematic’ English conception of teaching.

It had also been demonstrated that when English and French teachers’ perceptions of their roles were compared in advantaged or disadvantaged areas, the French teachers tended *“to have one conception of their role regardless of where they worked”*, whereas, *“in England, teachers in inner city areas were more likely to have different conceptions of their role and of their relationship with pupils and parents than teachers in schools in more advantaged areas.”* (Osborn, 1992) (though later research in the 1990s suggested that this situation was changing and that English teachers were becoming more homogenous and French teachers more heterogeneous). Osborn and Broadfoot only partly attributed the homogeneity they found in France to the centralisation of the French system because paradoxically they also found that French teachers were less likely to feel that, *‘a teacher’s practice should follow the lines laid down by government policy’*, (Osborn, 1992). The research showed that French teachers actually experienced more autonomy than their English colleagues. There was little within-school pressure and in practice centralised state pressure was remote and ineffective. Broadfoot and Osborn concluded that the heterogeneity that they had found in English teacher perceptions and the

homogeneity expressed by French teachers was due to underlying cultural values, values relating in particular to equality in the French context. The notion of equality will be looked at in Section 3.3.

These findings then beg the question of whether classroom contexts in the two countries differ in terms of the greater homogeneity of French teachers' values. In the Bristaix study of the 1980s Broadfoot and Osborn had been struck by the lack of conceptual equivalence to the English term 'teaching style' in the French context:

"For them (French teachers) teaching was largely unexplicated and unproblematic." (Osborn, 1992, p. 1)

The implication was that there was only one culturally approved way of teaching so the term 'teaching style' was meaningless to French teachers. This was of course prior to the 1989 'Loi de l'Orientation' which encouraged more experimentation in teaching, placed the child at the heart of the educational system and in consequence advocated "une pédagogie différenciée". However the OECD Examiner's Report on France in 1996, referring to French education, commented on *"Its abstraction and the notorious lack of individualisation of its teaching and learning strategies."* (OECD, 1996, p. 176). Later research has also shown that despite this attempt to reduce pedagogical homogeneity in the French primary schools, and despite the rhetoric of French teachers (43% of French teachers in the STEP project²¹ claimed that they were giving more importance to classroom organisation since the reform, Broadfoot, 1995) French teachers were still using less variety in their approach to teaching than English teachers; whole class teaching still dominated in the French primary classrooms of 1994 (STEP project) and the French classrooms of 1996 (QUEST project). The QUEST systematic observation notes showed that 61.5% of the French teaching observed was in a class teaching format. The English primary teachers were more heterogeneous and flexible in their approach: 50.7 % of observed classroom time was given over to individual pupil work, 38.7% to class teaching and 6.7% was taken up by pupils working in groups (see Appendix 2, No. 4).

Earlier, Broadfoot and Osborn (1988, p. 282) had also made reference to the *"remarkable coherence of content from school to school"* that they had found in the French context. Sharpe (1992,a) took up this point and explored homogeneity in his case study of two French primary schools in contrasting socio-economic zones. He found remarkable homogeneity in school buildings, classroom organisation, the learning environment, school organisation, timetabling, teaching and learning styles, pupil

²¹ For details of the STEP project see Appendix 1.4.

behaviour and teacher attitudes. Like Broadfoot and Osborn he attributed his findings to values or 'ideological traditions', in particular to the French concept of universalism.

To conclude Section 3. 1. a fundamental cultural difference between England and France, that of heterogeneity and homogeneity, has been described. The relative strength of homogeneity in the French context and heterogeneity in the English context has been explored. Examples of these two characteristics have been found to permeate different levels: the structure of the two educational systems, their history, society in general, teachers, pedagogies and schools. Whilst the research evidence refers to these differences in terms of 'values', 'long-term cultural patterns' (Beattie, 1996), 'ideology' (Broadfoot and Osborn, 1988), 'dominant ideological traditions' (Sharpe 1992,a) the term 'cognitive constructs' is preferred here as it relates to this study's theoretical perspective that culture is dominated by ways of thinking.

3. 2. National diversity versus national unity

Related to the values of heterogeneity and homogeneity are those of national diversity and national unity. Reference has already been made to the association between "*Variety and freedom*" (Sadler in Higginson 1979, p. 148) in the English context and 'indivisibility' (French 1946 Constitution) and the French context. Diversity and unity are concepts related to national identity, an area in which education plays a strong role.

English national identity

National identity is not as important an issue in England as it is in France. The country has several geographical definitions and several appellations: England, Great Britain, the United Kingdom. It does have the advantage of a geographical identity of an island. It is difficult to define English identity because it is only in times of economic, political, or moral crises that English identity becomes an issue. English identity hibernates until it is required:

"The nation is still the chief focus for people's identity, the source of much of their security and confidence; the more uncertain the world climate, the more important the nation will seem." (Sampson, 1982, p. 434)

The monarchy and even the BBC are useful symbols when the country's identity does need to be highlighted. At times where unity needs to be expressed, political parties (pre-devolution) refer, as in France, to freedom as an important ingredient of national identity:

"We cherish the precious traditions and freedoms of our island home"..... "The British way is about safeguarding the independent institutions which alone nurture freedom and responsibility." (Conservative, Hague, reported by McSmith 1998)

"The great tradition of British liberty." (Labour, Brown, reported by McSmith 1998)

Traditions and social class structure also serve to establish national identity:

"They (the British²² people's qualities) come from the historic continuity of our institutions, which themselves form our identity as long as we remember them." (Hugh Trevor-Roper, 1975, quoted by Sampson, 1982, p. XI)

Although national identity is not as clear cut as it is in France there is still an understanding, even if undefined, of national identity. A virtue is made of necessity, so that diversity is often celebrated as a fundamental ingredient of English identity. Sadler believed that England should find unity in the national tolerance for diversity:

"variety inspired by a sense of a national unity." (Higginson, 1979, p. 45)

He justified religious diversity as unity through diversity:

"We feel that we are more likely to preserve national unity if we allow a good deal of diversity of spiritual unity." (Higginson, 1979, p. 145)

It is this celebration of diversity which lies behind the policy of multiculturalism in English education. Unity and diversity are not in conflict in the issue of English national identity.

They represent two faces of the same coin; the two together help to define English national identity.

French national identity and the role of education

The issue of identity both is, and has been, a central issue in French society. Externally the "hexagone" shares frontiers with 6 countries. Its current frontier limits in the East date only from 1945. It has a history of English and German occupations of its territory (unlike England which has not been occupied since 1066) Internally France also has a long history of unifying its geographically and culturally different regions. Durkheim refers to the difficulties of this task:

²² An example of diversity in the English national context is the lack of distinction often made between 'English' and 'British'. The two words are often used as though they were synonymous. It is argued that this usage of the terms reflects the lack of clarity and diversity in the understanding of national identity by English speakers.

“Pour pouvoir donner à la personnalité morale de la France l’unité qui la caractérise, il a nécessairement fallu lutter contre toutes les formes du particularisme, communal provincial et corporatif.” (Durkheim, 1963, p. 20)

The traditional way of imposing national unity in France has been through education (Halls 1976 p. 4; Hough 1984 p. 74; Cousin 1998, pp. 304-305). Prost (1968, p. 338) argues that the aim of French education is to give:

*“Tous les français des souvenirs communs, et modeler ainsi une conscience collective qui d’emblée soit nationale.”*²³

Halls (1976, p. 4) traces the aim of *“promoting national sentiment”* in French education to the Revolution. Hough (1984, p. 74) argues that it was from the Napoleonic period that French education has been:

“an instrument for fostering patriotic and national sentiment”

Language has been considered an important instrument in forging national unity. It was stated in the French Revolution that education in France should be in the French medium in order to promote national unity. The unifying force of language was reiterated in the 1971 Constitution.

The French educational system has a strong role in creating national identity because it is centralised, homogenous and has a discourse of equality. In providing all pupils with the same education:

“les savoirs fondamentaux et les références communes indispensables à la réussite de chacun. Ainsi se forge la cohésion sociale et culturelle de la nation.”

(CNDP, 1995, p. 6)

so national cohesion will be achieved, as the official text declares.

But what is meant by ‘education’? The previous quotation from the CNDP refers to knowledge and understandings. Implicit in the above statement is the understanding that French education consists of French culture as another quotation shows:

²³ Interestingly, the national defeats of 1870 and 1940 were blamed on the educational system. The former defeat served to inspire Durkheim to remedy the perceived insufficient morality in the educational system which had led to the country’s downfall. He wrote in patriotic vein in 1916:

“Individuals need to be directed, not only in times of crisis, but in a normal, regular way, towards one single goal, transcending all religious symbols and party slogans. And this goal is not hard to find. It is the moral greatness of France. Everything is contained within these words, our duties as individuals to our country as well as our duty to humanity.”

This idea will have to be the focal point of all our teaching. It must be the principal task of the school to awaken the appropriate the sentiment, to implant it within all hearts and foster it to the utmost.” (Durkheim, 1979, p.159)

Similarly the defeat of 1940 was blamed by Pétainists on the socialist/communist anti religious influences in education. The Free French also indirectly blamed the educational system by ascribing the defeat to the highest outputs of the educational system: the upper ranks of the army, the political and financial systems, and industry.

"Our aim must be to build a country whose strength and unity derive from its values and culture." (CNDP, 1985, quoted in OECD, 1996, p. 72)

French culture is often regarded by the French as superior to that of other countries. It constitutes what Durkheim called the *"moral greatness of France"* and he thought other countries could benefit from it. This was the rationale behind French colonial policy and the application of un-changed French educational system to diverse cultures. De Gaulle too, thought that France had a mission to promote its superior culture to the rest of the world. It was thought that the rationalist model of French culture would have a civilising and liberating affect on other cultures. The English might take exception to French 'arrogance', but the thinking or 'mentality' behind this concept is based on the line of reasoning that French nationality and culture confer rights of equality, liberty and fraternity. The French view is that assimilation and integration of other cultures, 'monoculturalism', is of benefit to minority groups as they then achieve equality. The outburst of national pride and momentary acceptance of minority groups in the post 1998 World Cup period demonstrated these French ideals. As one radio commentator declared:

"Nous sommes plusieurs races, qu'une seule culture." (France Inter, June, 1998)

French education has traditionally had an overt role in passing down French culture to the next generation. The Durkheimian perspective on the role of education in society, though applicable to all societies, is particularly relevant to the French context:

"In spite of all the differences of opinions, there are at present, at the basis of our civilisation, a certain number of principles which, implicitly or explicitly, are common to all. The role of the State is to outline these essential principles, to have them taught in schools." (Durkheim, 1956, p. 81)

"Education perpetuates and fixes this homogeneity by fixing in advance, in the mind of the child, the essential similarities that the collective presupposes." (Durkheim, 1956, p. 124)

The primary moral function of schools for Durkheim was to make children know and love their country, in other words to attach them to society and give them a national identity:

"Attacher l'enfant à ces groupes, but ultime de l'éducation morale." (Durkheim, 1963, p. 193)

Thus education²⁴ in France has a particularly strong role in promoting national culture and creating national identity.

²⁴ Other institutions and industries also serve to promote French national identity as this response to the proposed deregulation of French public services shows.

"Ce serait donc le renoncement à l'aménagement harmonieux du territoire, qui est l'un des fondements de notre cohésion nationale." (Zuccarelli, 1992)

National unity or diversity and the structure of primary education in England and France

The structure of the French school system (see Appendix 17) shows remarkable clarity and unity through primary education and up to the third year of secondary school. The English system, by contrast (see Appendix 16) is very institutionally diverse at the primary stage. Post secondary, the French system is overtly selective and there is more visible diversity as selection is more institutionalised (that is, whereas in England sixth form colleges or colleges of further education might offer both academic and vocational courses, in France, in the fifth year of secondary education, educational institutions specialise in academic, professional or vocational education). There is concern in France that the structure of French higher education is “*opaque and difficult to understand*” (OECD, 1996, p. 34). However French primary education maintains “*une grande cohérence et elle garde tous les aspects d’une institution*” (Cousin 1998, p. 308). In England there is less preoccupation with the concept of a unified structure. There is more emphasis on parental choice (private or state system), and local heterogeneity (for example, junior or middle schools at primary level; grammar or comprehensive at secondary level).

Looking in more detail at primary education the organisation of the French system into five years of schooling, each with their centrally prescribed curricula and levels, serves to bind the country’s primary children into instantly recognisable national year²⁵ groups. The situation in England recently moved to a national year group system (1988) which represented a move towards unity. However diversity has not been abandoned as it is not unknown for individual schools to maintain their traditional appellations of: Class 1,2,3, etc; naming the class by the teacher’s name, e.g. Mrs Brown’s class; or even inventing names on a theme to do with the individual school’s identity. There is also more unity in the French system’s levels of achievement. Each year refers to a particular level in achievement. In England diversity is a feature of the system. The system of national assessment into different Key Stages allows for different levels within each Key Stage and within each year group. Furthermore there is even some dispute over the extent to which the bottom level of one Key Stage follows on directly from the top level of the previous Key Stage. It is argued that the unity of the French primary system enhances national identity.

²⁵ The five years of French primary education are: Cours Préparatoire (CP), Cours Elémentaire 1 (CE1), Cours Elémentaire 2 (CE2), Cours Moyen 1 (CM1), Cours Moyen 2 (CM2). They have been organised into 3 ‘cycles’ since 1989. The first cycle, is called the Cycle d’Apprentissage Premier., It consists of the first two years of pre-school education (Maternelle Petite Section and Moyenne Section). The second cycle is the Cycle d’Apprentissage Fondamentaux. It includes the last year of pre-school education ‘Maternelle, Grande Section), CP and CE1. The third cycle is the Cycle d’Aprofondissements which consists of CE2, CM1, CM2.

National unity or diversity and the curriculum in England and France

The traditionally centrally prescribed French primary curriculum gives particular attention to the French language. French takes up nearly one third of curriculum time. This is justified on the basis that: it is the basis for all other learning, it should be studied for its own sake as it exemplifies ideas of rationality in its organisation and clarity, and it is necessary for a successful professional life and participation in society (CNDP 1995). In the last year of French primary education (CM2) the curriculum is as follows: French, 8 hours, Maths 6 hours, Sport 5 hours, Science 3 hours History, Geography 2 hours, Civic education 1 hour, Art 1 hour, Music 1 hour. History and education civique occupy an important role in the French primary curriculum. They are held to be important principally for reasons of national identity: to become “*un citoyen français*” it is necessary to learn about the past of France; history gives children “*la conscience nationale*”; education civique teaches “*l’amour de la République*” and real citizenship “*On naît citoyen; on devient un citoyen éclairé*” (CNDP 1995). These declarations about national solidarity and identity echo Durkheim’s discourse on the role of history in the curriculum at the beginning of the 20th Century:

“Pour que l’enfant puisse s’attacher à la société, il faut qu’il sente en elle quelque chose de réel, de vivant, de puissant, qui domine l’individu, mais à quoi l’individu doit en même temps le meilleur de lui-même. Or, rien ne peut mieux donner cette impression que l’enseignement de l’histoire.” (Durkheim, 1962, p. 234)

“En faisant vivre aux élèves l’histoire de leur pays, on les fait donc vivre du même coup, dans l’intimité même de la conscience collective.” (Durkheim, 1962, p. 236)

The English national curriculum, which was only established in 1988, does not formally prescribe hours per subject, although it does indicate percentages of time²⁶. Reflecting the characteristic of national diversity in the English context, there is little consensus about the role of history, English literature and civic education. The 1996 conference on Curriculum, Culture and Society, convened by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, reflected the variety of opinions:

“There was much debate over the terms ‘national identity’ and ‘cultural identity’. Some delegates felt that the concept of national identity was not useful, as it tends to be exclusive and divisive.” (SCAA 1996, p. 40)

²⁶ Since the empirical work of this study was carried out there has been a requirement, since 1998, for one hour a day of Literacy, and from 1999, of one hour of Numeracy. These hours contain strongly prescribed activities and are in addition to English and Maths. The development is towards more entitlement, homogeneity, centralisation and unity.

There was an awareness of the multicultural, pluralistic nature of English culture and that schools should “*accommodate the values of others*” (SCAA 1996, p. 40). There was concern that “*To revise the curriculum to develop a sense of nationality could turn into indoctrination.*” (SCAA 1996, p. 40). It was even asserted that “*It is not possible to foster or promote national identity by teaching children about it, any more than is possible to teach morality, that is, to make students internalise it.*” (SCAA 1996, p. 17). However there was some agreement over the introduction of a new subject into the curriculum, that of civic education. It was proposed that this should include the understanding of national identities, and a critical understanding of the use of identity.

The English hesitation to foster national identity at this conference has been reported in some detail as it exemplifies the English value of national diversity and it provides contrastive illustrative material with the French curriculum.

National unity or diversity and the curriculum in English and French classroom

Interestingly, the research literature on curriculum coverage in English and French classrooms does not reflect centralised prescriptions. Osborn (in Broadfoot et al 2000) reports that in fact more of the observed English primary classroom time (64%) was spent on the national language than it was in France (43.8%). Civic education topics only took up 1% of observed curriculum time in both countries. However more French curriculum time was taken up by History (3.8% compared to 0% in England) and more English curriculum time was taken up by Science (9% compared to 1% in France). English and French teacher values of the 1980s, as reported by Broadfoot (1988, p. 277), showed that French teachers, reflecting the national curricula, did indeed express more responsibility for teaching citizenship (6.8% mentioned this objective) than English teachers (0%). At the level of pupils Sharpe (1997a) argues that French pupil perceptions show more awareness of national identity than English pupils. It is clear from Sharpe’s work that the English children’s responses about national identity echoed the hesitancy and diversity expressed by English adults at the SCAA conference whereas the French children’s responses closely reflected the content of their lessons in history and civic education.

To conclude Section 3. 2., it is argued from the research literature that national diversity is a value which is more strongly associated with the English context. National unity is a value which is more strongly related to the French context. These values have been seen to exist at the level of society, the educational system, school organisation, the

curriculum, the classroom and to some extent in the perceptions of pupils in the two respective countries. It is also argued that these values represent different 'ways of thinking' and thus provide a further example of two national cognitive constructs.

3. 3. Excellence versus egalitarianism

The third pair of contrasting values to be explored are excellence and egalitarianism. What evidence is there in English and French education and society to make the claim that the English cultural and educational context favours excellence and the French context favours egalitarianism? This study is not claiming that English education is more excellent or that the French system is more equal in actual practice (although Hollen Lees (1994) argues that the latter is indeed the case) but that these respective characteristics are more emphasised in the value systems and mentalities of one culture than the other.

Equality in French society and the role of education

Looking first at French society it remains 'unequal'. In 1994 1% of the population owned 20% of the total wealth of the country and 10% owned 50% of the total (Michaud, 1994). The authors also estimated that 30% of national revenue was in the hands of only 10% of households. They concluded that:

"L'inégalité des revenus reste plus forte en France que dans la plupart des pays développés". (Michaud, 1994, p. 320)

It is even suggested that social inequality has increased in France in the last 10 years (Thélot, 1998). Nor is there much social mobility, as Michaud comments:

"La population française reste compartimentée en une hiérarchie de couches relativement peu perméables entre elles, où les ascensions restent limités." (Michaud, 1994, p. 321)

Yet equality remains as an ideal and it is an ideal in which education is seen to play a key role. At the level of policy making education is seen as an instrument to get rid of inequality (Thélot, 1998). At the parental level education is seen as the path to social advancement (Zeldin, 1983, p. 91), hence the high regard in which education is held in France. Zeldin (1977) comments on the period between the 1840s and the 1940s that through education a poor family could rise to middle class status in three generations. Furthermore a career in education had traditionally been a sure path to social mobility. A French teacher's account of her background, reported by Osborn and Broadfoot (1992) illustrates this perfectly:

“I got my bac and then went directly into teaching. In 1959 there was a population explosion and the ‘Ecoles Normales’ couldn’t cope. It was up one social scale. It’s a matter of evolution. My grandfather was a peasant, my father a railway employee, I’m a teacher and my children have university degrees.”

Values of egalitarianism are embedded in French educational discourse, even if the social reality does not match the politics.

Equality and the development of the French educational system

What part has the ideal of equality played in the development of education in France? In France prior to the Revolution, the function of the education that existed was largely to provide children with some literacy to enable them to participate more fully in religion. It was the Revolution itself which set down the ideals of free and non secular education for all and equality, even if these aims were not realised in practice:

“To establish among citizens a de facto equality and also make real the political equality recognised by the law; this must be the first goal of national education.”

(Condorcet, 1792, quoted by Marceau, 1977, p. 100)

An interesting early move towards democratisation in French education was seen in the Duruy 1863 Law, which advocated that free education would provide a more equitable system as schools would no longer be in competition with each other. In establishing compulsory primary education the Jules Ferry Laws of 1881-1883 were an example of the practical application of the values of democracy and egalitarianism. The recommendation of the Langevin Wallon Commission too were essentially democratic in character.

The discourse of the French government’s statements on the mission of education in France enshrines the notion of equality. For example, the Constitution of the Vth Republic of 1958, reiterated egalitarian aims:

The State “guarantees the equal access of children and adults to instruction, vocational training and culture. The organisation of state education, which is free and non-denominational, is a duty of the State” (Marceau, 1977, p. 100)

The state “ensures equality before the law for all citizens, without distinction of origin, race, or religion.”

More recently, the Loi de l’Orientation of 1989 shows the same discourse:

“The right to education and training is assured in France. Respecting the fundamental principles of equality, liberty and secularism, the State guarantees the exercising of this right to all children and young people living on national territory whatever their social, cultural or geographical origin.” (Corbett, 1996, p. 49)

Louis-Etxeto (1998, p. 56) refers to '*la mission générale*' of French education which is:

"d'assurer l'égalité des chances".

The following is a further example of the value placed on equality as an idea in French education. It was because the 'Collèges d'Enseignement Secondaire', set up in 1959, were not seen to be fulfilling their function of providing equality, that ten years later with the Haby Laws an attempt was made to improve the situation by abolishing the existing system of setting.

The path to equality in French education has been connected to the concept of the democratisation of French education and democratisation has been thought to relate to '*la massification*'. This has almost amounted to an article of faith:

"On se rappelle que la 'foi' dans la démocratisation a conduit à penser que l'ouverture des portes de la sixième à tous les petits Français, dans les années 60, allait permettre de démocratiser le système." (Louis-Etxeto, 1998, p. 55)

The 'experimentation' with the 'Collèges' showed that the two were not necessarily connected and that as Prost remarked:

"La démocratisation n'est pas la fille naturelle de la massification" (Prost, quoted in Louis-Etxeto, 1998)

It is also clear from even a quick perusal of French research literature on education that one of the main themes in French research is the evaluation of the success of the system in terms of social equality. Pupil achievement is most often set against the variable of social class background. Research titles such as: "Le Recrutement Social de l'Elite Scolaire en France. Evolution des inégalités de 1950 à 1990" (Euriat & Thélot 1995), "Réussite scolaire et disparités socio-démographiques" (Le Guen 1991), "Les Scolarités de la maternelle au lycée: étapes et processus dans la production des inégalités sociales" (Duru-Bellat 1993), etc., abound. The educational system is assessed in terms of its accessibility to pupils from different social statuses. For example, the statistic that in 1936/1937 only 2.6% of children entering secondary schools were from a working class background (Zeldin, 1977). Despite the increase in accessibility to secondary education, with one third of a generation entering secondary education in the 1950s, and since 1975 the whole generation, research has concentrated on inequality. For example, that whereas 80% of teachers' offspring obtained the baccalaureate in 1980, this compared with only 25% of the offspring of factory workers (Duru-Bellat, 1996). As Cousin (1998, p. 9) has pointed out, this is because the issues of equality and democracy remain the fundamental theoretical values of the French system. The almost obsessive interest in social class and pupil achievement is a reflection of the underlying and deeply held commitment to equality

in France. The crises facing French education at the present time is the choice between whether to follow the traditional route of homogeneity in order to create equality or whether to follow the new path, instigated by the 1989 reforms, of diversification, in order to promote equality in a society which is ever more heterogeneous. The ends remain the same, equality and democracy, but there is a growing awareness that the means to get there might differ.

Equality and French education in the 1990s

To what extent are the values of equality in evidence in French education today? Again the emphasis is on values and not the reality of equality in inequality in French education. As Hollen Lees (1994, p. 76) argues the centralisation of the French system through the curriculum, government selected text books and assessment which is nationally controlled at all levels is there to support the ideal of “*equal achievement not just of equal access*”. This is the traditional idea that centralisation and standardisation make equality, which is the basic idea behind that of homogeneity. In order to try to provide an equal distribution of educational resources throughout the country the ‘Commission Nationale de la Carte Scolaire’ is responsible for deciding who gets what. Looking at the structure of education the expansion of the pre-school or ‘Ecoles Maternelles’, which encompasses a three year programme for 2 year olds to 6 six olds and in practice in 1990 provided pre-school education for nearly 100% of French 3 year old children (the highest rates for any OECD country) (OECD, 1996, p. 27) is a clear step forward in the aim of making education more equal. Furthermore selection into different institutions rarely comes into effect officially until pupils reach the age of 15, although pupils may be ‘orientated’ towards less academic paths (Quatrième and Troisième Technologie) in their last two years at ‘le collège’ (lower secondary school). This is made possible through the practice of ‘redoublement’ which allows pupils a second, or third, chance to stay in the main stream. The social reality is of course different as there are covert systems of selection such as parental choice of school and parental choice of language which conspire to make the system unequal, but so far this has not detracted from the overt ideal or discourse of equality.

Excellence and English society, the role of education

Turning now to England what evidence is there to show that far from emphasising equality the English context is more likely to promulgate values of individual excellence? As has already been stated it is not the aim of this study to show that English society is

more or less equal in practice than French society it is the attitude towards inequality which is important. Clearly English society, like French society, reveals tremendous inequality. Sociological studies in stratification show the dominance of English public school education, followed by Oxbridge, in the formation of the elite. Such well-established facts as: two thirds of professional and managerial classes have a private school education, and in 1995 50% of Oxbridge entrants were from private schools, when these account for only some 7% of the total school population, are indicative of inequality and the role played by education in fostering inequality. The characteristics of heterogeneity, decentralisation and individualism in English society and education have given rise not only to diversity but are also conducive to nurturing inequality. The greater variety seen in English primary and secondary education compared to French education (Appendix 16 and 17) is referred to later, in the section on diversity versus unity, has encouraged a hierarchy of schools in terms of academic excellence. In the secondary sector, at the top of the hierarchy, there are the elite private schools, followed by grammar schools, 'opted out' comprehensives, and at the bottom, the LEA controlled comprehensive schools, which in turn vary according to the socio-economic zone in which they are situated. A further illustration of this inequality can be found in the Financial Times's 1996 survey of A-level performance, where of the 200 highest achieving schools only 20 were in the state sector (Adonis, 1997). As Adonis writes:

"Far from bringing the classes together, England's schools - private and state - are now a force for rigorous segregation." (Adonis, 1997, p. 55)

In comparing the elites of England and France, Sampson concentrates on the role of the private sector in England:

"The French elite, the most formidable in Europe, has been tolerated in spite of its arrogance and visibility, because it emerges from a vigorous and reasonably democratic state system, where selection is based on brains and hard work. But Britain never having undergone a revolution, retains a very different traditional elite, still based on a tiny group of fee-paying boarding schools beyond the range of most parents." (Sampson, 1982, p. 118)

Whilst this study would take issue with Sampson's rather too simplistic account of the background of the French elite, it does like Sampson see a fundamental difference between overtly held societal values in the two countries towards the elite. It is because of the ideals of the French revolution that ideals of egalitarianism dominate French rhetoric, and the educational paths to the elite are tolerated on the grounds that the elite serve the state and the people. In England, this study maintains that inequality in education and society is

tolerated for two very different reasons. First that it an acceptable consequence of the English people's unwritten right to 'choose', whether the choice is one between schools or washing powder. Secondly inequality seems also to be an acceptable consequence of the much cherished excellence. As Sampson says, writing about public schools, but equally appropriate to the state sector:

"The biggest damage we do is to perpetuate a class division. But it may be the price we have to pay for excellence." (Sampson, 1982, p. 124)

Both the concepts of 'choice' and 'excellence' are intricately connected with the English concept of individualism. Using a Brunerian narrative mode to compare the mentalities of the two countries, the English story is that individual people, institutions, local areas, etc, can 'choose' between a variety of options available in order to achieve maximum individual excellence. The French story is that the state attempts to provide homogeneity in order to promote egalitarianism, excellence serves the state's aims and not the individual's.

Excellence and the pluralistic aims of English education

Although the history of education in England has shown developments towards equality and democratisation the notion of equality is not enshrined in the State or in its educational system in the same way as it is France. Not only has English education lacked what might be called a mission statement but it has often suffered from lack of clarity as it has put forward a mixed bag of aims and values. These aims have included, firstly, as first seen in the 19th century the need to provide an industrial work force with the minimum of skills to carry out their role in the economy. Education was also seen in the 19th century to have a positive influence in society as it 'occupied' or kept children off the streets. Children who, thanks to the Factory Act of 1876, were no longer at work. There was a fear that the enforced idleness of children could be linked to crime. This is in contrast to the view in the beginning of the 19th century that education for the working classes was harmful to society as increased knowledge might cause dissatisfaction and social unrest. Another overt aim of education in the 19th century was that it should be cost effective. The French system might refer to grandiose ideals but the English system was firmly rooted in the practicalities of minimising expense. For example the Newcastle Commission of 1858-1861 considered:

"what measures are required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of the people." (Evans, 1985, p. 33)

A further example is contained in the Revised Code of 1862 where Lowe asserted of education:

"If it is not cheap, it shall be efficient, if it is not efficient, it shall be cheap."

(Evans, 1985, p. 35)

The former example in particular shows that the English system, lacking the unity and direction of a centralised system tended to stress the cost of education in what was essentially a market force system of education. Ideals, such as providing education *"to all classes of people"* are represented but are not the key concepts. Another aim of education was that it should provide not only as in France a moral training, but also and in great contrast to France a religious one. This was stressed in the 1888 Majority Report of Lord Cross's Royal Commission. Moreover it has long been put forward that a good educational system is linked to a healthy economy. For example, Forster of the Forster Act of 1870 declared in Parliament:

"Upon the speedy provision of elementary education depends our industrial prosperity." (Evans, 1985, p. 38)

This aim for education is also represented more recently:

"..Our goal is a society in which everyone is well-educated and able to learn throughout life. Britain's economic prosperity and social cohesion both depend on achieving that goal." (DfEE, White Paper: Excellence in Schools, 1997, p. 9)

The above illustration also reiterates the another aim of education, that of social cohesion which was also reflected in the 1870s. Finally education has an important political role. The labour party's 1996 election manifesto of *"Education, education, education ..."* said little about education itself but more about its importance in party politics. Education in France has also represented many of the above aims at different periods of history but the primary aim of equality and democracy has always taken first place. As Sadler, in Higginson (1979, p. 60) suggests the diversity of educational aims and provision in England is a reflection of the lack of unity in society and the respect for individual opinions.

This pluralistic concept of education, which is itself related to decentralisation, is connected to the concepts of excellence and individualism. Individualism allows for greater variation. It allows for excellence (and its antithesis); excellence in individual schools who are competing with each other for clients on the basis of their published results; excellence in individual teachers (as in the Government's forthcoming Green Paper on performance related pay); excellence in individual pupils through pedagogic differentiation. Whereas in France assessment of the educational system, its teachers and

its pupils is more likely to be criterion referenced in England there is a growing tendency for a form of normative assessment which is based on the attempt to follow a standard of excellence which has been set up at the level of individual schools and individual teachers. In a sense the private schools set the standards of excellence, which state schools have then emulated by adapting it to their the local situation. Paradoxically at the level of pupils, individualism is more important than excellence. Individual pupils are assessed on the basis of performance related to inferred individual capabilities. Pupils are 'excellent' in terms of their own individuality.

Excellence is thus both a covertly and overtly held value in English education that in importance far surpasses that of equality. It can be seen in the structure of the educational system; for example, in the pre-school parental 'choice' of state nursery schools, locally run playschools and the more 'academic' private nursery schools. In the State system pupil excellence is in some areas still institutionally enshrined in selection to secondary schools through cognitive ability tests. This may result in streaming in the last year of primary school. Internal selection of pupils in comprehensive schools operates with much variation from school to school in terms of 'banding', 'setting', 'streaming'; the subjects involved; and the pupil age when it occurs. The different systems guide pupils into 'ability' paths that are formally set at 14 to 15 years when pupils are graded into basic or high level GCSEs. Pupil age and pupil ability are the English criteria for pupil performance.

Individual excellence and egalitarianism contrasted in English and French classrooms

French teachers emphasise the concept of equality in their discourse. First they believe in a national curriculum as it provides a basis for equality and unity (Osborn, 1992). Secondly French teachers hold values of entitlement and enlightenment:

"Their discourse emphasised equal entitlement and the need to treat all children in exactly the same way in order to achieve justice and educational results." (Osborn, 1997, p. 380)

English teachers justify differentiated pedagogy on the basis of their belief in individualism and the different needs that children have. Osborn and Broadfoot's findings from a comparative study of English and French primary school teachers showed that two thirds of English teachers observed:

"had aims which included all pupils reaching the highest level of which they were capable." (Osborn, 1992, p. 8)

Furthermore whereas French teachers conformed to 'universalistic' values in their educational objectives, in the face of social class differences English teachers showed a more 'particularistic' approach (Osborn, 1997, p. 381). The English values of 'particularism' stem from the concept of individualism and excellence. Differentiation is often justified because it allows excellence. The argument being that 'the most able' would 'be kept back' in a criterion referenced situation. It is also arguable that the association made by Robinson (1992, p. 73) and Hollen Lees (1994) between a concept of fixed natural ability and the English context compared to an association between achievement is possible for all and the French context, is another example of more overt egalitarianism in the French context.

The differences between English and French classrooms observed by Sharpe (1992,b), Osborn and Broadfoot (1992) and Osborn and Planel (1999) have been credited as largely due to the difference between teacher values. The following two observations on French classrooms and French teaching from Sharpe (1992,b) show how French values about equality permeate teacher practice. Firstly he noted that:

"The classroom environment ignores life outside school" (Sharpe, 1992,b, p. 333).

This is related to French values that pupil socio-economic background is not relevant, that within school everyone is equal. Secondly he observed the French teachers':

"apparent overriding concern that everyone should jump the same hurdle whatever their differing individual capacities." (Sharpe, 1992,b, p. 337),

which in practice meant that all the children in the class were expected to carry out the same work at the same speed, and illustrates the traditional French belief that equality can only be realised through homogeneity. Broadfoot and Osborn's more quantitative research shows how English teachers' beliefs in individualism and excellence was consistent with less class teaching, more individual and group work and less teacher instruction. At the level of child interaction they found that English pupils were slightly more likely interact on a one to one basis with their teacher but much less likely to interact as a member of the whole with their teacher.

To conclude Section 3.3. this study argues that the emphasis on values of excellence in the English context (which are related to English values of individualism), and the French emphasis on values of egalitarianism are in evidence in: the societies of the two countries, their educational systems and their classroom practices. Furthermore it is

suggested that both excellence and egalitarianism are cognitive constructs. They exist in both countries but in different degrees of strength and importance.

3. 4. Individualism versus collectivism

The fourth pair of contrasting values to be considered are those of individualism versus collectivism. These values are closely connected to those of homogeneity and heterogeneity. For example in the English context, Sadler (in Higginson 1979) made the point that English education reflects societal values allowing freedom of personal conviction, at all levels. The relative decentralisation of England is related to more heterogeneity and more diversity. There is a less uniform ideal of life. The English context contains a stronger mix of values of individualism and collectivism than the French. These contrasting ideals have traditionally been associated with party politics. State intervention and control are emphasised by the Labour party and individualism by the Conservative party. However when the cultural characteristics of England and France are compared it is maintained in this section that individualism is a stronger concept than collectivism in the English context. Quotations from two past Conservative prime ministers can be used to illustrate the important role of individualism in the creation of a traditional English identity:

“Edward Heath wanted people to ‘stand on their own two feet, we have to get back to the traditional British attitude of independence from the state’”. (Sampson, 1982, p. XI)

Margaret Thatcher on individualism - *“I’ve always regarded the Conservatives as the party of the individual”*. (Sampson, 1982, p. XI)

It is argued that education has a greater role in furthering the individual, his needs and interests, in England than it does in France, where the State’s needs come first, the individual’s needs second. It is only since the late 1980s with the discourse of *“mettre l’enfant au coeur du système éducatif”* (Loi de l’Evaluation) that the French system has put more emphasis on the individual child. At the heart of these differences lie different values and concepts about individualism.

Individualism, the collective and the role of education in the French context

Whereas there is a view in England that a strong centralised State poses a threat to individual liberty the French see the State as the means by which the individual and his rights are protected. What is meant by collectivism is the belief that the State or any unified group of people is better than the sum of its parts. Durkheim makes interesting

source material here²⁷. Durkheim thought that we only really became individuals by getting outside of our narrow personal domains and submitting to the moral authority of society:

“Ainsi la société dépasse l’individu, elle a sa nature propre, distincte de la nature individuelle, et, par là, elle remplit la première condition nécessaire pour servir de fin à l’activité morale. Mais dans un autre côté elle rejoint l’individu; entre elle et lui il n’y a pas de vide; elle plonge en nous des fortes et profondes racines. Ce n’est pas assez dire; la meilleure partie de nous même n’est qu’une émanation de la collectivité. Ainsi s’explique que nous puissions nous y attacher et même la préférer à nous.”

(Durkheim, 1963, p. 62)

Thus the State or the collective allows people to be individuals by liberating them from the confines of family or local area:

“The main function of the State is to liberate the individual personalities. It is solely because, in holding its constituent societies in check, it prevents them from exerting the repressive influences over the individual that they would otherwise exact.”

(Durkheim, 1957, p. 63) *“It is the State that sets it (the individual) free. And this gradual liberation does not simply serve to fend off the opposing forces that tend to absorb the individual: it also serves to provide the milieu in which the individual moves, so that he may develop his faculties in freedom.”* (Durkheim, 1957, p. 69)

This idea is perhaps the key to the definition of individualism in the French context. A French individual in his own right counts for little. The Larousse’s definition of an “individu” is “une personne quelconque”, a rather indeterminate and uninteresting person. The French individual only fully realises himself when he is an individual as a social being. For Durkheim this was one of the main aims of education, to liberate the child and give him his individuality:

“L’enfant, exclusivement élevé dans sa famille, devient la chose de celle-ci l’école le libère de cette dépendance trop étroite.” (Durkheim, 1963, p. 122)

This perhaps explains the apparent paradox of why the French see themselves as supremely individualistic and why they have produced such original individualistic movements in the arts and the social sciences. They are only allowed to be individuals once they have reached a certain level of education. It may also explain why French school

²⁷ Durkheim’s work is central to this study firstly because of his sociological perspective on French education and society. Secondly because, as a product of the French nineteenth century establishment, his ideas also embody French values: “To relate the works of a period to the practice of the school therefore gives us a means of explaining not only what these works consciously set forth but also what they unconsciously reveal in as much as they partake of the symbolism of a period or of a society.” (Bourdieu, 1976, p.196). Thirdly because Durkheim, in his capacity as teacher trainer, may be seen to have had some influence on the direction of French education.

children are treated as inferior by their teachers, and why pupils then perceive themselves to be thus treated as inferior. This understanding of the French concept of individualism is fundamental to an understanding of the educational system. French education defines itself:

“en fonction de l'adulte à former, et non de l'enfant à épanouir”. (Prost 1968, p. 280)

Individualism, the collective and the role of education in the English context

The English system, where the Oxford English dictionary defines an individual as *“a distinct character”*, cherishes individual differences and the development of different characters:

“Individuality must be respected, guarded and developed.” (Sadler, quoted by Higginson 1979, p. 156)

Unlike the French system the English system does seek to *“épanouir l'enfant”*. English primary teachers' beliefs in their professional responsibility are 'extended' (Broadfoot 1988) and include the development of children's personalities (Broadfoot, 1987, p. 292). As compared with French teachers:

“Where English teachers emphasise the whole child, and therefore take responsibility for the children's aesthetic, intellectual, physical, socio-emotional and moral development, French teachers are more likely to see the child as 'student'..... stressing intellectual and cognitive development and mastery of a narrow range of school subjects.” (Broadfoot, 1988, p. 277)

When Broadfoot and Osborn compared English and French teachers' perceptions of their role they found that English teachers took more responsibility for extra-curricular activities; 5.2% of English teachers thought they had a responsibility in this area compared to 0.7% of French teachers (Broadfoot, 1988, p. 265). These English teacher values in the importance of the individual and his development are clear and have a long history. As Sadler, in Higginson (1979) concludes looking back over the last 400 years of English education:

“The English believe that education should develop the whole man or the whole woman, body, mind and spirit.” (Sadler, quoted by Higginson 1979, p. 156)

Philosophically these values can be traced back to Kant:

“The end of education is to develop, in each individual, all the perfection of which he is capable.” (Durkheim, 1956, p. 62)

The relationship between individualism and religion and collectivism and morality

A major difference between English and French education, which is connected to individualism versus collectivism, is the function of religion and morality in education. Religion has remained in the sphere of State education in England as seen in Sadler's reference to the development of the *'spirit'*. Writing at the beginning of the 20th Century Sadler comments:

"There is now general agreement that education must be so planned as to touch the springs of character, to inculcate allegiance to spiritual ideals." (Sadler, quoted by Higginson 1979, p. 147)

The Educational Reform Act of 1988 requires that English schools offer a curriculum which:

"promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school" (ERA 1988 Part 1, Ch 1, p. 1)

The concept of 'character building' lies buried in the second statement of:

"prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life". (ERA 1988 Part 1, Ch 1, p. 1)

Religious teaching is connected to the development of the individual and his character, *"the development of the whole man"*. This is an instance of where English State education has been much influenced by the ideals of English public school education. The English individualistic concept of character building and preparation for adult life includes ideas about the individual as a social being, individuals learning to live together, or what Sadler calls *"the obligations of fellowship"* (Sadler, in Higginson 1979, p. 147). Broadfoot (1988) reports this English emphasis in English teacher values of the development of the individual and his/her ability to socialise. Thus the English context could be summarised as the development of the individual, his/her spirituality, his/her character, which also includes learning to live as a member of a collective.

The French educational context, where religion is absent, concentrates on morality. To understand this aspect of French education we need to again turn to Durkheim's work. Firstly although the term 'morality' will be used, as Pickering (1979) noted, Durkheim's use of *"la morale"* does not directly translate as 'morality' as it contains within it the concepts of traditional and descriptive ethics. In Durkheim's own words morality:

"consiste en un ensemble de règles définies et spéciales qui détermine impérativement la conduite." (Durkheim, 1963, p. 29)

The concept of morality is thus bound up with that of discipline and authority, hence the importance of understanding the role of morality before comprehending the role of

discipline, rules and authority in the French classroom, which will be looked at in Section 3. 5. Morality, in the French context, is the glue which holds the collective together, in much the same way as religion might do:

“The fundamental duty of the State is laid down in this very fact: it is to preserve in calling the individual to a moral way of life It serves to bring about that communion of minds and wills which is a first condition of any social life”. (Durkheim, 1957, p. 69)

Durkheim actually compares the function of “*communion of minds*” to that of a cult or religion. He explains that when education has no religious component it needs to have an aim which goes beyond the individual and instead puts society, or the collective, as its main aim, otherwise society is merely a name put to an amorphous mass of individuals. It is a theme which will be returned to in Section 3. 4. Although Durkheim’s argument is relevant to classroom education in any country it is particularly appropriate to French education, where religion is excluded, especially when contrasted with English education, where religion is still present. In the absence of religion Durkheim gives morality an important role in French education:

“L’oeuvre de l’école, dans le développement moral de l’enfant, peut et doit être de la plus haute importance.” (Durkheim, 1963, p. 16)

There would seem to be a stronger understanding in the French context that morality is closely associated with the collective whereas in the English context religion first serves the individual and then the collective. Individualism in the French context can only be indirectly achieved by the individual first submitting him/herself to the collective whereas in the English context individualism can be more directly achieved.

Individualism versus collectivism and English and French pedagogy

Is there a relationship between on the one hand, the emphasis on whole class teaching in France and the concept of collectivism, and between on the other hand, the weaker emphasis on whole class teaching in England and the concept of individualism? The high incidence of whole class teaching that was found in Broadfoot, Osborn and Sharpe’s work is perhaps related to a national value, or cognitive construct, in the strength and virtues of the collective. As Durkheim explains:

“Une vie collective de la classe: le maître doit donc s’appliquer de toutes ses forces à la susciter. Le rôle du maître est de la diriger. Son action consiste surtout à multiplier les circonstances où peut se produire une libre élaboration d’idées et de

sentiments communs, à en dégager les produits, à les coordonner et à les fixer.”

(Durkheim, 1963, p. 205)

In other words Durkheim argues that the French teacher should actively use the fact that the class is a collective unit, a small version of society “*une petite société*” (Durkheim, 1963, p. 127) to teach morality and the primordial importance of the collective. Although Osborn’s (1997, p. 384) findings showed that only a small percentage of a French sample of teachers in the 1990s gave moral development of their pupils as one of their priorities, this study maintains that it is the traditional importance given to the implicit relationship between morality and the collective which underlies whole class teaching in France. At the level of the pupil Prost (1968) points out that the effect of treating the class as a collective can have the opposite consequence on the pupil than that which was intended. He criticised the French system for producing isolated pupils, working silently in class and working at home on their own with individual assessment and with few occasions for “*travaux collectifs*”. Research evidence in the 1990s does not totally substantiate Prost’s claim. Broadfoot et al (2000) reported that 50.7% of the observed English pedagogic context involved pupils working on their own compared to only 33.8% for French pupils. However concepts of individualism, and the relative importance of the collective, in France are changing, under English and American influences. These changes account for some of the problems and dilemmas that the French educational system is facing in the 1990s.

Looking at pedagogy in the English context, Piaget’s theories of child development found fertile ground in the English philosophical terrain of individualism. The concept that children would vary in their developmental age in the three areas of the intellect, the emotions and the physical coincided with the English view of the individual definition of one who has special characteristics. Piaget’s ideas saw their apogee in the Plowden Report of 1966 which made individualisation into a theory of education:

“Individualisation of the educational process is the essential principle on which all educational strategy and acts must be based.” (Galton, 1980)

Although the practice of many English teachers has not always been found to be directly affected by Plowden (Galton, 1980), and subsequent research (Pollard 1994) has shown much variation in the teaching styles of English teachers, the discourse of English teachers is, compared to that of French teachers, consistently concerned with the needs of individual children and their individual abilities:

“English teachers express a strongly held ‘child-centred’ ideology which defines what is to be learned much more in terms of the needs and interests of the individual child.” (Broadfoot, 1987, p. 298)

Section 4. 1. will examine this study's empirical findings of the relationship between collectivism and the French classroom, and individualism and the English classroom.

To summarise Section 3. 4. although values of collectivism and individualism exist in English and French culture it is suggested from this analysis of the research literature that individualism is stronger in the English context and collectivism is stronger in the French context. Hence the argument that collectivism is more of a French cognitive construct and individualism is more of an English cognitive construct.

3. 5. Creativity versus authoritarianism

In this section it is argued that English education, and to a certain extent English society, place more emphasis on creativity whereas French society and education favour authoritarianism. By creativity, what is meant is not just an individual's performance which is evaluated according to a particular group's values, but more generally the value that is placed on an individual thinking for him/herself. This study's concept of creativity is therefore closely associated with values of heterogeneity and individualism. The contrasting term of authoritarianism that is used in the French context is also related to the concept of structure .

Creativity in the English context

The concept of creativity as individual self expression can be found in English society.

Conservative William Hague stated with reference to Britain that:

"The British Way is about the creativity that comes from independence."

(McSmith 1998)

The narrower notion of creativity and artistic performance is also in evidence.

Labour Gordon Brown declared in 1997 that:

"The British Way is to encourage the creative talents of all." (McSmith 1998)

In education there is 'creativity' at both the levels of the institution and the individual pupil. The emphasis placed on diversity in the English educational context encourages creativity, as the following passage referring to comprehensive schools in the late 1970s illustrates:

"Comprehensive schools have resisted classification. They vary as much as the communities they serve or the hundred local authorities that run them; each has its own specialists, weaknesses and values, and their headteachers oppose any attempt to

compare them; much of their interest is in individual self-expression.” (Sampson, 1982, p. 117)

Where there is diversity and respect for individual self expression there is arguably also less authoritarianism. Sadler, comparing English and Continental education, remarked in 1921 that:

“(English education) has always been a little milder than education on the continent of Europe.” (Sadler, in Higginson 1979, p. 137)

At the level of the pupil reference has already been made to the influence of the philosopher John Locke on education and his belief that education should champion *“variety and freedom of thinking.”* This value placed on freedom of thinking has been noted by several observers of English education. Goethe came to the conclusion in 1827 that English children:

“are treated with far more respect and enjoy a far freer development than is the case with us Germans.” (quoted by Sadler, in Higginson 1979, p. 137)

English values of encouraging critical and independent thinking are enshrined in the 1944 Education Act which included as one of its aims that pupils should *“develop lively and enquiring minds”*.

Critical thinking is also seen in the already mentioned conclusions of the 1996 SCAA Conference on Curriculum, Culture and Society where pupils’ *“critical understanding”* of national identity was thought to be important. Referring to the narrower meaning of creativity as original performance Sadler also draws our attention to a distinctive characteristic of English education, that of creativity and aestheticism. He refers to Wordsworth’s definition of a learner as a :

“sensitive being, a creative soul.” (Sadler, in Higginson 1979, p. 111)

French educational aims include aesthetic aims but there is no mention of creativity:

“Il faut permettre aux élèves de développer leurs goûts et leurs capacités artistiques.” (CNDP, 1995, Préface)

Authoritarianism in the French context

Authoritarianism is defined by the Oxford Dictionary of English as “favouring obedience to authority as opposed to individual liberty”. The term contrasts quite well with this study’s use of creativity in the English context to describe individual self expression. Authoritarianism is connected in the French context to an emphasis on structure. The latter notion needs to be explored first.

Structure, order and system are valued in French society. They can be seen in such diverse examples as French landscape gardening and French primary maths text books (Harries, 1998). For the former compare French classical garden design which flowered under the reign of Louis XIV to English garden design. The French intellectual climate was particularly congenial to classical and Renaissance ideas of symmetry. The gardens at Versailles and elsewhere, like Haussman's planning of Paris, represent the French passion for order, system and structure, and the imposition of these on nature. These values, though also present in English society, are much less strong. They are tempered, in the case of English garden design, by more informality and more harmony with nature.

The degree of centralisation in France and the division of its institutions into hierarchies is another example of the value placed on structure in France. The educational system itself is highly structured, as has already been seen. Education primarily serves the state, not the individual, in providing quotas of trained workers to satisfy the needs of a still centralised and structured economy:

"The education system is supposed to confer on individuals, whatever their origin, specific and nationally recognised qualifications enabling them to take their place in society as a citizen and producer." (OECD, 1996, p. 175)

Professional and vocational qualifications are highly structured and hierarchical, reflecting the employment situation in society. There is little room for individual manoeuvring in the structured system of accreditation:

"The initial hierarchy (levels of recruitment), determined by qualifications, is generally decisive for a person's entire career." (OECD, 1996, p. 102)

The OECD criticises French education for its *"excessive emphasis on qualifications"*, which is itself a product of the degree of structure in professional and vocational qualifications²⁸.

Ideas of structure and system in France are related to authoritarianism and discipline, as authoritarianism exists within the well defined structures of classrooms, institutions and the educational system itself. According to Prost (1968) there is ideological unanimity about authority in France. Durkheim defined education as *"une oeuvre d'autorité"*. He thought that discipline was essential, and although individual thought was admirable in *"L'homme fait"*, he considered it to be *"néfaste pour la jeunesse"* (Prost,

1968, p. 9). Individual self expression is still not encouraged in French primary schools, structure and rules dominate²⁹. Instead the French teaching style is characterised by “strong authority and firm discipline” (Sharpe 1992,b, p. 265) and “the suppression of pupils’ own natural spontaneous interests”. Sharpe’s example of a lesson on sentence structure to a class of French 6 year olds includes reference to the teacher’s authority (as expressed in teacher’s phrase “*Je vous dis...*”). Osborn and Broadfoot (1992) also comment on the high level of teacher control in French classrooms. They observed that work carried out in French classrooms differed from the English classrooms in that it was: more or less totally dependent on teacher control; they noted the almost constant pressure of French teachers to exhort pupils to work: the criticism directed at French pupils and naming of individuals compared to the English teachers’ efforts to protect children’s self esteem; the French teachers’ use of their position of their authority and their emphasis on direction compared to English teachers’ use of persuasion and reasoned argument; and the relative emphasis of negative comments by French teachers and positive comments by English teaches. French pupils needed less reminding about the teacher’s authority than did English pupils. Research (Broadfoot 2000) in English and French classrooms of the 1990s, of a more quantitative nature using systematic observation, supported some of these earlier ethnographic findings³⁰.

Part of the teacher’s authority in the French primary classroom comes from the value placed on learning and knowledge in France, as Sharpe points out elsewhere:

“The classroom environment celebrates the role of the teacher as possessor of valued knowledge and skills.” (Sharpe, 1992,a, p. 333)

But it is argued that the French primary teacher’s authority is also related to the value placed on moral authority. In order to understand this relationship between morality, authority and structure it is helpful to look at Durkheim’s lectures in education delivered at Bordeaux to French teacher trainees. For Durkheim class discipline was essential because it constitutes the morality of the social group:

“Le premier élément de la moralité, c’est l’esprit de discipline.” (Durkheim, 1963, p. 27)

²⁸ There is also however a positive outcome in the field of motivation. The French Ministry of Education (quoted in OECD, 1996, p.37 and others (Hollen Lees, 1994, p..6; QUEST unpublished material) agree that French pupils are highly motivated by their need to acquire qualifications.

²⁹ An example of the difference in values between English and French writing requirements can be found in Appendix 18, when a bilingual child from an English school encountered the structure and rules in her French school.

³⁰ An analysis of teacher activity showed that during the observed time of teacher activity 3.5% of English teacher activity was taken up by encouragement of pupils (compared to 1.8% of French teacher time; and 1% of French teacher activity was taken up by negative feedback (compared to .3% for English teachers). However the significance of these findings is reduced by the smallness of the sample size.

In French schools where religion plays no part, the teacher is perhaps endowed with more moral authority than in the English context³¹. Durkheim compares the French teacher to a priest, as both must believe in their moral legitimacy as intermediaries through which “*une grande réalité*” passes:

“De même que le prêtre est l’interprète de Dieu, lui est l’interprète des grandes idées morales de son temps et de son pays.” (Durkheim, 1963, p. 131)

The parallels described in Section 3.1. between Catholicism and French education exist not so much because of the existence of Catholicism but because of its non-existence in schools. In the absence of a religious influence in French schools collective morality and discipline have filled the gap³². The stronger emphasis on rules, structure and discipline in French schools is also related to stronger French values about pupil obedience and the collective:

“N’est-il pas possible d’être un très bon enfant, et de ne pas savoir arriver à l’heure fixe, de n’être pas prêt au moment voulu pour son devoir ou sa leçon? Mais tout change d’aspect, si, au lieu d’examiner en détail la nature de cette réglementation scolaire, on la considère dans son ensemble, comme le code des devoirs de l’élève. Alors, l’exactitude à remplir toutes ces petites obligations apparaît comme une vertu.” (Durkheim, 1963, p. 12)

The Durkheimian justification for discipline underlies French official texts of the 1990s:

“Il faut permettre aux élèves ... d’évoluer dans un groupe organisé, d’assimiler peu à peu les règles de vie qui régissent l’école et la société.” (CNDP, 1995, Préface)

This study thus argues that the dominant and authoritarian position of the French primary teacher that is reported in the research literature is not merely a consequence of a whole class teaching style but relates to long and deeply held French values about the collective and morality in secular education.

Two points concerned with authority and morality remain to be explored. Firstly Durkheim reminds us that pupils have to be conscious of morality for it to be effective. Pupils must have understanding. In other words there is a relationship between morality

³¹ It is interesting to speculate if the social reality of the decrease in the importance of religious education in English schools, leaving a moral vacuum, has affected teacher authority in the classroom.

³² The subject of civic education also serves to replace religious education as it fulfils an ethical role as well as a citizenship role:

“Civics, an eminently moral discipline is intended to foster honesty, courage, the rejection of racism and love of the republic.” ... “Civics must never become indoctrination or exhortation; it should encourage responsibility, and always constitute instruction in the ways of liberty.” (CNDP 1985)

and rationality, and this will lead us into Section 3. 6. Empiricism versus Intellectualism.. Secondly the rational understanding of morality and the importance of the collective are also related to the transition from child to adult in French society. It is argued that the frequently used term 'pupil autonomy' in French educational texts refers not merely to a child who is capable of working independently but also to the concept of personal freedom or individualism. The process of child to adult in French education particularly involves the **rational** acceptance of rules and authority in the structure because through recognition of the underlying morality:

"Autonomy is the attitude of a will that accepts rules, because it recognises that they are rationally based. It presupposes the free but methodological application of the intelligence to the examination of the ready-made rules that the child first receives from the society in which he is growing up, but which far from accepting passively, he must gradually learn to give new life to, to reconcile, to purify of their decayed elements, to reform, in order to adapt them to the changing conditions of existence of the society of which he is becoming an active member." (Durkheim, 1956, p. 45)

Using a Brunerian narrative mode it is argued that the 'French story' is that morality, like the collective, allows children to achieve adulthood. Once they have rationally understood the rules and morality of their society, their French identity, they are autonomous, they are individuals (in the English sense), they can be creative and critical, they have achieved personal freedom. Although these values may not be consciously held by the actors of the French educational system they well account for the much greater responsibility that French teachers were reported (Broadfoot and Osborn, 1988, p. 277) to feel they had for preparing their pupils for adult life (23.2% of French teachers giving this as one of their objectives compared to 3.6% of English teachers).

Creativity versus authoritarianism and structure in English and French classrooms

Looking first at pedagogy, Sharpe (1992,b) makes the point in his analysis of French 'catechistic' teaching that French teacher questions are closed in the sense that they require a set preordained answer. There is no room or manoeuvre for individual responses. He contrasts with the more Socratic and English model which encourages exploratory, independent thinking and where authority can be challenged Secondly looking at creativity, in terms of the curriculum, art and music have only one hour set aside for each subject in the French curriculum. In practice more curriculum time was spent on art in 1995 in the English classrooms (8% of time) observed in the QUEST project than in the French ones (0% of time) (Broadfoot 2000). The converse was true for music, but since

this also included dance the findings are not very clear. However the more cross curricular nature of the English curriculum and the use of music in daily English assemblies would suggest that music takes up more time in the English curriculum than in the French one. Teacher perceptions (Broadfoot and Osborn 1988) on their responsibility to their pupils indicated that English teachers felt slightly more responsible for the artistic education of their pupils (3.2%) than did French teachers (2.3%) in the 1980s. However it is not sufficient to merely quantify time spent on artistic subjects in order to make conclusions about the relative emphasis of creativity in the two countries. What needs to be looked at is the way in which these subjects are taught. The QUEST project revealed greater emphasis on creativity in language lessons in England. When the content of the observed language curriculum in the two countries was analysed it was found (Osborn and Planel 1999) that creative writing took up 18.7% of English in England and only 1.5% of French in France. The French emphasis was clearly on structure with 15.9% of French time spent on grammar and 5.8% on verb conjugations (compared to 0% on both in the English classrooms. The relative emphasis on creativity in language learning in the English context of text books and national assessment compared to structure in the French context has also been qualitatively presented by the author elsewhere (Planel, in Broadfoot et al 2000). Sharpe in the same vein, commenting on the teaching of art, craft and poetry stressed the uniformity and attention to reaching adult standards in French classrooms:

“Even in these more creative areas the focus in the lessons observed has been on pupil skill in reproducing adult standards rather than developing childhood originality and imagination. Poetry lessons, for instance, have always been about learning by heart the works of great poets, not stimulating the children to any poetic expression of their own.” (Sharpe, 1992,a, p. 336)

Osborn and Broadfoot, observing the differences between English and French teachers, reached the same conclusion:

“On balance, English teachers appeared to be more concerned to encourage creativity and inventiveness. French teachers by contrast were more concerned to achieve pupils’ conformity to a common goal.” (Osborn and Broadfoot, 1992, p. 7)

Thus to conclude Section 3. 5. the research evidence would suggest that creativity is a value more associated with English society and education and that values of structure and authority are more emphasised in French society and education. Once more these values have been seen to interact with the web of previously presented national values. Creativity is related to in the traditional English values of heterogeneity and national

diversity and individualism. Authoritarianism is associated with the French values of homogeneity, equality, collectivism and national unity. Creativity and authoritarianism are a further pair of values or cognitive constructs which help to define the national identities of England and France.

3. 6. Empiricism versus intellectualism

The last pair of opposing values to be looked at, which help to define what is meant by cultural differences between the national contexts of England and France, are concerned with cultural views about learning and thinking. The type of thinking that is valued by a society needs to be understood as it helps us to understand the context and meaning of pedagogy and curriculum in that society. It will be argued that empiricism is more associated with the English context of learning and intellectualism with the French context of learning. Empiricism and rationalism are interwoven with the values of heterogeneity and homogeneity, national unity and national diversity, individualism and collectivism, excellence and egalitarianism, and creativity and authoritarianism.

Intellectualism and the French context

There is a widely held belief in England that France is more ‘Cartesian’ and more dominated by ‘reason’ than England. Zeldin offers the following description of the French:

“The French always place a school of thought, a formula, a convention, a priori arguments, abstractions, and artificiality above reality, they prefer clarity to truth, words to things, rhetoric to science.” (Zeldin, 1977, p.205)

To what extent is this true? Halls traces back this preoccupation with ‘thinking’ and intellectualism to several key historical influences:

“J. R. Pitts has identified the characteristic of French culture as the cult of ‘intellectual prowess’. In education this has been expressed as the pursuit of excellence of the mind, which has been a constant ideal. The mediaeval schoolmen insisted that logic was the foundation of education and the indispensable tool for sharpening the intellect. Rabelais believed that happiness lay in the fount of knowledge, of which all men must drink ‘because it has the power of filling the spirit with all truth’. The Jesuits were partly the victim of the postulate that knowledge automatically brings goodness in its train, when, using a subtle blend of Antiquity and Christianity, they sought to promote what they conceived to be the right religious and moral ideas.” (Halls, 1976, p.25)

There is ample evidence to show that intellectualism is indeed a primary aim of French education. For example, the Ministry of Education requires that primary schools equip

pupils with *“les comportements intellectuels”* (CNDP, 1995, p.6). Digging deeper Halls also states that:

“The guiding light of French education has been intellectualism, the ‘doctrine that knowledge is wholly or mainly derived from the action of the intellect, i.e. from pure reason’.” (Halls, 1976, p. 24)

Zeldin also makes the distinction between understanding through reason or understanding through experience:

“The triumph of individual reason, the proclamation of reason’s ability to understand and solve all problems, the rejection of authority, the questioning of all dogmas, the universal doubt; the assertion that man is above all a thinking being, who is not dependent on sensations and experience for his ideas or for the discovery of truth.” (Zeldin, 1977, p. 224³³)

The basic concept of rationalism is that everything has a logical explanation; what is important, is to find and use a method in order to understand the world and uncover essential truths. In order to find the laws and types that govern individual facts it is necessary to use the thought processes of abstraction and generalisation. Rationalism also includes the notion that there is only one explanation³⁴ (these attributes of rationalism: abstraction, generalisation and the ‘one’ explanation will have particular relevance in Chapter 4). For Durkheim rationalism was an important aim of education:

“We must remain Cartesian in the sense that we must fashion rationalists, that it is to say men who are concerned with clarity of thought.” Durkheim, 1938, p. 348

He even saw rationalism as an essentially French characteristic, which he linked to national identity:

“Our children must continue to be trained to think lucidly, for this is the essential attribute of our race; it is our national quality, and the qualities of our language and our style are only the result of it.” (Durkheim, 1938, p. 348)

³³ There would appear to be a contradiction here between the values of authoritarianism and intellectualism as the latter rejects authority. In fact there is no contradiction as children in France are considered as incomplete beings who are learning to be rational. French pupils have to accept authority and the institutionalised rationalism of learning at school. Rationalism and the rejection of authority come with adulthood.

³⁴ Prost draws our attention to the limitations of rationalism:

“L’acceptation des différences est en France une résignation, un pis-aller, le signe tragique d’une impuissance de la raison.” (Prost, 1968, p.340)

He suggests that it is this ‘one and only’ explanation that is the reason why France cannot accept cultural pluralism.

It is argued that the fundamental priority in French education is to teach children to think, in the sense of rational and not creative thought³⁵. However knowledge is also important. In the curriculum much stress is laid on knowledge "*les savoirs fondamentaux*" (CNDP 1995, p. 6) as well as skills "*les compétences*" . The OECD in 1996 was still criticising French education for "*the stress laid on the encyclopaedism of the curriculum.*" (OECD, 1996, p. 198)³⁶. Teaching children to think is held to be a more important aim of French education than gaining knowledge. As Montaigne (in Paoletti, 1986, p,189) succinctly put it:

"Mieux vaut une tête bien faite qu'une tête bien pleine."

Durkheim and Zeldin also draw our attention to another French characteristic connected to rationalism, the importance of rhetoric, style and language. (These characteristics will also contribute to the analysis of Chapter 4). Rhetoric is valued in French education. Zeldin attributes French skills in argument to the inclusion of rhetoric and philosophy as secondary school subjects (the former was retained until 1902). Style and clarity are held to be important as they are related to clarity of thinking. This attitude to style is summarised in a well known phrase of Rivarol (1784):

"Ce qui se conçoit bien s'énonce clairement."

Traditionally language (i.e. French) has been regarded as the most important subject in the primary curriculum (although in practice Maths now dominates in the process of selection in post primary education). The French Ministry of Education (CNDP, 1991) gives three main reasons for this dominance: language is the basis for all other learning; it is necessary for a successful professional life and for participation in society; it can be studied for its own sake as it displays organisation and clarity³⁷.

The study of French is valued in France in the same way as Latin (the English language is regarded as deficient in logic) is sometimes valued in England. Durkheim summarises this argument:

"This study of languages is obviously the best way of accustoming the child to distinguish and to organise his ideas logically. It is by making him reflect on words,

³⁵ Social and pastoral functions of schooling are not the French teachers' concern. This is particularly visible in French secondary education where there is an institutional division between 'l'instruction', which is concerned with pupils' 'thinking' and knowledge and is carried out by teachers; and 'l'éducation', which is concerned with the social and pastoral aspect of school life and for which different personnel ('conseiller d'éducation' and 'surveillants' are responsible.

³⁶ The OECD also pointed out that France has no real tradition of curriculum development (and this perhaps the chief cause of the 'fossilisation' of French education). It is true that although there have been attempts to change pedagogy, the primary curriculum has seen little change. Perhaps primary curriculum change is seen as a threat to national identity?

³⁷ The same CNDP 1991 text also values maths as a subject for the training it gives in abstract and rigorous thinking and ability to reason.

meanings and grammatical forms that we can train him to think lucidly." (Durkheim, 1938, p. 345)

The same belief in the value of teaching French is echoed in the conservative French researcher de Romilly in 1984. She decries modern trends of laxity which she equates with falling standards and maintains that rationalism can be trained by:

"L'analyse grammaticale des phrases, l'analyse intellectuelle des textes, les traductions méthodiques, les raisonnements mathématiques, et la philosophie".

(de Romilly, 1984)

Zeldin explains that it was only when rhetoric was abandoned as a subject that the analysis of language and texts in French gained in importance.. Thus it is argued, using language as an illustrative example, that French pedagogy can only be understood in relation to the underlying French values of intellectualism, as Zeldin states:

"Learning the language was to Frenchmen more than the acquisition of a practical tool. It involved the training of the mind also, and the development of certain ways of thinking." (Zeldin, 1977, p. 240)

Notions of rigour, method and repetition are also related to rationalism and are important pedagogical tools. Their historical and cultural origins need to be looked at to throw more light on French pedagogy. Method and rigour are advised by the Ministry of Education for this study of maths and language in primary schools:

"C'est à l'école primaire que les élèves vont acquérir une première maîtrise des langages fondamentaux, langue française et mathématiques . Il faut aider les enfants à se situer dans le monde qui les entoure, à se constituer des méthodes de travail rigoureuses et efficaces ..." (CNDP, 1995, p. 6)

A systematic and methodical approach to the study of French is considered essential:

"l'apprentissage de la langue exige des phases de travail systématique...." (CNDP, 1995, p. 43)

Repetition, which will be seen to be a feature of French teaching, has its roots in the past. Zeldin traces the use of repetition in French teaching method to Buisson's analogy with physical exercise:

"The child should be assisted towards a rational mastery of himself by training, in the same way as muscles need to be exercised." (Zeldin, 1977, p. 183, summarising Buisson 1899)

Zeldin also traces the "concentric" method, of cyclical repetition with increased complexity, the basis of the French curriculum, which can be seen in primary textbooks and teaching practice, to Gréard:

“Since primary education is an education of principles, and since principles cannot be too often represented if they are to penetrate, it is necessary that the child should pass over the same ground.” (Zeldin, 1977, p.188, quoting Gréard, 1887).

It has been argued that the primary aim of French education is to teach children to think and to think lucidly and rationally. A methodical approach to learning is also valued. These values affect how teachers teach. The influence of intellectualism on French pedagogy will be explored in Chapter 4 which analyses the empirical research from French classrooms.

Empiricism and the English context

Turning to the English context there is less emphasis on ‘thought processes’ in education, here there are other, and more diverse aims, such as empiricism and development of the whole person. Several educationalists refer to this difference with French education. Sadler noted in 1900 that England placed less emphasis on intellectual learning than England and Germany:

“the persistence of the English view that education ought to be more concerned with physical and moral training than intellectual.” (Sadler, quoted by Higginson 1979, p. 51)

In the same vein Zeldin (1977) remarked that whereas the top students in France become intellectuals, in England they become prefects. Non-intellectualism seems to be quite commonly associated with Englishness, as witnessed in this statement from Adonis (1997, p. 142):

“In its anti intellectualism the British royal family once again reflects national traits.”

In the same way as Durkheim associated rationalism with French identity so Adonis seems to equate non-intellectualism with English national identity. Clearly this is going a little too far, English education does seek to create ‘thinking’ minds, but the aim is perhaps for a different type of thinking. With reference to ‘types of thinking’ the 1994 Education Act included in one of its aims:

“To help pupils to develop lively and enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills.” (Galton, 1989, p. 240)

Rationalism is there but what is meant by ‘lively and enquiring minds’? This study maintains that what is being referred to is partly creativity and partly empiricism.

In contrast to the Cartesian model of French philosophy English educational philosophy is much influenced by John Locke, who deliberately rejected Descartes’ ideas

and attributed learning to experience. The Scottish philosopher David Hume was also empiricist in his view that experience is the variable that dominates our thought processes and affects our understanding of reality. John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism has also been a strong influence. Despite the philosophical antecedents, in terms of the history of English education, empiricism is essentially a 20th century phenomenon. Other 20th century influences were the American philosopher John Dewey, who thought that the justification for learning a subject lay in its usefulness rather than for its intrinsic mental training. Other influences affecting English 20th century education came from the discipline of psychology. Piaget's work in the 1930s showed children learn as a consequence of generalising, only after having had the experience of physically handling objects. Associationist psychology also challenged the prevailing view of the learner as a passive recipient.

As early as 1926, 1931 and 1933, the Hadow Reports had included sections on the curriculum recommending the dissolution of the formal curriculum and noting the use of projects and learning through activity and experience:

"The curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored." (Hadow report, 1931)

It was in the Hadow Reports that learning was advised to be more child centred and thus harness the *"child's unsystematised but eager interest"*. This received the official stamp of approval with the publication of the Plowden Report in 1967 and its support of 'discovery methods' and child centred education. It advocated that:

"Activity and experience are often the best means of gaining knowledge and acquiring facts.", the child *"is the agent of his own learning."* and *"We endorse the trend towards individual and 'active' learning, and learning by acquaintance."*

This became the recommended approach to English education. It was challenged by the Black Papers of the 1970s and the more recent 1988 Education Act. Although observers (Galton, 1980) did cast doubts on the extent to which English classroom practice had changed as a result of the Plowden Report it is argued that the English empiricist tradition has been of fundamental importance in shaping English teachers' ways of thinking about learning, and by extension their pedagogy.

Empiricism and intellectualism in English and French classrooms

To what extent are the values of intellectualism and rationalism in the French context, and the English value of empiricism in evidence in English and French primary classroom practice? Looking first at primary school textbooks there is clear evidence that

English textbooks are imbued with English empirical values and that French textbooks reflect French rationalism. Sharpe's (1992,a) findings in his study on homogeneity in the French context, which is not overtly comparative but is implicitly so, echoes the analyses presented in the previous paragraphs on French rationalism. He describes French textbooks as:

"leading the learner along a previously trodden path, structuring the process in such a way that error is avoided as much as possible by prior explanation, using logical reasoning anyone is presumed to be able to follow, and by continually telling the learner what has been learnt and what is being learnt." (Sharpe, 1992,a)

Bierhoff (1996) also concludes that English primary maths textbooks in comparison with those from Germany and Switzerland, lack a structural step by step approach to the learning of complex operations and topics, with also less consolidation before moving on to another topic.

Harries and Sutherland (1998), in their comparison of primary maths textbooks from England, France, Hungary, Singapore and the USA, comment on the lack of underlying structure in mathematical ideas presented in the English textbooks:

"(English) pupils are often introduced to a wide variety of mathematical ideas and ways of solving problems without being presented with any support to make links between these ideas. The broad curriculum is accompanied by a fragmentation of mathematical ideas. For example, when ideas of multiplication and division are introduced they are surrounded by many other topics which bear little relationship to multiplication and division." (Harries, 1998, p. 13)

In terms of presentation the English textbooks in Harries's study stood out in their lack of consistency and clarity in their use of pictorial representations. The use of colour was highlighted by the authors. Whereas decoration was seen as the dominant theme in presentation in English textbooks (with accompanying distractive results) method was more important in France and the other countries:

"Colour tends to be used more as an analytical tool to support the learning of mathematics." (Harries, 1998, p. 13)

The emphasis in the English textbooks was on pupil experience of mathematical ideas (Harries, 1998, p. 13) and pupils finding their own methods, whether standard or non standard (Harries, 1998, p. 7), whereas the French emphasis, although including an element of 'finding out' was directed at standard practice.

The research literature on teacher perceptions (Broadfoot and Osborn 1988, p. 277) also confirms the greater emphasis on 'knowledge' in the French context than in the

English. The authors findings showed that French teachers considered themselves to be substantially more responsible for passing on academic knowledge to their pupils than did English teachers (55.6% of French teachers compared to 14.7% of English teachers)

Looking next at pedagogy, the French 'catechistic' teaching style (Sharpe, 1992,b, p. 265), which has been previously described, includes several characteristics associated with rationalism: 'the intention to instruct', 'teacher-centredness rather than child centredness', 'emphasis on knowledge to be remembered', suppression of pupils' own natural spontaneous interests', and 'logical reasoning from given premises'. As an example of the latter, Sharpe found that French teacher discourse even in the instruction of grammar to 6 year olds tended to proceed along a logical structure of X, then Y, but Z, therefore Vincent (1980, p. 57) also comments on how learning is structured in the French classroom:

"(Ils) découpent l'ensemble en leçons, chaque leçon en demandes, chaque demande en sous-demandes - qu'enfin on doit répéter, revoir. La soumission à des règles impersonnelles nous est aperçue, en effet, comme l'une des caractéristiques de la vie scolaire."

When observing and comparing English and French teachers Osborn and Broadfoot (1992 p. 7) also commented on the French approach of leading children to a correct answer and not seeking out 'individual' suggestions from pupils, whereas the English teaching approach "*emphasised discovery based learning*". The research literature, even though is limited, does therefore suggest that English values of empiricism and French values of rationalism can be found in the classroom context.

3. 7. Conclusion

This chapter has of necessity been of some length as it has attempted to provide two national examples of the theoretical construct of 'national culture' as presented in the first chapter. The French national context has been explored at greater length than the English context. This is partly due to researcher bias. It is also partly due to the anthropological tradition of studying 'other' cultures, as although the author is bicultural, the thesis is written from the English side of the Channel. This chapter has set out to show how a network of values can be associated with a national educational system. It was suggested that these values could also be found in the past and in society in general in each country. Moreover it is suggested that it is these national values which define and delineate the identity of a country. The identification of national values does not preclude the existence of religious, social class, gender or age social group values, but these are not the subject of

this study. In comparing England and France it was found that English national culture is a combination of values concerned with heterogeneity and national diversity, individualism, excellence, creativity, and empiricism. In comparison, French national culture is more a combination of homogeneity, national unity, egalitarianism, collectivism, authoritarianism, and intellectualism. It is thought that more cross national comparisons with other countries would further extend our understanding of the concept of national values and the particular contexts of England and France³⁸. The two countries are thus used as case studies to illustrate the existence, the strength and the influence of national values in education. Moreover as explained in Chapter One cultural values are regarded as manifestations of different 'pensées' or ways of thinking. Thus this study sees national values as cognitive constructs which are associated with and help to define national contexts.

This chapter has also shown how this study has taken its roots in previous cross cultural comparative research in the field of English French studies. It has attempted to synthesise the existing research literature in order to establish the background context to the empirical work in this study. Context, both present and past, is regarded as essential to interpreting the meaning of classroom practice and pupil learning. For example it was maintained in Section 3. 6. that English and French pedagogy can only be understood in relation to English values of empiricism and French values of intellectualism. Thus using the research literature, the background context of the two countries has been set and contrasting pairs of national values have been examined.

There are however two 'words of warning' that should be issued. Firstly because this study compares two countries there is a danger of polarisation. There might be a tendency to view specific national cultural and educational characteristics as either present or absent in a given national context. This is not intended. The differences between national cultures are recognised as differences of degree and relative emphasis. They are not absolute differences. Furthermore comparisons between England and another Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian country would have perhaps revealed both less differences in the specific constructs used here but more types of constructs. Such is the value of comparative work. As has already been mentioned it is also understood that each national context comprises overlapping multi-culturalism. The national cultures presented in this section are a distilled essence of reality.

Secondly in describing the historical antecedents of English and French education there might also be a danger of giving the impression that the two systems are fossilised in the

³⁸ See Chapter 6 for the research literature on national values in other countries.

past. For example, it might be argued that Durkheim's analysis of French education is no longer applicable to French primary schools of the 1990s. However, this study does not deny that change has taken place. French education is increasingly developing along the scale of heterogeneity and individualism. English education appears to be moving towards more homogeneity. The aim of this study is to understand the present in terms of past and wider influences. The STEP project suggested that the realisation of policy changes in the practice of education were affected by the fundamental national values of the actors in the system. This study argues that pupils' learning is affected by national values.

Chapter Four

The identification of social and cognitive constructs at the contextual level of the classroom, through empirical work

The methodological strength of selecting a sample of 8 classrooms (2 classrooms in each of the 2 schools, in both countries) was borne out in the first general finding that there was considerable diversity between classrooms not only across but within each country, but that underlying this general diversity national classroom characteristics could be identified. The most striking overall difference between the two countries was that although diversity was a feature of both systems it was even more pronounced in the English system than it was in the French system. The most significant qualitative differences lay in the teachers' approach to the class as a collective or as a group of individuals (Section 4.1), the type and degree of authority exercised by the teacher (Section 4.2), the structure of the teaching and learning process (Section 4.3) and finally the types of motivation the teachers employed with their pupils (Section 4.4). These will be examined under four separate subheadings although the themes are interconnected and form a network (in the same way as did the characteristics of the English and French contexts in Chapter 2). Much of the data is based on teacher discourse.

The classrooms and teachers on which the empirical findings were based were:

English teachers	Mrs Burton, Cotswold School, Y2
	Mrs Gibbs, Cotswold School, Y6
	Mrs Brown, St Paul's, Y6
	Mrs Bates, St Paul's, Y1

French teachers	Mme Chagnon, St Martin, CM1
	Mme Allard, St Martin, CP
	M Pinson, St George, CM1
	Mme Soler, St George, CP

On the basis of the four dimensions of difference between the English and French teachers³⁹, outlined in the previous paragraph, Mrs Gibbs represented the most extreme type of English primary teacher where individualism and creativity were highly valued, learning often took the form of pupils 'finding' out, instruction was minimal, there was considerable pupil choice and pupils were encouraged to follow their own interests. Amongst the French teachers it was Mme Chagnon who displayed the most extreme example of the values of French primary school teachers. The class was treated as a collective unit, there was strong didactic teaching and strong control over pupils and the emphasis was on structured learning through instruction. As will be seen, for the other teachers there was some overlap between the extent to which they manifested the characteristics of one country rather than the other, so that, for example, Mrs Burton's and Mrs Bates's, for different reasons, sometimes displayed French characteristics and Mme Soler's classroom context was occasionally quite English in character. The classroom contexts of the youngest pupils were particularly interesting as teachers were having to transform children into pupils by teaching them the 'ways of thinking and doing' that were expected of them. Thus the distinctive national characteristics, although in a more embryonic form, were often more explicitly articulated.

4. 1. Collectivism versus individualism

A class is by definition a collective unit but the French teachers in the sample were more likely to emphasise the concept of collectivism and value the class as a whole unit. English teachers by comparison were more likely to create situations where there was more opportunity for individualism.

4. 1. 1. Collectivism and the importance of the group

The most obvious visible difference between the two countries' approach to the concept of collectivism was the teaching methods used, that is both the amount of whole class teaching and the type of whole class teaching.

The relative use whole class teaching in the English and French classrooms

Although it is difficult to quantify with any precision from ethnographic notes the data would suggest the following scale of teacher use of whole class teaching in the four classrooms:

³⁹ For an individual description of each of the eight teachers see Appendix 4.

Greatest use of whole class teaching

French Mme Chagnon, St Martin, CM2,

French Mme Allard, St Martin, CP

French M Pinson, St George, CM1 *English* Mrs Brown, St Paul's, Y6

French Mme Soler, St George, CP

English Mrs Burton, Cotswold School, Y2

English Mrs Bates, St Paul's Y1

English Mrs Burton, Cotswold School, Y6

Lowest use of whole class teaching

The relative dominance of whole class teaching in the French classrooms compared to English classrooms can also be illustrated by the following analysis of the teaching context of a 'typical' day in the two classrooms which provided the most contrast:

French context Mme Chagnon, St Martin, CM2, 6th January 1993 (see Appendix 19 for a complete write up of the day)

Time	Content	Teaching context
8.30-9.00	French dictation	Whole class
9.00-10.15	Grammar - direct and indirect objects	Whole class
	<i>Break</i>	
10.45-11.30	Maths - proportionality	Whole class
	<i>Lunch break</i>	
1.30-2.15	Maths continued	Whole class
2.15-3.00	English (other teacher)	Whole class and groups
3.20-4.30	Project presentation	Whole class and groups

English context Mrs Gibbs, Cotswold School, Y5/Y6, 24th September 1994 (see Appendix 20 for a complete write-up of the day)

Time	Content	Teaching Context
9.00-9.20	Silent reading and teacher administration	Individuals
9.20-10.15	Drama - for an assembly <i>Break</i>	Groups
10.35-12.00	English - compilation of individual anthologies <i>Lunch break</i>	Individuals
1.00-2.00	Partnered reading	Pairs
2.00-3.00	History - topic work	Whole class/individuals
3.00-3.15	Homework	Whole class

However there was not only a quantitative difference in whole class teaching in the classrooms of the countries there were also qualitative differences.

Whole class teaching in the French context

There was an underlying similarity to all the whole class teaching sessions observed in the French classrooms that gave the lessons a 'French' identity. This unity was derived from the homogeneity of the structure of French whole class teaching. The structure is presented below:

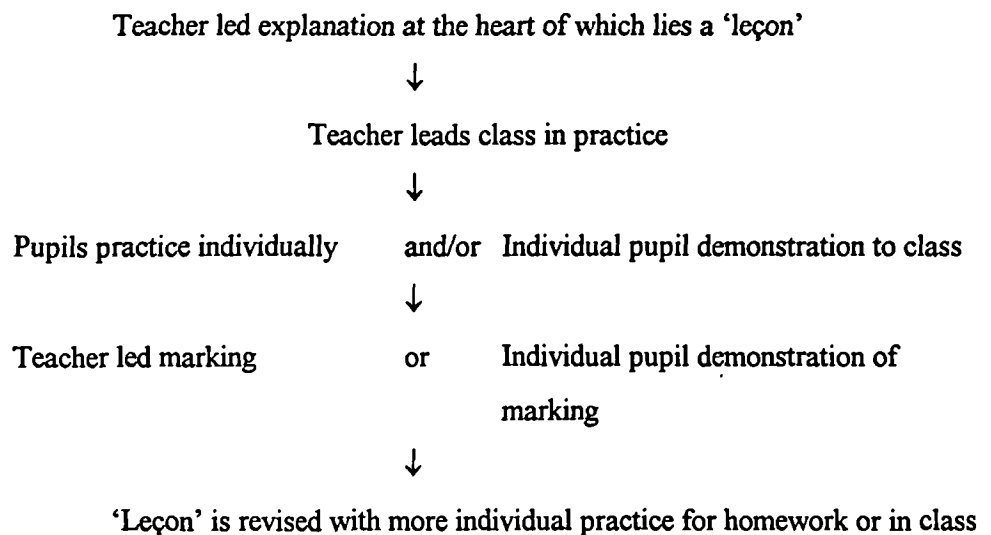


Figure 8 Structure of a French whole class teaching session

This structure can be seen to underlie the following example from a one and a half hour reading and writing lesson in Mme Allard's, CP class; only the last two stages are missing, the marking of the exercise and the revision or extra practice which were carried out at a later date.

31st January 1994 13.30 - 15.00

First 20 minutes children finishing off writing, colouring from the morning, or looking at books in the reading corner. T is working with Mathilde (who should have repeated the last maternelle year but whose parents insisted she enter CP) but has to stop to calm children - "Je ne veux pas faire la police et donner son travail à Mathilde. Je vais vraiment me mettre en colère."

Teacher led explanation

T introduces new activity - "On va faire un jeu ensemble". "Vous regardez ce que je mets sur le tableau" -

Roc - bord - Rocco - crocodile - dort - dormir - encore

T asks 2 children to read out the morning's 'story' (Mme Allard had presented the sentence that morning as "Une nouvelle histoire") which is still on the board -

Sur un roc, au bord du Nil, Rocco Kroko le crocodile dort encore à midi pile!

She explains that they are going to ring in yellow all the 'ro' sounds and ring in blue the 'or' sounds..

She checks they know the difference - several children are asked to produce "or" or "ro" sounds.

Teacher leads class in practice

She asks them to read out individually the words on the board, which they are very keen to do.

T adds one of the children's names - "Morgan", and adds his elder brother's - "Romain". She says these names interest her - "Il y a quelque chose qui m'intéresse dans ces noms". Children respond with the correct 'ro' and 'or' sounds.

Individual pupil demonstration

T sits down at an empty desk with the children and facing the board. She chooses Michael to go to the board, choose one of the words, read the word, then circle it in the correct colour and pronounce the syllable. He chooses "bord", the T is pleased with him as it is a difficult word. He then incorrectly circles the "bord" letters and also uses the wrong colour. T asks him to think again - "Est-ce que ça correspond à ce que tu as entouré? Efface et réfléchis. Réfléchis aussi à la couleur".

T asks Vanessa if she would like to try as she had her hand up. She goes to the board, Antoine is allowed to help her to read her word out loud. She circles the syllable correctly. The T is very pleased with her - "Très bien Vanessa, tu es devenue grande".

One more child goes through the same process

Individual pupil practice

T introduces and explains new activity of a worksheet (see reading worksheet in Appendix 21) with 'ro' and 'or' columns - "Je vais vous donner un petit papier. Il y a deux colonnes, une avec 'or' et une avec 'ro', deux familles." "Vous allez faire tout seul". "Vous allez bien vous appliquer pour le faire." "Vous l'écrivez en détaché pour que ça se voit bien".

T checks a girl who is wriggling about - "Melanie tu n'es pas assise comme il faut. Concentre toi. Si tu te concentres tu le feras dans deux minutes".

T moves around checking work.

One child doesn't understand where the words are, T admonishes him - "Toi alors, tu es dans la lune".

Two girls who have finished and done it correctly (one is Vanessa) are asked to set out the exercise books so the others can stick in their worksheets when they have finished.

The four French teachers observed would sometimes make minor variations to the structure of their whole class teaching sessions but the underlying pattern remained the same. Although there were several instances of English pupils demonstrating to the class much as Michael did (this was a particular feature of Mrs Burton's approach and gave her teaching a 'French' flavour, although the context of children sitting on the floor squashed around her knees was very English), pupil demonstration was not built into English teaching in the same way as it existed as a structural unit in French whole class teaching. It needs to be looked at in more detail. French pupils demonstrating at the board contributed to the progression of learning within the class as a whole. Thus in the above lesson when Michael was demonstrating at the board the whole class was learning with and through him. Should the pupil who is demonstrating make an error then the class profits even more in their learning as they have to work through the analysis of the cause of the error, with the pupil in question. The individuality of the pupil who is selected to demonstrate is not an issue, the pupil is but a unit in the class, where learning is a shared and often enjoyable social activity. Another example can be taken from the same teacher in one of her maths lessons to demonstrate how the French class can learn as a collective as its individual units perform in front of it.

The lesson, which took place on the 11th January 1994 between 10.30 and 11.30 was a maths lesson into understanding the concepts, symbols and mathematical language of 'greater than', 'smaller than' and 'the same as'. Mme Allard had presented the lesson earlier in the form of a game :

T - "On va faire un jeu que vous ne connaissez pas. C'est l'histoire du canard magique.....,c'est un très gros gourmand. Il a un bec magique. Le "canard mathématique" (T repeats name). Il s'appelle comme ça parce qu'il est obligé de savoir compter pour pouvoir prendre le plus" (T goes next door to quieten down children whose teacher is not present - there's a communicating door)

T holds up Maths signs (magnets on back) - = , < , > .

T - "On va s'amuser à donner du travail au canard mathématique. On va mettre des gommettes à droite et à gauche"

T puts up 3 magnetic counters on special board, leaves a space, and puts up four counters -

0 0	0 0
0	0 0

T asks - "Quel bec il faut donner, le bec < , le bec = , le bec > ?"

T tells them - "Le bec < parce que 4 c'est plus grand que 3"

ie.	0 0	0 0
	0	< 0 0

T explains that ch can go to the board put up some counter stickers and then choose the correct beak.

Ch very keen to do this.

T - "N'en mettez pas plus que dix parce que plus que dix ça fatigue le canard!"

The pupils take it in turns to go to the board, place counters and add the appropriate < or > sign, some make errors and are aided by the teacher and the class. Then the following interesting event occurs:

One ch goes up and puts up 4 stickers on one side and 4 stickers on the other side. He adds the signs < and > . T is amused and indulgent - "Le canard est bouche bée il ne peut pas se décider, il a le bec en égal!"

She asks for a volunteer to put up the correct sign. A child goes to the board and puts up the equals sign. T is pleased with the extension to the equals sign - "C'est bien d'avoir mis 4 et 4 ça m'a bien plu".

Due to a pupil's half understanding of the concept 'is the same as' the class is able to participate in a deeper understanding of the concept and its mathematical notation. The concept is revisited later in the lesson when clearly another pupil has not fully understood it yet:

Another ch puts up equal numbers, this time -

0 0

T introduces humour again referring to the smallness of the number - "Oh, il est vraiment malade, il n'est plus gourmand !". Ch laugh. The same ch puts up two signs - > <

T - "On a pas le droit de faire ça, je viens de le dire" Il n'a pas de bec comme ça" She re-explains why not and the ch puts up the correct sign. With the T's help some/most of the class put this into words - "1 égal 1"

Although it was not possible to evaluate the extent to which the class had progressed in their learning the above example does show how French pupils as units learn as part of the collective.

The St George CP class also provided interesting data on the same theme as it showed how French pupils learn the skills of pupil demonstration that are required by French whole class teaching. The teacher, Mme Soler, was still at the stage of teaching methods of 'performance' to her pupils, for example, she was getting pupils accustomed to poetry recitations:

"On a dit qu'on s'habitue à le dire aux copains"

and helping them to demonstrate at the blackboard:

"Je vous ai donné un conseil hier pour écrire au tableau ... il faut écrire gros."

Whole class teaching in the English context

The English teachers observed showed more diversity in their approach to whole class teaching⁴⁰. Although they all followed a pattern of a presentation to pupils, pupils working and an evaluation, the differences between each teacher were sufficient to merit an individual teacher analysis:

⁴⁰ With the advent of innovations such as the 'literacy hour' (1998) and the 'numeracy hour' (1999) it is hypothesised that English approaches to whole class teaching are, in the year 2000, less diverse.

Mrs Bates, St Paul's Y1
Teacher explanation or use of worksheets



Pupils work individually but seated
in friendship groups



Individual marking with or without pupil

Mrs Burton, Cotswolds School Y2
Teacher explanation and instruction - a
forty minute session covering all the
day's tasks, from which pupils could
choose the order



Individual, paired or group work, seated
according to task



Whole class or individualised review

Mrs Brown, St Paul's Y6
Teacher explanation
↓
Individual pupil work
↓
Individual marking without pupil but
presentation of good work to whole class

Mrs Bates, St Paul's Y1
Teacher 'telling' and arousing interest
↓
Individual pupil work with consultation
between pupils
↓
Individual marking with or without pupil
and presentation of good work to whole
class

It is difficult to portray the qualitative diversity of the English whole class teaching sessions observed. They ranged from a maths lesson given by Mrs Brown of St Paul's to her Y6 class, which had a strong resemblance to a French whole class lesson (with its strong emphasis on teacher control and teacher instruction and the class functioning as a collective - see Appendix 22) to an English creative writing lesson given by Mrs Gibbs to her Y5/Y6 class at the Cotswolds (see Appendix 23). This was the only whole class teaching lesson that took place during observation of that class and it showed more pupil choice and control with a teacher role of stimulator and guide. The pupils comprising the class functioned as a collection of individuals rather than a collective.

Apart from the quantitative and qualitative differences in whole class teaching which tended to establish a stronger class unity as a collective unit in France than in England there were several other ways in which French teachers were observed to foster the concept of the collective.

French values of pupil homogeneity and English values of pupil differentiation

French teachers employ the concept of the group, the collective to control the pace and behaviour of individuals within it. By making the pupil feel that he/she is different from the others the teacher encourages the pupil to conform. For example in order to control a girl's pace in CP Mme Soler of St George said:

"Tes copines elles étaient prêtes ... dommage que toi tu n'étais pas prête."

In the same way in order to speed up a boy who was taking too long with his French dictation Mme Chagnon of St Martin first addressed the pupil *"Tu te remues un peu"* and then turning to the rest of the class pointed out how far behind he was *"il est encore en train d'écrire le titre"*, and again on another day *"Lui il est à la quatrième phrase du premier ... vous vous êtes au quatrième exercice"*, a form of public humiliation in order to make an individual pupil conform to the norm of the class. French pupils were also made aware that they were expected to conform to the level of the year, for example, again from a French class of Mme Chagnon's CM2 class as she observed a new boy writing *"Tu auras besoin de t'accélérer pour aller en Sixième"*. The French classes observed were of a more homogenous level than the English classes, due to French expectations of a universal level for each Year Group and the system of year repetition to cater for exceptions, and the French teachers capitalised on this homogeneity to control the individual variation. By contrast the English teachers planned differentiation into their work from the outset with the assumption of individual pupil variation. English pupils were grouped according to the class teacher's interpretative assessment of their ability. This varied from a form of covert setting in Mrs Bates's St Paul's Y1 class, as seen in the next excerpt from the ethnographic notes, to the overt setting in maths and English employed in the two parallel Y5/Y6 classes at, interestingly, the same school.

Mrs Bates asks the children - "Who's got their Mathematics head on this morning?" and calls out other children and gives them their Maths exercise books and sometimes a text book (Some children can cope with the text books, for others she writes sums for them to complete in their exercise books or gives them worksheets of sums she has written. Each child's work is planned for him/her. T divides the class in her planning into three ability levels. She says she is careful to avoid the children being aware of this and uses "mixing and matching" to avoid this. She is aware that the middle group is conscious that there are some children who are faster than them and some that are slower.

The difference between Mrs Bates's attempt to conceal pupil differences in achievement and Mme Chagnon's deliberate public statements about pupil differences also show very different attitudes towards pupil self esteem in the two countries.

Moreover French teachers employed a further strategy of invoking pupil friendships in order to establish group collectivity. They used the term 'les copains' or 'les

camarades' to refer to the rest of the class (see the previous quotation from Mme Soler, St George, CP). The use of this term conveys the assumption that all the pupils in the class are friends and represent but one group. By treating all their pupils as friends French teachers also had a lever with which to maintain quiet in the classroom, for example Mme Soler admonished pupils who were making a slight noise "*Ne dérangez pas les autres en parlant trop fort*".

French classroom collectivity and French national collectivity

Reinforcing this concept of the class as one group French teachers were observed to talk with the class as though it was one person and the class to respond in the same vein. For example M. Pinson, in his St George CM1 class in taking a grammar class on the difference between 'l'adjectif épithète et l'adjectif qualificatif' checking the class's understanding asked "*Vous sentez la différence?*" and the pupils chorused as one "*Oui*". French children were expected to belong to this class collective. The acceptance of the collective was often formalised by a set of rules which pupils had to sign their names to M. Pinson of the St George CM1 class expected pupils to behave in certain way because, "*ça fait partie du contrat de l'école*". The important point in this statement is that the contract is not with a particular class or even a particular school but with the system of education, 'L'école', and thus the nation.

The meanings of collectivity in the English context

Turning to the English classes there was much variation in the meaning and use of the class group as a collective. Moreover the unit of the collective was often not the class but the particular school. Mrs Bates (St Paul's Y1) encouraged a 'family' unit. This was fostered during Circle Time and for example during a 'sitting on the carpet session' at the start of the day:

T takes the register by greeting each child with a 'Good morning' and an individual comment. They each reply 'Good morning Mrs Bates'. Some reply, 'Good morning best teacher in the whole wide world'. When she has finished she says, 'Our happy family is all here'. A boy adds, 'We're a happy school'.

The boy's link with a school identity is important. Mrs Bates also gave her class an identity through the particular rituals she used, for example her way of getting the class's attention:

'Right Class 3 ... can you put your pencils down and show me two empty hands?' She holds up her own hands to demonstrate and everyone copies except John, 'John, I can't see your two empty hands..' She continues when there is silence...

or getting children to form a line and file out of the class:

'All the children who are bunny rabbits, squirrels, badgers ... ' to line up by the door'.

In contrast Mrs Brown also of St Paul's used a more authoritarian and dominant approach with her Y6 class but without alluding to a collective identity. At Cotswolds school Mrs Gibbs also did little to foster a group identity, pupils tended to retain and manifest their individual identity. It was Mrs Burton who, despite using a very English approach to learning, presented the strongest English image of the class as a collective. A contributory factor was her daily system of a whole class teaching session explaining and instructing the day's work. This was very much a shared activity with strong input from pupils with similarities with the French approach. She also made her class feel special and different, for example, if all pupils completed their work in any one week her reward for them was 'to dance on the table'. She also used linguistic devices such as ritual responses from the pupils, for example, her use of the phrase "*It's up to you*", would be completed by pupils if she only started off with "*It's...*" Another linguistic device was 'in class names' such as pupils addressing her as 'Mrs Scientist'. Finally in much the same way as French teachers use 'repères' or explanatory notices around the classroom Mrs Burton used notices or slogans such as, 'Make plans before you start' or 'Look before you leap', in the technology area. These were often referred to by the teacher and ritually repeated by the pupils.

In the English context the collectivity of the school was important to headteachers and teachers, unlike in the French context. Assemblies had an important role to play in this concept of a collective. The values and ethos of the school were made evident in assemblies. At Cotswolds school it was clear that a caring approach was valued, as the headteacher said during the assembly of the 26th November 1994: "*Lots of kind and considerate people, that's what I would like to see in the Book of Excellence*"; also initiative and creativity: "*If anyone finds out more about the artist and the musician they might get a sticker for showing initiative*" (said by the headteacher in reference to the music the school had heard in assembly and a painting she had showed everyone); and individualism, as in response to a child's comment that the Miro painting in assembly was upside down, she said, "*You can do things the way you want....the artist wanted the picture to be that way.*" Other whole school activities such as fund-raising, social events such as weekend camping trips and sporting events contributed to the importance of the particular school as a collective (see Appendix 24). Mrs Gibbs of Cotswolds school was keen to convey at the school's annual general meeting of 1994 - that everyone worked together, that they gave children the feeling that the school was a unit, and that there was a 'united team'. She said that you could see during 'shared reading' that the children felt that they belonged to the school.

Conclusion to 4. 1. 1.

The different values and ways of 'thinking' underlying the different strategies used by the English and French teachers, with regard to individualism or collectivism, is summarised below:

English classrooms	French classrooms
Individual pupil valued for his/her individuality	Individual pupil is a unit of the whole
Learning and reinforcement occur in different social settings in the class	Learning is a shared class activity, reinforcement is an individual activity
Sharing the school ethos is important	Sharing the class ethos is important
Teachers are more likely to follow individual pupil's needs	Teachers are more likely to follow the proscribed year level
Collective pressure is often avoided in order to protect individual pupils	Collective pressure is frequently used to mould pupils
Individualism and creativity are encouraged	Conformity and observance of rules are encouraged
More heterogeneity in the above	More homogeneity in the above

4. 1. 2. The importance of the individual

The teaching strategies of English and French teachers and the discourse they used showed that there were underlying differences in their concepts of individualism.

English and French teachers' pedagogic relations with individual pupils

It has already been seen that French teachers used individual pupil demonstration in order to further the understanding of the class as a collective. It is in this sense that the French teachers were expressing the meaning of an individual, as one unit of the whole. By contrast the English teachers varied from Mrs Brown (St Paul's Y6), who dealt the most with the whole class and the least with individual pupils, to Mrs Gibbs (Cotswolds Y5/Y6) whose approach was much more individualistic. When English teachers attended to individual pupils they related to the pupils as individuals with different needs who were at different levels. Communication between English teachers and pupils was carried out privately or with a group. The English 'individualistic' approach can be illustrated by notes made during a morning session (9.30-10.15) with Mrs Gibbs. The notes read: T deals with individuals that come to her. She rarely has time to move about and check what they are all doing.

The only French teacher whose teaching approach showed any resemblance to the above was Mme Soler (St George CP). Another example which shows Mrs Gibbs following the perceived needs of the individual child concerns the handing out of homework:

Mrs Gibbs hands out sheets of spellings to be learnt. One sheet contains two differentiated groups of words. A girl asks about the second group of words. The T replies, 'Do you feel you would like to try them?'. The girl is hesitant so the teacher suggests she just does the first group but that she does them very well.

Individualism and choice in the English classroom

English pupils were also allowed to have a say in their work; their individualism, their choices and autonomy were respected. An extreme example of this is the following discussion which took place between Mrs Gibbs and her Y5/Y6 class on the afternoon of the 5th November 1994:

T - 'I'm going to ask you what you want to do?'

Ch - 'Non fiction book'

T - 'Any other ideas?'

Ch - 'Art'

T - 'What sort of Art?'

Ch - 'We want to continue our....'

Mrs Burton's (Cotswold Y2) teaching approach was based on individual pupils choosing the order in which they carried out the day or the week's tasks.

There were numerous occasions when Mrs Gibbs followed the suggestions of individual pupils, for example, during a drama rehearsal for assembly:

Children rehearse. Those watching from the benches and those providing the music suggest, 'Why don't we use some of the apparatus for a well?' and that they should add cymbals for the chorus in one of the songs.

T concurs with both suggestions. She also agrees to a boy's suggestion that they should alter the words in one of the scenes.

The following excerpt from the notes illustrates the responsibility given by Mrs Gibbs and the Cotswolds school to individuals:

Friday 24th September 1.00-3.15 Partnered reading

Children leave the room to find their reading partners in other classrooms. Younger children enter the room to meet up with their partners. Children settle down in various nooks and corners in the room, on the balcony and in the corridor area. The teacher has left the room. It is mostly the older children who read to the younger ones from a book selected by the younger one. A Y5 boy resists his Y2 partner's request to read him passages from the Bible he has brought with him

Individualism and creativity in the English classroom

Individualism was also positively encouraged in the English classrooms. Although it is difficult to quantify from ethnographic notes the heading 'Pupils encouraged to find

individual solutions' in Figure 9, gives an indication of the comparative incidence of English and French teachers encouraging pupils' individual solutions to problems.

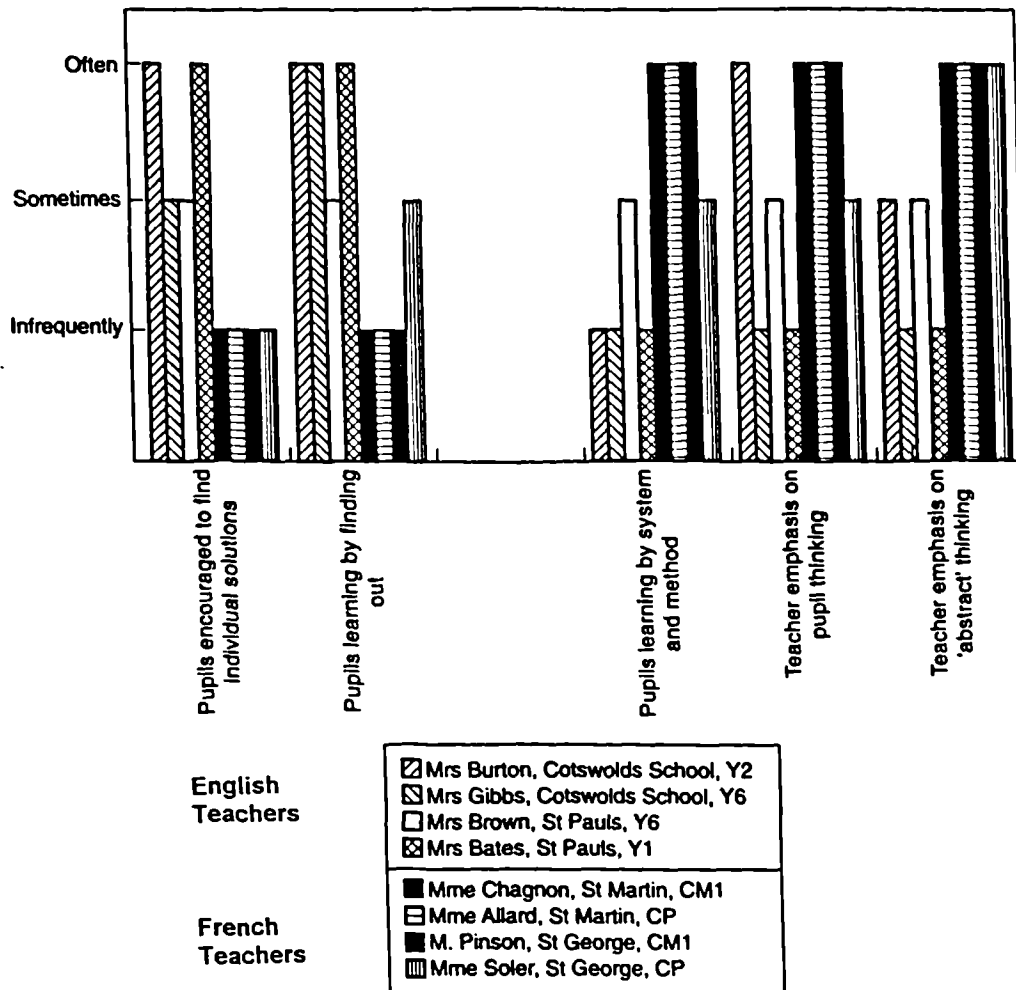


Figure 9 The relationship between individualism, empiricism and English pedagogy: and the relationship between French pedagogy and intellectualism

The English teachers tried to develop individual thought and expression in their pupils. For example Mrs Burton (Cotswold Y2), whilst making suggestions in a technology lesson for the patterns the pupils could choose to design, said, "What I want is your pattern, not one copied from mine. Remember it's your design made out of your head." Similarly during a technology lesson where pupils were designing ramps Mrs Burton advocated individualism: "You've got to think about that ... everybody's will be different". This is strikingly different from the French approach to art and design where pupils often all produced the same final product and the emphasis was on technique and presentation. The English approach to individual thinking was not however restricted to arts subjects. Mrs

Burton also emphasised individual creativity in a science lesson where a collection of balls had to be sorted into different sets: *"I'm not going to give you any ideas, I want you to come up with your own ideas."* There were also numerous examples from St Paul's school of English teachers encouraging individual thinking. For example Mrs Brown advised her Y5/Y6 class in their written descriptions of colour in a creative writing lesson: *"It would be better if you describe what you think It doesn't matter what colour I call it, it matters what colour you call it."* See also at the same school Mrs Bates's evaluation of children's science work putting pictures into sets:

T moves around checking progress and comments on those that are working on the reverse side of the sheet - 'I can see far too many groups that are just the same as mine. I want to see your ideas, your groups. Daniel, your groups are just the same as mine'.

Conclusion to 4. 1. 2.

The main difference between the concept of the individual in the English and French classrooms can be summarised as:

English classrooms	French classrooms
Individuals are different	Individuals are units of the whole
Teachers relate to individuals and follow their needs	Teachers relate to the class through an individual
Individualism and individual thinking are encouraged	Individualism is not encouraged
More heterogeneity of the above	More homogeneity of the above

4. 2. The degree of authoritarianism in teacher control

Teacher control over pupil behaviour in English and French classrooms

Not only were French teachers more severe in their language and attitude, for example Mme Chagnon's class:

Teacher continues to circulate and impose control. A slight whisper is stopped by her command, 'On se tait'; again to two pupils trying to consult each other, 'On se tait derrière moi'; and once more, 'Stéphanie, travaille, tais-toi'.

but also they limited their control to the area of providing an academic environment.

French pupils were mostly expected to work in silence:

T - 'Adrien et Jérémie, vous croyez que c'est le moment de discuter?' (Mme Allard's response to hardly audible whisperings between two boys in her CP class doing a drawing exercise.)

An exception was Mme Soler who was more permissive and allowed her CP pupils to whisper as they worked "*Chuchotez, si vous avez quelque chose à vous dire*". Physical movement was restricted. Pupils in Mme Soler's CP class had already internalised this as the following utterance by a boy to the girl sitting beside him shows: "*Mélodie, je vais le dire à la maîtresse, tu t'es levée, tu n'as pas le droit*". French pupils were expected to raise their hands before speaking. The CP classes showed French teachers training their pupils in these class working methods. Mme Soler was still accepting a certain amount of spontaneous pupil response but would also remind her pupils: "*Si tu levais le doigt au moins pour demander la parole*".

English teachers were more diverse in the degree of control they maintained and the methods they employed to maintain it. Mrs Gibbs (Cotswold Y5/Y6) preferred a more relaxed consensus approach. She believed that, "*You've got to meet them half way*".

However Mrs Brown (St Paul's Y5/Y6) favoured much tighter control:

8th June 1995 10.50-12.00 Creative writing Two Y5/Y6 classes together

Children come in and are milling around. T threatens to remove housepoints if they do not settle down quietly. 'I might add that I'm not used to being kept waiting that long'. The children are sitting down. T rewards those that have their creative writing books ready with a house point. There is more disruption as the rest of the children get up to fetch their books.

T - 'The first thing you write down is the date and the second thing you write down is three sentences saying how you should behave when you come into class. When you've done that you sit with your arms folded.'

Ch write in almost complete silence. T then selects pupils to read out what they have written. One pupil reads, 'You come in and sit quietly'. T focuses on the word 'quietly' and points out that they were not quiet. She also points out that it is 11.10 and that it is time to start the lesson.

Mrs Burton (Cotswolds Y2/Y3) used different methods to maintain control: directly,

"*Don't you look at me like that, all grumpy and cross*", referring to individual pupils,

"*Who's that coming in like that* (as pupils enter the classroom noisily after break); sending

pupils out; using sarcasm, "*It's amazing, in 48 hours you can't find 10 minutes to do*

your homework"; and using humour, "*Vanessa, are you listening, because I've got the feeling that you think you're on the beach?*" English teachers also exerted control over

wider issues to do with the whole child, for example, Mrs Brown in her frequent references

to poor posture seemed to equate bad posture with moral degeneration. Mrs Brown also

exerted control over pupil dress, as in, "*James, can you tuck your shirt in please.*"

Teacher control over pace, content and time in English and French classrooms

The French teachers' relative strength over pupil pace was observed in the frequent recommendations to pupils to hurry up: "*On attend, vite, vite Roger, Pascal et*

Jean.”. “Allez dépêches-toi, vite, vite”. “Allez bouges” (Mme Chagnon admonishing a boy for walking too slowly to the board.) The use of the collective to regulate the pace of individual French pupils has already been looked at. Pace was not such an issue with English teachers because pupils were often not working at the same activity and it was more acceptable for pupils to have a different working pace.

As has already been seen English teachers allowed more pupil control over content and timing of work. French teachers were in almost absolute control over these areas with only M. Pinson (St George, CM1) allowing some pupil choice over activities in the afternoon. Change of subject matter was often introduced in the French classrooms by a simple reference to the colour of the subject exercise book: “*Nous allons reprendre le cahier vert*”. There was no room for discussion or argument. French teachers also exerted strong control over presentation of work. The teacher’s authority was made clear over the colour of pens:

Mme Chagnon dictating a leçon to be written in the CM2 class’s ‘cahier de leçon’. “Dans une phrase les mots qu’on met en groupe qui répondent à la question *qui* (vous l’écrivez en bleu) et *quoi* (en rouge) ont pour fonction..... ; which line to write on, also from Mme Chagnon “Vous sautez une ligne et vous écrivez le deuxième exemple au tableau” (With reference to this command a boy in Mme Soler’s CP class who had not yet understood that teacher commands should be obeyed without question asked why it was necessary to do so. Mme Soler had replied “*Parce que c’est plus propre*”.); French teachers were also severe about standards of handwriting. Mme Chagnon criticised a CM2 boy’s work at the board in the following way: “*C’est illisible, tu écris comme un cochon*” Presentation was also important to English teachers but they achieved their aim in more subtle ways. For example, at the opposite extreme from Mme Chagnon, Mrs Gibbs elicited good presentation by requesting that her pupils made a border around their written work.

Negative sanctions in English and French classrooms

The comparative severity of the French teachers was also evident in their stronger use of negative sanctions. The word ‘punition’ was often in evidence in the French teachers’ discourse, regardless of pupil age or the severity of the offence: “*Qui est-ce qui s’est amusé à dessiner sur le tableau? On leur donne une punition?*” (Mme Allard to her CP class); and regardless of location and curriculum subject: for example during tennis coaching. The style and degree of punishment was institutionalised in the class, for example when Mme Chagnon reminded her CM2 pupils that spelling mistakes had to be rectified by copying out the correction 20 times, the class joined in as a chorus with her

words “*Chaque mot est à copier vingt fois*”. The French teachers’ authority was legitimised by parental authority. The French teachers were more likely than the English parents to refer to parental authority as a threat, for example, “*Tu te rappelles la fois quand on a montré à maman*” (Mme Soler to a boy who was not applying himself to his work in her CP class), or, “*Je commence d’en avoir assez de vos histoires ... encore une fois et je vais faire un mot dans votre cahier du soir*”. By contrast the English teachers never referred to the term punishment and only Mrs Brown (St Paul’s Y5/Y6) routinely used negative sanctions such as removal of housepoints.

The degree of teacher pupil distance in English and French classrooms

Another way in which French teachers imposed their authority and control over pupils was in their use of public humiliation, which had an underlying message of pupil inferiority and teacher superiority. It also relates to the teachers’ use of the class as a collective, when the class’s collective ideal norms were applied against a pupil who had deviated from them. Assessment played an important role. For example when Aline, a girl in Mme Chagnon’s CM2 class made several errors, Mme Chagnon publicly humiliated her by referring to her status as a ‘redoublée’ pupil, “*C’est une honte .. et toi qui refais un CM2*”. Mme Chagnon’s control technique often relied upon these two elements of public humiliation, the lowering of a pupil’s status in the class’s eyes, and the contrast with teacher superiority in terms of knowledge and the distance between French teachers and pupils. For example the following passage from the class marking stage of a lesson on direct and indirect objects (see Appendix 25, Ex 8),

Each sentence is checked. Pupils put up their hands to give the answers.

T queries any semantic deviance even if the sentence is syntactically correct:

“On franchit une descente”

T asks, “*Tu franchis une descente toi?*”

“Demain nous reprendrons notre maison”

T does not understand the meaning. The boy explains that it was rented out before and that they are getting it back. T thinks this is too complicated:

“Boff ... tu aurais pu trouvé quelque chose de plus simple.”

“Les moutons se méfient du chien féroce.”

T criticises the semantic element here too as she was expecting the missing words to be ‘Le loup’:

“Tu sais, les chiens de berger ne sont pas très féroces.”

She corrects a boy’s suggestion for the next sentence, he made an error in the noun ‘couragement’ .:

“Nicolas a très peur, il manque de couragement? she asks the class.

“Ton ‘couragement’ s’appelle le ‘courage’ en français en sixième”, she warns the boy.

French teachers were also more likely to use physical force to control their pupil, for example, Mme Soler physically pushed and pulled her CP pupils to get them into two straight lines in the playground at the end of break before leading them into the classroom; and on another occasion a boy who would not return to his desk in class as directed was bodily picked up and put there.

On the whole the English teachers had a different and less authoritarian approach to control over pupils. The inequality in status between teacher and pupil was not so extreme in the English classrooms. English teachers sought for and respected their individual pupil's opinions. The qualitative and quantitative differences in teacher control between the two countries were due to differences in the teacher pupil relationship. English teachers presented themselves in a more friendly image, for example, a Y6 girl was observed buttoning up Mrs Gibbs's cardigan whilst Mrs Gibbs was explaining some work to her. English teachers were concerned with a more extended view of the pupil, not just the pupil's academic self in the classroom but his/her behaviour and him/her as an individual, and they took more interest in the pupil outside school. For example, this passage from Mrs Bates's 'sitting on the carpet' session at the start of the day:

A boy tells everyone about a man he knew who has died. T shows great concern, she says:

"He's gone to live with God and you'll have to wait a long time before you can see him again and play with him"

T asks a girl to come up beside her and tell everyone her sad news. Her baby brother is unwell and has had to be admitted to hospital. T suggests that during the day they all make a card for brother.

When exerting control there tended to be more reasoned argument and a moral inculcation of the right way to do things. For example following a fairly serious incident between 2 boys in the Cotswolds Y5/Y6 class, Mrs Gibbs publicly admonished one of the boys, *"Did you go over to Tom? Did you ask him if he was hurt? That's what I'm cross about, you knocked him over and you did nothing. You know if someone takes care of you, you feel better. You've upset Tom so much he's run off home. You laughed at him when you had hurt him. That's the most cruel thing you could do"*

However French teachers had two roles. They reserved their distant, superior, authoritative and pedagogic role only for the classroom, in the playground it was common to see French teachers and pupils physically close, affectionate and friendly.

Conclusion to 4.2.

The overall finding in the area of teacher authoritarianism was that French teachers on the whole were more authoritarian and exerted stronger control over their pupils than did the English teachers. Figure 10 shows that Mme Chagnon, Mme Allard and

Mme Pinson consistently operated a stronger system of control over pupil behaviour, pupil mobility, pupils' working pace, pupils' working time and content and punishment.

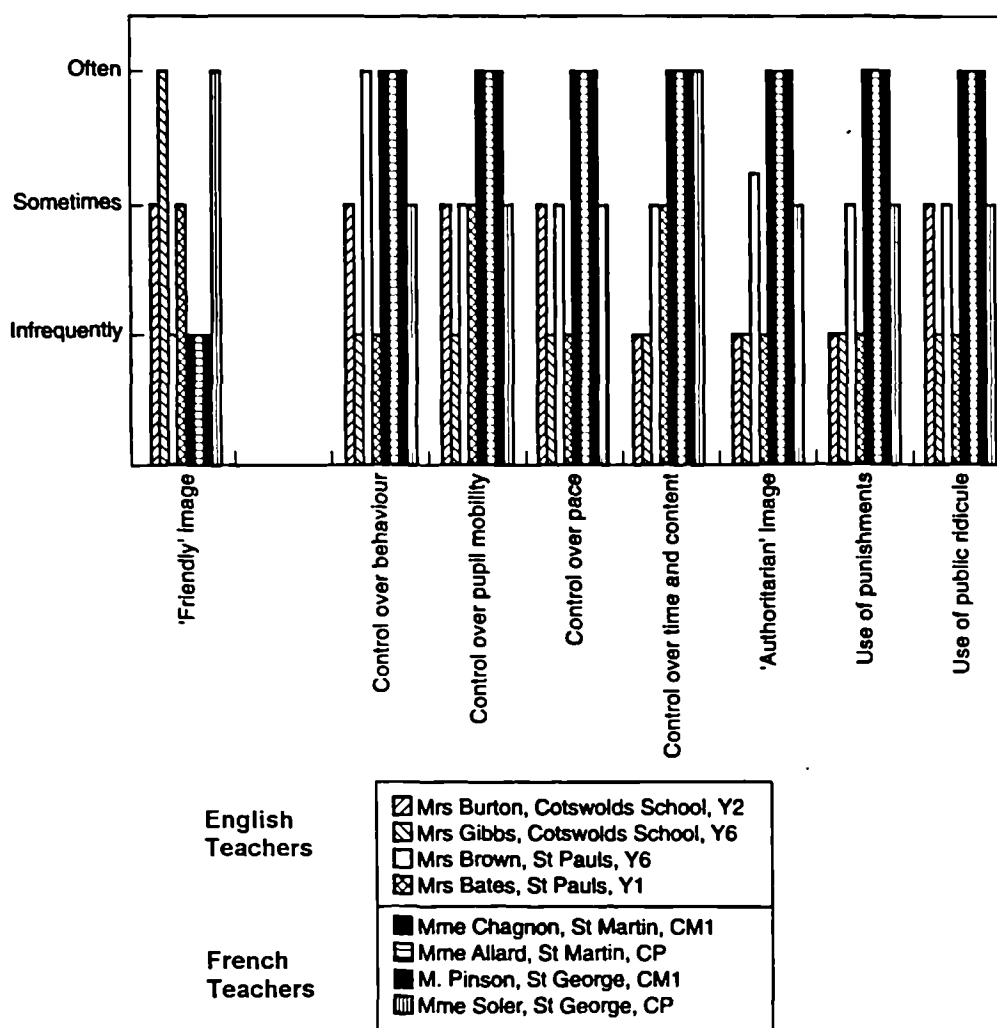


Figure 10 English and French teachers' use of authority and control

Three out of the four French teachers also presented a more authoritarian image and were more likely to use public ridicule as a method for maintaining control. The English teachers Mrs Burton, Gibbs and Mrs Bates exerted less control in the above areas and were more likely to present a 'friendly' image. One English teacher, Mrs Brown, and one French teacher, Mme Soler showed control characteristics which overlapped with those of the other country.

4. 3. Rationalism versus empiricism and the relative dominance of the teacher in teaching and learning

'Finding out' in English learning

An attempt has been made to quantify the extent to which the English teachers observed, encouraged their pupils to learn through empiricism or by 'finding out', see the heading 'Pupils learning by finding out' in Figure 9, p. 136. The ethnographic notes reveal English teacher discourse which either explicitly required pupils to 'find out', or it did so implicitly, for example, a science lesson with Mrs Bates and her Y1 class:

"You will find pictures on the other side of the sheet of things that are alive and you have to decide what groups to put them in. They could all be things that fly or things that don't fly. You'll have to draw a line around a group to make set." T demonstrates what she means. "Let me think ... my groups are going to be things that fly so the things that don't fly are not included in my ring". T draws a line around a group of pictures. "You could make a group of things that are insects. If you're not sure if something is not an insect you could go to the infant library and find a book." A pupil asks, "Could we ask you?". T replies, "Yes, you could ask me?"

The above example is typical of this English characteristic of learning. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, use resources and use the knowledge they have already acquired from outside the classroom.

With the above view of learning the teacher's role becomes more one of 'telling' and 'demonstrating' and facilitating learning rather than direct and more intrusive scaffolding. However there was much variety in the English teachers' approach. Mrs Gibbs also adopted a more non-directional role with her Y5/Y6 class and tended not to impose her ideas but to elicit ideas from pupils in order to 'pool' them together. Mrs Brown used strong scaffolding and 'led' her pupils' understanding forward, for example:

Top set maths 24th May 1995 11.00-12.00

T introduces the topic. She tells the children that the skill of estimation is an important one. The children have been doing multiplication. She demonstrates on the blackboard that if they have a calculation of

$$\begin{array}{r} 46.3 \\ \times 36.7 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

it is important to work out in written form a rough answer first to have an idea of what the answer should be. She writes up the sum 39 She asks the children to work out in their heads a rough answer. She elicits the

$$\begin{array}{r} X _6 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

process of how they will do this. A girl volunteers that they should make 39 into 40. A boy then suggests that they multiply 4 by 6 and add a zero.

T demonstrates 'rounding up' and 'rounding down'.

She writes up the sum 73.2 and elicits from the children that 73.6 should be rounded up to 74. They practise

$$\begin{array}{r} X 42 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

a few more examples in this way.

But even Mrs Bates used the English empiricist approach to learning in other subjects. A science lesson was observed where Y5/Y6 pupils had to measure the rate of flow of a given amount of water through different soils: sand, earth and gravel. As Mrs Bates explained to me, her pupils had *"to find out what I want them to find out"*. A boy who was carrying out the experiment was heard to say *"There's so much to think about"*, and, *"This isn't accurate,"*, and clearly he was learning through empiricism. Mrs Burton (Cotswolds Y2/Y3) could also use strong scaffolding but in a more individualistic approach, for example the following science lesson, which also illustrates learning through 'finding out' and 'doing' .:

Ch go to Buffer Room to watch programme on "Pushing and Pulling". After the programme T makes the ch sit in an oval - this requires an explanation and some moving about. T places a large cardboard box in the middle. She chooses a volunteer to push it when it is empty, then with one child in it then with two children in it. Another child carries out the same experiment. T establishes from the ch that it is gets more difficult to push with each additional ch. She asks them why they think this is. A boy replies - "The box is sticking more to the floor". (The ch are enjoying it very much and are very keen to suggest reasons and present themselves as volunteers.

T suggests they try and see if pulling makes a difference. She ties a rope around the box and they repeat the experiment. Ch come up with a variety of hypotheses -

"It's harder with the rope".

"If you're further from the box you can get a better pull".

T suggests they try to pull the box first with David in it on the floor and then on a plastic sheet. She asks them why they think it is easier on a plastic sheet. A boy replies - "Because the plastic is smooth". T explains 'friction' and reminds them of the programme they saw. She checks if they know why they always ask David to stay in the box and don't choose a different boy. She gets the answer she wants of him being the same weight. She asks what else they could use to make the box move more easily. A boy suggests wheels. She says she happens to have some and to the ch's delight produces a trolley. The experiment is repeated and a boy concludes - "Wheels help it move because they rotate". T points out that 'friction' is involved - "Look at the area of the wheels that are touching the floor".

T takes ch back to the classroom.

'Notion' in French learning

By contrast the French teachers played a more dominant role in their pupils' learning and learning was more abstract and theoretical. It could be said that the learning climate in the French classroom was more intellectual and more rational. This French approach contained a number of specific elements. Firstly the French teachers made it clear to their pupils that in any lesson there was a 'notion' or concept to be understood. For example in the following introduction to Mme Chagnon' maths to her CM2 class on proportionality:

T discusses with pupil contributions the concept behind the mathematical situation of one loaf costing 3F and four loaves costing 12F. She leads into this pointing out that “Le nombre de pains influe sur le prix du pain.....le prix du pain reste fixe”. She tells them that this is called “Une situation de proportionnalité”. T asks children for the meaning of “proportion”. As they cannot reply she asks them to look up the word in a dictionary and write down what they have found. Children move to back to select a dictionary or take one from their bags by their chairs.

Children elect to read out the different definitions they have found. T asks them which is the word which is common to these different definitions. She elicits the word “rapport” from the children and summarises for them - “Le lien entre deux choses s’appelle le rapport. Tant qu’il y a ce rapport on aura à faire à une situation de proportionnalité....C’est ça que je veux que vous comprenez et vous le verrez dans les exercices qui suivent.....Les rapports des deux où autres parties entre elles”.

French teachers often introduced the ‘notion’ to be understood by the simple expedient of writing it up as a title on the board, for example M Pinson introduced a French lesson in the following way:

“On arrête là, ça va, on attaque, c’est 10.15. On passe tout de suite à la grammaire”. There is almost complete silence as he writes up the date, ‘Grammaire’ and ‘L’attribut du sujet’.

Thus the French teachers conveyed to their pupils that at the heart of every lesson lay a concept or building block of learning. It was given a term, a ‘leçon’, which could often be reduced to a phrase and committed to memory. For example in M Pinson’s lesson on ‘Les compléments circonstanciels’ he used three children to represent three clauses in a sentence, ‘En arrivant au bord de l’eau’, ‘J’aperçus un garçon’, ‘Au milieu d’un gouffre’. In an empirical demonstration of an abstract concept he asked the three pupils to change their order or leave the sentence, in order to arrive at the conclusion, *“Les deux compléments peuvent se déplacer et être éliminés.. Il s’appellent le complément non essentiel ou le complément circonstanciel. C’est ça la leçon d’aujourd’hui.”*

Structure in French learning

Secondly all the French teachers emphasised the structural aspect of learning. Structure existed in the presentation of learning as a progression from simple to complex and concrete to symbolic. As an illustration of the former M Pinson’s lesson on ‘Les compléments circonstanciels’ developed from previous lessons in his year and from preceding years on ‘La phrase minimale’, which he explicitly referred to. Learning was presented in a logical sequence of progressively more difficult building blocks (the contents pages of the French grammar text books (Dupré 1988) covering the five years of French primary school also make this progression clear). As an illustration of the latter Mme Allard’s previously presented maths lesson on the concepts of ‘smaller than, the same as,

greater than' moved rapidly from the concrete of magnetic counters, to verbalisation and mathematical symbols.

Method in French learning

The importance of structure was also seen in the French teachers' transmission to pupils of specific methods of analysis. An attempt was made to convey the French teachers' greater use of system and method in pupil learning (see Figure 9, p. 136, heading 'Pupils learning by system and method'). For example Mme Chagnon was observed to take through and remind her CM2 pupils of the required method of grammatical analysis to arrive at correct spellings in a dictation:

T - Qu'est-ce qu'on fait?

Children together - On trouve les verbes. On souligne les verbes conjugués en gris.

T - Et puis.....?

C - On trouve les temps de la phrase

T - Et après...?

C - On cherche le sujet.

T - Comment on trouve le sujet?

C - On pose la question qui est-ce qui.

T - Et puis qu'est-ce qu'on fait?

C - On vérifie que c'est juste.

T - Qu'est-ce qu'on cherche après?

C - Les adjectifs qualificatifs.

T - Qu'est-ce qu'ils nous disent?

C and T - Comment est le nom.

C and T - On les entoure

T - On entoure et on vérifie le genre et le nombre

T - Et après les adjectifs qualificatifs?

C - Les règles d'orthographe.

Children write over their dictation in pencil. They link verbs with subjects and write masculine plural, etc. by the nouns and the adjectives. T moves around the class checking the work. She questions a boy's work. He has correctly identified that the subject of the verb 'donner' is "les grandes personnes" and that it is 'elles' but has written down "donnerons".

The importance of following a taught method and not a pupil individual strategy was also seen in Mme Chagnon's rejection of a CM2 boy's method of calculating the price of 15 loaves of bread, where each cost 3F, by adding the price of 10 loaves to the price of 5 loaves in his head, as the aim of the lesson had been to use the 'tableau de proportionnalité':

Nombre de pains	Prix en francs
1	3
4	12
10	30

The required method was to add up the price of one loaf, four loaves and 10 loaves. The implication in these two examples is that French pupils are required to follow one taught strategy and that there can only be one answer.

Logic in French learning

The importance of structure also lay behind the French teachers' appeal to logic and reason in their teaching. For example Mme Soler asked her CP pupils who had completed the maths exercise below:

1 calcule de deux façons le nombre de blocs.

$3 + 3 + 3 + 3 = 12$
 $3 + 3 + 3 + 3 = 12$

Figure 11 Exercice in addition

"Est-ce qu'il vous semble logique que le nombre soit pareil si on les compte en lignes ou en colonnes?"

M Pinson was heard on several occasions to refer to underlying logic and rationalism: *"Il y a une logique de progression"* (referring to methods of analysis which should proceed from asking general questions to specific questions). He also made the comment to his CM1 class that *"Nous sommes le fruit de certains logiques. Il y a un ordre"* when describing the social and moral constraints of individuals.

To introduce the inherent structuralism of learning the French CP teachers often used the concept of a game, with accompanying rules. This has already been seen in Mme Allard's allusion to a game with the mathematical duck. The St George CP teacher also often introduced maths and French lessons with "*On va faire un jeu, on va s'amuser à*". The presentation of learning as a game enabled the teachers not only to motivate their pupils but to introduce the idea of rules, that some things were allowed, but some were not allowed, e.g. '<' and '>.' could not be used together, '=' had to be used. It also gave the teachers the opportunity of explaining the idea of 'learning traps', for example Mme Soler gave a CP reading lesson that was an embryonic study of word classes. Pupils had to complete sentences using a selection of words (nouns, determiners and nouns, and adjectives) on the board. In the sentence 'Maman fait un ----- au chocolat', the pupils were warned "*Attention au piège*" as they had to select the word 'gâteau' and not the determiner plus noun sequence on the board of 'le gâteau'. By CM1 French pupils had internalised the rule bound nature of learning as the following passage from M Pinson's class shows:

"Je vous demande de faire une phrase minimale. C'est à dire d'enlever tout ce qui est superflu. Je vous donne une minute et demie." One child asks, "Est-ce qu'on a le droit d'ajouter quelque chose"..

The phrase 'avoir le droit de' was very common in French teacher discourse. It was a reference to more than the teacher's control over the pupils. It referred to the logic and the rules behind an abstract concept, for example M Pinson in presenting the concept of fractions and the possibility of dividing a rectangle into tenths, thirds, etc. said, "*J'ai le droit de continuer, je pourrais aller à l'infini.*" In all the above examples of French teachers using structure, and encouraging abstract thinking in their pupils, their dominant and authoritarian position has been in evidence.

Structure method and logic in the English classrooms

Structure, method and logic was less important to English teachers. Perhaps the disadvantage was that learning lacked sequence and development. The English teachers with their relative emphasis on empiricism in learning also tended by comparison with the French teachers to inadvertently downgrade the cognitive and intellectual elements of learning. This has been pictorially summarised in the heading 'Teacher emphasis on pupil thinking', Figure 9, p. 134. The notable exception among the English teachers was Mrs Burton. In many ways Mrs Burton proved to be both an exception and an exceptional teacher. She married together in her own individualistic style some of the merits of each educational system. She treated her class as a collective and yet prioritised individualism,

giving pupils choice and responsibility and encouraging individual creativity. She had a dominant role in the classroom and in her ability to pass on clear methods of learning, whilst at the same time allowing pupils to follow their own methods, she combined some of the 'closed' aspects of the French system and the 'open' aspects of the English system. Her approach to learning was strongly empirical but also emphasised cognition. It is this last aspect which needs to be looked at now. Mrs Burton encouraged her Y2/Y3 pupils to think. The already presented science lesson on 'pushing and pulling' demonstrates this. She also explicitly made reference to pupils' cognition, for example in a technology lesson where pupils had to design a structure on their ramps that would cause cars to change direction, she said, *"You've got to think about that ... everybody's will be different. First you've got to draw a plan. You've got to think ahead before you do something. There could be 25 different ways of doing it."* In response to a pupil's question of whether they could ask her, she replied, *"No, you've got to ask your head"*. As she explained to her pupils on another occasion, *"If I told you the answers to everything you wouldn't know how to think. My job is to teach you to think for yourselves. You need to learn to think. That's what you come to school for..... You've all got lovely brains."* (even her voiced expectations about pupil egalitarian ability resembled French values).

Conclusion to 4. 3.

The main differences between the English and French teachers' approach to their teaching and the pupils' learning can be summarised in the following table:

English classrooms	French classrooms
Less teacher dominance, pupils expected to 'find out' from other resources than teacher	Strong teacher scaffolding around a 'leçon'.
Emphasis on learning through 'doing'	Emphasis on 'thinking'
Little structure and sequence in teaching and learning	Importance in learning of structure, simple to complex
	Importance in learning of logic, method and rules
More heterogeneity in above	More homogeneity in above

Two other major differences between the English and the French teachers' approach to learning, which has already been discussed and which are not associated with

rationalism or empiricism were, in the French context, the process of learning which moves from the social to the individual, and the use of error analysis as a teaching strategy.

4. 4. The relative use of the carrot and the stick in pupil motivation by English and French teachers

Values about making learning interesting in English classrooms

Looking first at the English classrooms English teachers were observed to put in considerable effort to make the subject matter intrinsically interesting to pupils. Mrs Gibbs provided stimulating experiences to her Y5/Y6 pupils working on their topic of The Tudors. These included a TV programme on the Tudors, a museum visit, a visit to the school by a Tudor music group and a computer game about the Tudors. Mrs Bates was also observed to emphasise pupil interest as an introduction to a task. She was heard to explicitly refer to this characteristically English value of intrinsic interest in subject matter, for example in one of her 'sitting on the carpet' sessions with her Y1 class a girl recounted her weekend trip to a museum and the model of a dinosaur she had seen there. Mrs Bates asked her, "*And was it very very interesting?*"

Values about contextualising tasks in English classrooms

English teachers were also observed to motivate pupils by presenting the practical use and relevance of tasks. For example Mrs Bates used the forthcoming visit by the local playgroup as a stimulus for creative writing. The Y1 pupils were to read out their stories to the visitors. Similarly Mrs Burton made 'writing' a useful activity by setting up a pen pal link with a Bristol school. Although it was difficult to observe, and not clearly stated, the English teachers may also have gone to more efforts than the French teachers to present a 'friendly' image and to make their pupils like them, in order to motivate them to work. As the mother of one of Mrs Gibbs Y5 boys observed to me "*He would do anything for her*".

Values about learning in French classrooms

The French teachers of the younger classes also sought to motivate their pupils by presenting the work as enjoyable and intrinsically interesting. But for the CM1 and CM2 pupils the main motivation seemed to be a tacit understanding that pupils should be interested in learning. Value placed on learning, not learning about the subject matter, but the process of learning, the pleasure of intellectualism. The teachers presented themselves as aids or mediators in their pupils' learning, for example M Pinson says to Elise who is

having difficulty in understanding the maths lesson, *"Passe au tableau, tu vois ce n'est pas difficile, je t'aiderai"*. The French teachers presented themselves as pedagogues whose function was to help pupils by simplifying the work and whose final aim was for all their pupils to succeed. When Mme Allard's class commented at the end of a maths lesson which most of the pupils seemed to have understood, *"Tu es une championne"* and she replied, *"C'est peut-être parce que j'ai bien expliqué"* there was an understanding that she has fulfilled the requirements of her teaching role.

Values about a work ethic in English and French classrooms

Both English and French teachers implied that work was sometimes difficult and that it required effort, though the French teachers on the whole made more reference to a work ethic and placed more emphasis on the seriousness and value of work. This is shown graphically in Figure 12 below.

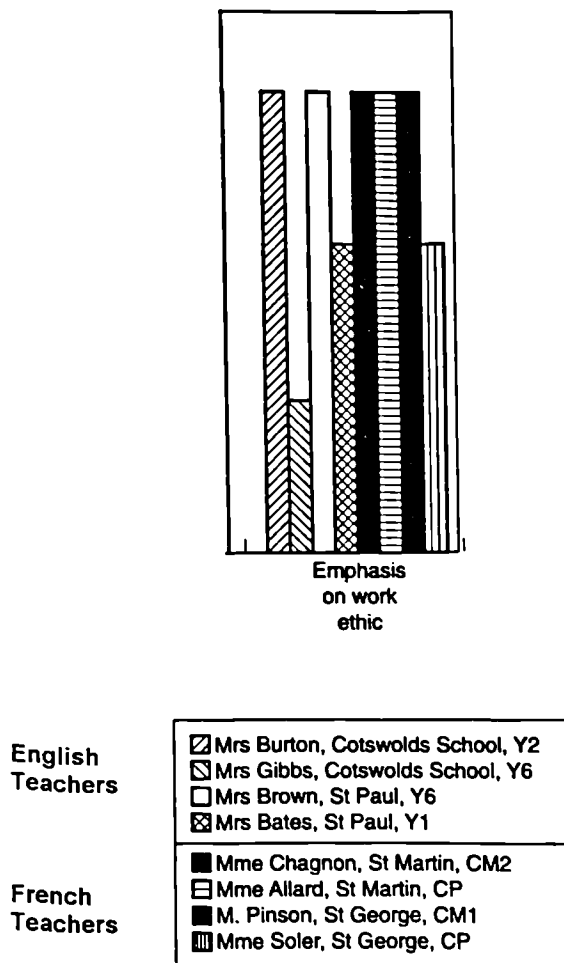


Figure 12 Encouragement of a work ethic in English and French teacher discourse

An example of the French teachers' insistence on a work ethic is Mme Chagnon's outburst during a grammar lesson, "*Mais vous les posez les questions? C'est trop fatigant de les poser?*".

Assessment values in English and French classrooms

Where there was considerable difference between the English and French teachers was in the area of positive or negative assessment. The English teachers tended to favour positive encouragement. The French teachers made more use of negative sanctions. They did not refrain from giving extremely low marks or disparaging comments, of the "*tu es nul*" type. The French teachers did not seem to share the English teachers' assumption that negative assessment would de-motivate pupils. The motivation was understood to come from elsewhere, 'elsewhere' being, this study would argue, the national cultural context. Poor results were a straightforward result of a pupil's lack of effort and an indication to him/her on how he/she should improve. Some examples of the use of the collective to sanction poor assessment results have already been seen as has the use of public humiliation and punishment. Fear, the fear of teacher and parental anger at low marks, also had a stronger part to play in the French classrooms than in the English classrooms. The St George CM1 teacher M Pinson, who was interested in my work discussed motivation with his pupils. Concluding from their suggestions which were all concerned with fear of punishment he said to them, "*C'est donc un pays qui avance avec la peur. S'il n'y a pas de peur vous n'avancez pas?*"

4. 5. Conclusion to Chapter 4

Observation of classroom practice and teacher discourse in the eight classrooms of the sample revealed both similarities and differences between English and French classroom contexts. In both contexts there was a scale of degree to which classrooms exhibited values about individualism or collectivism, values about authoritarianism, values about empiricism or intellectualism, and values about motivation. Nevertheless English classrooms were more likely to embody individualistic and empirical values about learning, with weaker teacher authoritarianism and they were more likely to have a particular concept of motivation. Whereas French classrooms were more likely to exhibit stronger collectivist and intellectual values, stronger teacher authoritarianism, and motivation by intellectual interest. Due to the relative degree of incidence of these values there was some overlap between English and French classrooms. Thus it was not uncommon for English

classrooms to occasionally exemplify values usually associated with French classrooms, and vice versa. Although there was this diversity in both English and French contexts, there was more diversity in the English classrooms than in the French.

It is argued that the values identified in English and French classrooms are related to teachers' conscious and unconscious 'ways of thinking', which are themselves related to the values of the national context (as identified in Chapter Three). This suggests the existence of cognitive social constructs in national contexts. Could these then affect learning? Chapter Five sets out to explore pupil attitude to learning in England and France and the extent to which pupil attitude is affected by underlying national values.

Part Three

Learning: The existence of socio-cognitive constructs in pupil perceptions and pupil performance in two empirical studies

Chapter Five

A comparative analysis of the existence of national socio-cognitive constructs in pupil perceptions about school and their role in pupil motivation

This chapter looks at the findings from the empirical data of pupil interviews. It is argued that within each country pupil responses were very similar. Furthermore the responses of most of the English pupils contrasted with those of most of the French pupils⁴¹. This suggested that pupils within a country shared common concepts or ‘ways of thinking’ about schooling which differed from one country to the other. The Oxford English dictionary defines a concept as “*an idea of a class of object*”. The meaning of ‘concept’ is thus very close to the meaning of the term cognitive construct given in Section 1. 3. It is put forward in this chapter that pupils have socio-cognitive constructs. These function at the level of the individual but, as the chapter will bring out, they reflect the socio-cognitive constructs of the country in which pupils are experiencing schooling.

Pupil perceptions are an important window into pupil learning as they inform our understanding of pupil motivation. Pupils ascribe meaning to their schooling on the basis of the cultural environment and the classroom environment which they experience. Previous work in the English and French context has tended to focus on one or two areas of pupil perspectives: feedback (Caffyn 1989), learning (Cooper and McIntyre 1994, Carré and Head 1974, Harris and Ruddock 1994), attitude to and expectations of school (Ainley and Bourke 1992, Cullingford 1985, Cullingford 1991, Keys and Fernandes 1993, Institut Louis-Harris⁴² 1990, Mortimore et al 1988, Powell 1985, Tizard et al 1988, White and Brockington 1983, Williams and Batten 1981), attitude to work (Blatchford 1992, Cullingford 1988, Roberts and Dolan 1989), pupil values and incentives (Branwhite 1988), pupil attitudes to maths, science, economics (Foxman 1991, Scott-Hodgetts 1992, Foxman 1992, Mercer 1988), attitudes to teachers (Gilly 1980, Nash 1976, Open University 1992), transfer to secondary school (Measor and Woods 1984). A more holistic approach to pupil experience is favoured here, which resembles that of Woods (1990), and the two French researchers: Charlot (1992) and Dubet (1996). The aim is to capture and depict the web of English and French pupils’ socio-cognitive constructs as a whole.

It is argued that pupil perceptions of schooling relate to the cultural setting of the national context. Other studies, which are reviewed below, suggest that in comparison with pupils from other countries, English pupils are more likely to associate and value individualism and enjoyment with school, to link success to ability more than to effort, to

⁴¹ The findings presented here, were originally reported in a British Educational Research Association conference paper (Planel 1994) and two publications (Planel 1996 and 1997), see Appendix 2, Nos. 2 and 1

⁴² A rare example of French research into the primary pupil perspective.

rate achievement as less important, to have a higher level of self esteem, to have a more negative view of school and most importantly that English pupils place less value on learning. Thus comparisons between pupil perspectives in England and Japan has suggested, for example, that in comparison with Japanese pupils, English pupils were more extrinsically motivated and that their values were more negative, more related to social class and natural ability (Simmons and Wade 1988, IDS 1987, McPake 1995). Comparison between English and Hungarian pupil perceptions had suggested that English pupils were more motivated by careers, that they had a more surface approach to learning and were more negative about school (Entwhistle and Kozeki 1985). Comparisons between English pupils and pupils from five European countries had also found that English pupils were more preoccupied with social class and aspects of individualism (Simmons and Wade 1985). Pupil perceptions of Hong Kong Chinese immigrants in England suggested that work and achievement were more highly valued in Hong Kong than in England (Klein 1997). Studies of Chinese American pupil perceptions (Siu 1992) also showed a contrast between the Chinese value placed on learning and the anti intellectualism mentality of American high schools, which had originally been identified some thirty years before (Coleman 1961). Comparisons between Russian and English pupils suggested that a higher value was placed on learning rather than gaining qualifications in Russia and that Russian pupils unjustifiably rated their abilities lower, they saw effort as more important and were more positive about school (Stewart-Smith 1996). Work by Oettingen et al (1994) on the pupil perceptions of East and West Berlin has indicated that it is a Western tendency to encourage high esteem when achievement is low. Thus it is well established that national context has a role to play in pupil perceptions. The approach to the study of pupil perceptions used here is that, in order to explore the effect of what pupils think, on how they learn, pupil perceptions need to be looked at comparatively and they need to be contextualised.

The context of English and French pupils' learning experience has been described in Chapter Four. Cultural values embedded in classroom processes were related to the wider context of the two respective countries. As a comparative study between two countries, differences between countries were presented in pairs of contrasting values but within each country the context was seen to be made up of a network of inter-related themes, a mutually supporting web. To what extent are the cultural values identified in the context visible in pupil perceptions? What role might they play in pupils' motivation to learn? These questions lie behind the presentation of pupil responses in this chapter but they will be answered later in Chapter Seven.

No systematic analysis was carried out on the degree to which the perceptions of pupils in any particular class matched the characteristics of the class teacher. This would

have been a research study in itself and was beyond the aims of this study. However it was clear that the responses of pupils in Mrs Gibbs's class (the teacher in England who most encouraged individual and empirical thinking) were particularly individualistic, uninhibited and critical of their school experience. At the opposite extreme in terms of teaching characteristics, Mme Chagnon's pupils' responses in France provided some of the strongest examples of pupil conformity and passivity. This suggests that pupils' understanding of their school experience was affected by the classroom strategies of individual teachers as well as the national context itself.

This chapter sets out to describe English and French pupils' cognitive constructs of their school experience. Pupils had constructed definitions and concepts from their experiences both at school and out of school. School experience was made meaningful by the pupils' interpretation of it through the pupils' immediate social context. Ideas were then conceptually organised. Analysis of pupil responses in the group interviews revealed these underlying constructs. The socio-cognitive constructs which will be explored are those of: the function of school (5. 1.), school work (5. 2), pupil control (5. 3), teachers (5. 4), the learning process (5. 5.), assessment (5. 6), the parental role (5. 7.), the peer group (5. 8). The chapter concludes by attempting to put together contrasting English and French pupil cognitive maps of school experience.

5. 1. English and French pupil constructs of the function of school

The research literature in comparative English French pupil perspectives shows that French pupils had a more restricted and career orientated perception of the function of school. The QUEST project found that a greater emphasis is placed on learning in the French context (more French pupils disagreed with the statements: 'I don't learn very much at school' and more French pupils agreed with the statement 'I really enjoy most lessons' and 'It's important for me to do well'). Triangulation of the latter is more difficult to assess as existing research uses different instruments and samples. However looking first at the function of school in the two countries, the literature would suggest that most English pupils are very motivated by jobs but that French pupils are even more motivated by them. A direct link between working at school and getting a job was made by 100% of pupils in Cullingford's 1985 study, 96% in Roberts and Dolan's 1989 study but only 53% in Blatchford's 1992 study. Problems of comparability are exacerbated by social class considerations of the samples used. Charlot, Bautier and Rochex (1992) point out in the French context the higher association between school and jobs in working class French pupils than middle class pupils who have amore cognitive approach. Nevertheless the literature would suggest that not only were French pupils more motivated by the learning function of school, they were also more motivated by the

school's function in their career (77% of QUEST French pupils, out of a sample of 405 French primary pupils and 452 English primary pupils, strongly agreed with the statement 'School work helps you to get a job' compared to 48% of English pupils (Osborn 1997). There is also evidence that qualifications are more valued in the French context (Hollen Lees 1994).

In this study pupil responses to the questions "What do you think school is for?" and "Why do you come to school?" showed that English and French pupils had different concepts about 'school'. French pupils had a clearer instrumental perception of school. Although pupils from both countries primarily associated school with learning and working, and thought that schooling would eventually lead to a career, the French pupils made stronger associations between these two than did the English pupils. Figure 13 shows that out of a total of 184 English pupil responses to the above questions 58.6%, referred to the learning and working function of school compared to 68.4% of French responses (out of a total of 165 responses). French pupils came to school with the acceptance that its main function was an instructional one, as a CM2 pupil at St Martin put it, "*L'école c'est pour nous instruire*". They had lower expectations than English pupils that it would be an enjoyable or 'fun' experience (no French pupil responses referred to an element of enjoyment whereas 6.5% of English pupil responses did do so). French pupils were more motivated towards school because they saw its long term job implications (6.2% of English responses contained a reference to a job or career compared to 16.5% of French responses). Even some of the youngest French pupils made this connection between school and their future prospects, "*On gagne plus de sous si on reste plus longtemps à l'école*" (CP boy from St George). School was also perceived by some French pupils as having an instrumental role in helping children to grow up and become adults. Thus French pupils had a clearer understanding of the relationship between school and adult life.

French pupils had a more restricted view of school which was associated with its instructional role. Figure 13 shows that apart from the learning and working, and career function of school (and the social function which interestingly at 6.1% was exactly the same for English and French pupils) the further 6 French categories which arose showed only minor significance.

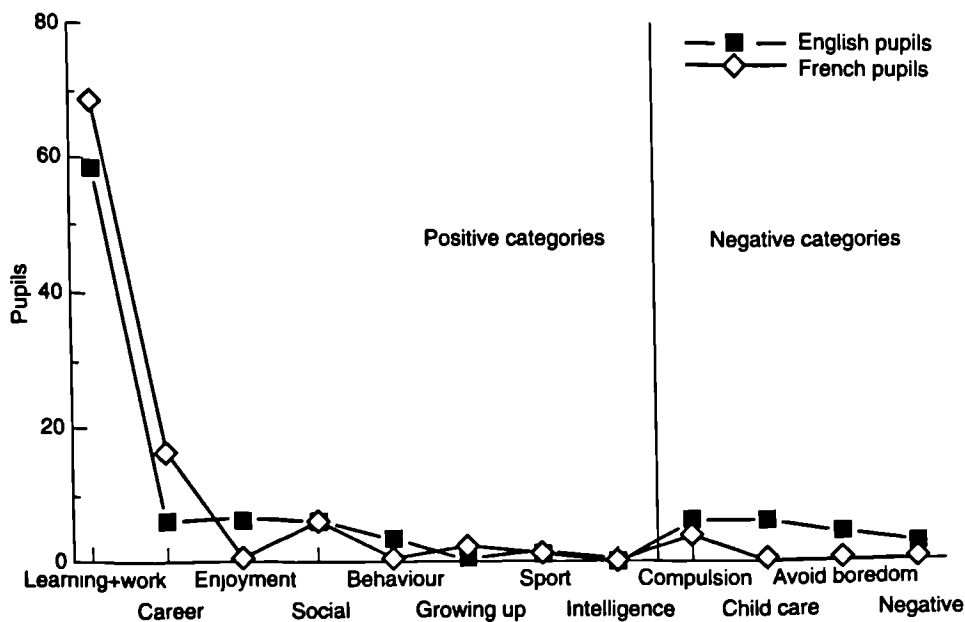


Figure 13 Percentage of pupil responses suggesting categories in response to the question, 'What do you think school is for?' and 'Why do you come to school?'

In contrast the English pupil responses showed a less clear learning and working function of school and more diversity in the 9 further minor categories. The more English school's functions of teaching pupils to behave (for example, "It teaches you table manners," girl, Y5/Y6 Cotswolds), of how to avoid boredom ("If you were stuck at home it would be a bit boring" Y5/Y6 St Paul's), its role in providing child care ("It's for looking after children" Y2/Y3 Cotswolds) and its more negatively perceived function ("It's to get you out of your mum's way" Y5/Y6 Cotswolds) showed that English pupils had a more extended perception of their school's function which concerned the child both at school and at home.

Although pupils were not specifically asked the degree to which they enjoyed school or not there is some evidence to suggest that French pupils were more positive about school. For example when pupils were asked what they most enjoyed about school (Question A1, 2), more English pupils gave responses which conveyed their negativism: "I like the end of school", "The enjoyment of going home" (Y5/Y6 St Paul's). Previous research in English schools shows approximately half of pupils enjoying school (42% of Blatchford's 1992 study found school mostly interesting, 43% of Tizzard's 1988 study), but 'boredom' was reported to occur both at home and at school (Cullingford 1991, Blatchford 1992, Tizzard 1988). French research on French pupil satisfaction indicates greater pupil satisfaction. 81% of primary pupils were reported to be happy at school (Institut Louis-Harris 1990) and the QUEST project (Broadfoot 2000) reported

46% of French pupils strongly agreeing with the statement 'I like being at school' compared to 20% of English pupils. The QUEST project report also indicated that English pupils perceived school to be more boring than did French pupils (56% of French pupils strongly disagreed with the statement that 'School is boring' compared to 26% of English pupils). Both English and French sources cite that pupil satisfaction with school decreases with age (Institut Louis-Harris 1990, Keys 1993).

Furthermore despite variation between classes in this study in the English context, which reflects the diversity of the English classroom context and the national value of diversity, English pupils made more claims that they were bored at school than did French pupils. This was perhaps because their higher expectations of enjoyment were more difficult to meet and because their motivation was not so restricted to the instructional function of school. More English pupils, particularly at St Paul's, claimed that the work ("*Most of the work is boring except art*" Y5/Y6 St Paul's) and the teachers ("*When the teachers keep rabbiting on*" Y5/Y6 St Paul's) were boring and that they were often unoccupied, ("*You're sat there not knowing what to do*" Y5/Y6 St Paul's).

French pupils claimed that they were too busy to be bored, "*On s'ennuie jamais, on a toujours du travail*" (CP St Martin), "*Avec la maîtresse on a pas le temps de s'ennuyer*" (CM2 St Martin). As one pupil from CM1 St George put it, "*A l'école on ne doit pas s'ennuyer - on a du travail*". Perhaps because the most common French definition of boredom was lack of work, "*Quand on ne sait pas que faire*" French pupils also claimed that they were bored when the teacher was absent. Work itself in the French classrooms could be boring if it was too difficult, if there was too much repetition, or if pupils had to sit and listen too long or copy too much from the board.

5. 2. English and French pupil constructs of school work

Not only were French pupils more motivated towards work because in their conceptual scheme they were more likely to see it as the main function of school but their concept of the term 'work' differed in content and clarity from that of English pupils. Figure 14 shows that both sets of pupils described work as something that involved learning or thinking.

Useful	
Marked	Boring
Independent	Fun
Long and difficult	
Teacher control	
Involves effort	
Involves learning and/or thinking	
French pupils	English pupils

Figure 14 Categories used by English and French pupils in their definitions of 'work'

For example, "Thinking can be working" (Y2/Y3 Cotswolds), and "L'ordinateur c'est du travail parce que c'est pour évoluer notre tête" (CM2 St Martin). Work was thought by both English and French pupils to be long and difficult, for example, "Work on beans and trees is work because it's really hard for you" (Y1 St Paul's), and "C'est du travail quand ça plus de temps" (CP St Martin). For both sets of pupils work involved effort, for example, "Painting is work when it's hard" (Y5/Y6 Cotswolds), and "Dessiner c'est pas du travail parce que des fois c'est facile" (CP St Martin). English and French pupils thought that work was controlled by the teacher, for example, "Sand and water are not work except if you have to do something" (Y2/Y3 Cotswolds), and "Les jeux, c'est différent, on peut faire ce qu'on veut" (CM2 St Martin). However the French pupils used three other concepts which helped them to classify activities more clearly as work or non work. They used the criteria of independent working to distinguish work from a game, "On peut se mettre à deux pour les jeux" (CM2 St Martin). A further criteria^{um} of work was that it was always assessed, "Si c'est noté c'est du travail" (CM2 St Martin). Thirdly and most significantly an activity was defined as work if it fulfilled the criteria^{um} of usefulness. 'Usefulness' itself was a concept peculiar to French pupils. It was associated with the restricted school domain of learning, progress through school and an eventual

career beyond. Thus a pupil in CM1 St Martin defined listening to the teacher as work on the basis of its usefulness to his learning, "*Ecouter le maître c'est du travail, on apprend des choses qui nous aideront dans notre travail*". The same concept of usefulness re-occurred in French pupils' reflections about their experience, "*C'est bien, j'arrive à suivre maintenant*", "*On peut mieux apprendre*". Some of the French CM1 and CM2 pupils also cited their CP year as their preferred year on the basis of this concept of usefulness, "*Parce qu'on a appris à lire et à écrire, c'était le plus important*" (CM2 St Martin) and "*Le CP parce que je travaillais mieux*" (CM1 St George).

The English pupils' concept of the term work was less clear because the two concepts of boredom and enjoyment, which they associated with work, resulted in a less strong classification between work and non-work activities. There was considerable diversity in the English pupils' constructs, again reflecting the national value of diversity. Some pupils expected work to lack enjoyment, "*Work is supposed to be boring*" (Y5/Y6 Cotswolds). Other English pupils (even pupils in the same class) expected work to be enjoyable, "*Most work's fun*" (Y5/Y6 St Paul's). Sometimes discussions arose between English pupils because individuals held conflicting concepts, for example,

- "*Music isn't work it's just fun.*"

- "*No, it's sort of work because you're learning.*" (Two Y1 pupils from St Paul's)

Sometimes the classificatory conflict could be seen within an individual, for example,

"*Betsy (Tudor computer game) isn't work well, it is a bit of work but it is fun*". (Y5/Y6 Cotswolds)

In order to resolve the conflict which some English pupils felt between work and enjoyment some pupils in both English schools had constructed a further category of 'fun work' or 'fun job', for example, "*Painting is fun work*," Y5/Y6 St Paul's

French pupils with their stronger classificatory scheme of work displayed less confusion and conflict; reflecting the national value of unity. Some French pupils did acknowledge that work could be enjoyable, for example, "*Le travail c'est des fois amusant, les jeux toujours*" (CM2 St Paul) but they were much more likely to perceive activities that were "*une distraction*", "*pour s'amuser*", "*une détente*", "*pour se défouler*" as non work. They did not have the same expectations that work should be enjoyable. It is suggested that the French pupils' cognitive construct of work, the clarity of its definition and its function in their cognitive scheme of school, learning and adult life, played an important part in their motivation at school. English pupil motivation, with the more imprecise construct of what constituted work, relied to a greater extent on the teacher's skill in making work enjoyable.

5. 3. English and French perceptions of pupil control over learning and work

On the whole English pupils had a perception of pupil control through choice and the French pupils held a perception of pupil control through effort. Again there was more diversity in the English context, reflecting values of national diversity. English pupils at the Cotswolds were aware that they had a certain amount of control over the content, timing and pace of their work, *“Teacher tells you how many things you have to plan”* (Y2/Y3 Cotswolds), *“You can choose quite a few things”* (Y5/Y6 Cotswolds). At the other extreme English pupils in the Y5/Y6 St Paul’s class reported very little choice, where it existed it was restricted to control over sequence of tasks, *“You can choose the order from the board sometimes”* (Y5/Y6 St Paul’s). However it is significant that, irrespective of the degree of pupil control over choice that the English pupils experienced in the classroom, the concept was rated positively. For example, *“You should be able to plan as you grow older”*, *“If the teacher tells you what to do it’s not much fun”*, *“It’s best to choose what to do”* (Y2/Y3 Cotswolds, referring to the start of the day where pupils plan the days’ tasks) and *“I would like to choose it would be more fun, we’re always doing what the teacher tells us”*, *“Yes definitely, we’d like to have more fun at school”* (Y5/Y6 St Paul’s). English pupils equated choice with enjoyment and, as will be seen in the next part, enjoyment often formed part of the English pupils’ concept of learning. By contrast in the French context, where there was more unanimity (again reflecting values of national unity) about the lack of pupil control through choice, *“La maîtresse nous dit ce qu’il faut faire”* (CP St Martin), *“Ici on est obligé de faire comme le maître nous dit, comme un robot”*, (CM1 St George), *“La maîtresse nous donne tout, on est obligé de suivre”* (CM2 St Martin), the concept of pupil choice was viewed less positively, *“Je ne voudrais pas choisir parce que nous on ne sait pas”* (CP St Martin), *“Non, les maîtres ils connaissent mieux que nous”* (CM2 St Martin). The French pupils’ responses gave more evidence of the acceptance of the French teacher’s dominant role and the value placed on knowledge. Where they did occur the French positive responses indicated French values of work and liberty. For example, pupil choice in the classroom was sometimes taken to mean an alternative to work or the possibility of choosing work that was less difficult, and sometimes it brought out the concept of freedom, *“Plus de choix ça veut dire plus de liberté”* (CM2 St Martin).

Whereas English pupils were more motivated by a concept of control where control was defined as a degree of pupil choice over work, French pupils were more motivated by a definition of control where control was defined as individual control over learning through individual effort. In response to the question, “Why do you think some children do better than others?” pupil responses in both English and French classes cited ability, effort and other factors, but more French pupils in each class attributed

achievement to effort. Figure 15 shows the ratio of pupils in each class citing ability or effort.

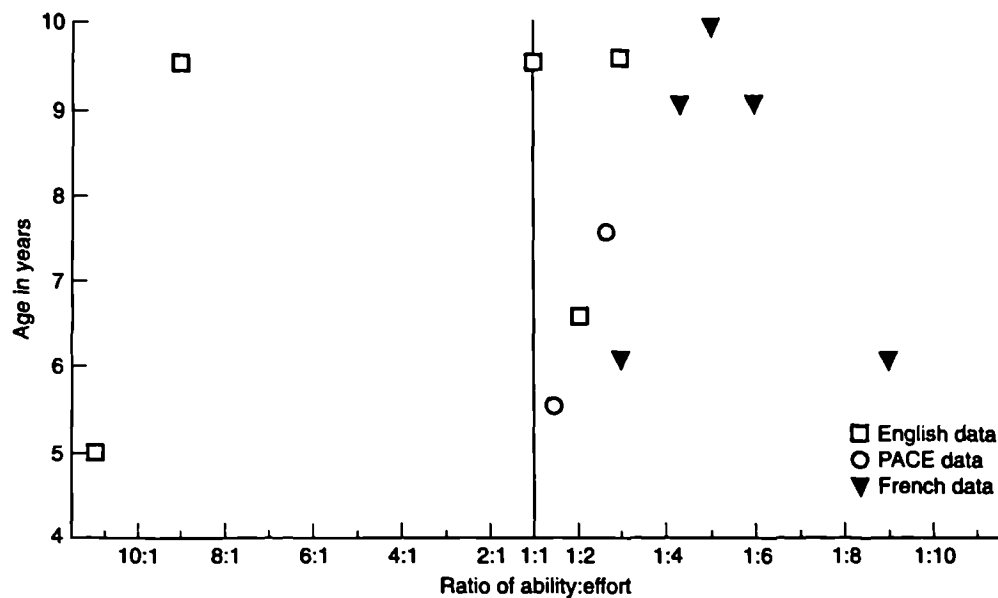


Figure 15 Ratio of pupil responses citing ability or effort, showing the variables of national contexts and age of pupils (English pupil data: 114 pupils, French pupil data 97 pupils, PACE data: 54 pupils from 9 classes)

The research literature is not clear about this issue. In the English context learning was perceived to be successful where pupils had some control (Cooper 1994) and pupil choice was important in England (Branwhite 1988). However Cullingford (1991) also concluded that younger English pupils ascribed success to effort. There is a clearer link between success and effort in the French context. Robinson's work on self esteem (1989, 1990, 1992) does suggest that one of the reasons that low achievement in French schools was not associated with low self esteem was because of the French pupil association between effort and success. Charlot (1992 p. 47) argues for a strong link between success and effort. He cites a pupil, "Celui qui travaille 'passe', celui qui ne travaille pas 'plonge'" (Charlot, 1992 p. 49).

In this study the concept of achievement in the French context had a more direct link with the effort with which pupils followed the French learning process, "Ils apprennent mieux la leçon, ils s'appliquent plus"(CM2 St Martin). The French concept

of achievement interrelated with the French concept of learning and contributed to pupil motivation.

5. 4. English and French pupil concepts of teachers

Most French teachers were conceived of as kind and they were liked by their pupils. However there was a greater distance between teacher and pupils in France than in England and an element of fear, *"It's not really that they (French pupils) respect them (French teachers) it's more that they're afraid of them"* (CM1 pupil at St George who had previously been at school in England). French pupil perceptions about the severity of their teachers reflected the classroom observations' findings of teacher authoritarianism. French pupils' responses also revealed the underlying national value of authoritarianism. French pupils spoke of the frequency and severity of punishments. A French pupil reported that the penalty for talking during the peripatetic English teacher's class in CM1 St George was writing out 100 times 'Je ne dois pas parler en classe'. This was increased to 150 if the pupil continued to talk. French pupils were aware of their teachers' absolute control in the classroom, the French boy quoted in section 5.4 compared the French teacher's authority over pupils to that which might be exercised over robots. Most French teachers required absolute silence in their classes, teachers such as Mme Soler in St George CP who allowed whispering were seen as an exception. French pupils reported that their teachers used physical force to control pupils, *"Il y en a qui en (inaudible)... à la force. Ils prennent la petite crête là, en haut des oreilles, ils le tournent, ils nous font comme ça, et ils disent, 'Tu arrêtes de parler?'"* (CM1 St George). Pupils reported being hit and kicked by teachers. French pupils described their embarrassment when teachers used public humiliation to make the class as a collective influence an individual pupil's work or behaviour (see Section 5.7).

It is argued that French pupils partly accepted, and even approved of, teacher authoritarianism because they had a cognitive categorisation of teachers in a more restricted instrumental role in the learning/school/adult life process. Previous research confirms that French pupils perceived their teachers to have a more dominant role in their learning than did English pupils. 89% of French QUEST pupils thought that learning involved listening and watching the teacher (compared to 67% of English pupils), 77% of French pupils associated learning with answering teachers' questions (compared to 49% of English pupils) and 63% of French pupils thought that they learnt most from their teachers (compared to 30% of English pupils). Similarly more French pupils associated learning with sitting quietly, not talking and having little physical mobility compared to English pupils. It is argued in the present study that authoritarianism was accepted because the French teacher was more likely to be perceived as almost a mediator between

his/her pupils and the content of the learning process (a long and difficult syllabus of things they did not yet know), *“Un maître c’est quelqu’un qui nous apprend des choses qu’on connaissait pas avant”* (CM1 St George). The teacher was seen to have a pivotal role in the pupils’ access to learning, which in turn would equip pupils for adult life. A pupil concept of a more restricted instructional teacher role contributed to the effect of making French pupils more passive and accepting of their teachers’ authority. It is interesting that pupil passivity and teacher appreciation were at their strongest in the CM2 class at St Paul, the class context which was shown in Chapter 4 to be the most extreme in terms of teacher authoritarianism and structured learning. French teachers, in that class in particular, were perceived as having an essential, the essential, role in their pupils’ construct of learning, school and adult life. The French pupils accepted that their teacher was on their side, he/she wanted them to succeed., for example, *“La maîtresse fait tout pour nous, et le maître, pour qu’on réussisse dans la vie, pour qu’on passe en sixième”* (CM2 St Paul). Thus the French pupils accepted teachers that made them work hard, for example, *“La maîtresse nous fait travailler, c’est bien, ça nous aide”* (CM2 St Paul), and a girl in the same class, expressing egalitarian values said that if he were a teacher, *“Je forcerais les mauvais à travailler”*. French pupils accepted teachers that were authoritarian, because they understood that their teachers wanted them to be successful in school and in life:

“J’aime bien quand elle crie, quand elle gronde, elle insiste, ça nous fait mieux travailler”

“Elle crie mais ça rentre dans la tête. C’est pour notre bien. Plus tard on verra que c’est à cause d’elle ...”

“La maîtresse crie beaucoup mais elle fait ça pour qu’on apprenne mieux, elle a raison d’un côté” (All three responses from CM2 St Paul)

“Il a raison de nous crier dessus, sinon on arriverait pas dans notre travail”

“J’aime pas trop que le maître crie mais il a envie qu’on passe en CM2” (Two responses from CM1 St George)

In keeping with the French pupils’ concept of a teacher’s more restricted instructional role, French pupils put a high priority on the teacher’s pedagogical skills. Their responses reflected the emphasis put on intellectualism in the French context. M Pinson’s talents were particularly appreciated, his pupils liked *“La façon qu’il explique les exercices”*, they appreciated doing exercises as a class with him, *“Il nous aide énormément en faisant l’exercice ensemble”*, and they valued individual pupil work at the board in front of the class, *“Il nous explique bien au tableau, quand on comprend pas il nous amène au tableau, il nous aide”*. Because the French pupils perceived their teacher to have this instrumental role in their learning and their eventual adult life it was

vitaly important that teachers should concentrate on their pupils and help them. The worst fear for many of the pupils in Mme Chagnon's class was that she would ignore them. What they preferred was, "*Quand elle s'occupe de nous*", "*Quand elle nous laisse pas tomber*", and "*Quand elle nous surveille*". They even accepted that a teacher might have to forgo being kind in order to achieve the pupil success at school, for example, teachers should be, "*pas tout le temps gentil. Il faut pas qu'elle soit tout le temps gentille sinon on ferait des bêtises, on travaillerait pas, il faudrait redoubler*" (CM2 St Paul).

The English pupils' concept of their teacher's role was more extended, less central to the pupils' learning and it was given less status. As such the English teachers' role was intrinsically less motivating. The English teachers observed had to invest more time and effort into finding individual ways of motivating their pupils. The English pupils' responses showed that they perceived their teachers not only as teachers but also as friendly adults. There was a difference between the relative importance of teacher personality and pedagogic skills in the two countries. The English pupils focused more on their teacher's personality and intuitive skills and less on their instructional skills, "*It's like she mind reads, you do the sort of things that you like yourself*". This consideration of the English teacher as a person, an individual shows the underlying national value of individualism. Teachers not only helped English pupils in their work but were more generally seen as 'helpful', "*She's helpful, when you don't know what to do she's helpful*" (Y1 St Paul's). English pupils were less dependent upon their teachers for their learning; other adults, peers, "*I learn from my mates, my friends learn me quite a bit, more than my teacher*" (Y5/Y6 Cotswolds), and other resources had a stronger part to play, "*You look in books, to give us information*" (Y2/Y3 Cotswolds);. The English teacher was not perceived to occupy the same pivotal role in pupils' learning and he/she was given less status. For example, English pupils were more likely to be critical of their teachers, as in this definition of a teacher, "*A teacher is someone who is never really fair*" (Y5/Y6 Cotswolds), and when pupils were asked if they would like to be teachers more English pupils replied negatively; English pupils appreciating some of the difficulties of the teaching role and the amount of work it involved. French pupils were partly more positive about teachers as they held knowledge and learning in higher regard and associated these with teachers: "*Oui j'aimerais être maître, même si jamais on est maître on peut pas tout savoir, donc en même temps que faire maître on peut apprendre quelque chose qu'on ne connaît pas.*" (CM1 St Martin)

5. 5. English and French pupil concepts of the learning process

The research literature shows that English pupils have a more extended and experimental definition of learning. Their concept of learning is also more closely related

to enjoyment than it is for French pupils. Cullingford (1991) found that primary English pupils preferred 'doing' types of learning, "*Learning your tables isn't fun but doing things is*"

(p. 101), "*I like doing better than working*" (p. 157) (the situation had however changed at secondary school where Y 10 and Y11 pupils perceived learning which involved 'doing' to be inferior to more cognitive learning (Woods 1990)). Furthermore comparative findings from the QUEST project showed that 81% of English pupils thought that learning involved finding out compared to 58% of French pupils. Learning aims sometimes lacked clarity in the English context (Carré 1974) and that learning in the English context was less restricted to instruction and academic aims (Cooper 1994, Branwhite 1988). Research evidence on comparative intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of work for English and French pupils had to be treated with some caution due again to sampling considerations. Woods found teacher pupil relations and the level of 'interest' of the task was what motivated English pupils. Charlot (1992) talks about French pupil perceptions of the 'usefulness' of work, particularly in the motivation of working class pupils. However more reliably for comparative purposes, the QUEST project found that French pupils gave more emphasis to the concept of usefulness of their work. The English play or game concept of work found in this study is also identified by Woods (1990), as is a weak work ethic. Finally the more extended function accorded by English pupils to school (developing character, learning behaviour and manners and avoidance of boredom) is found by Cullingford (1985). The QUEST project findings suggest that the French construct of school is indeed more restricted to learning with 76% of English pupil agreeing with the statement 'School helps you to get on with people' compared to 58% of French pupils.

English and French pupils in this study held different concepts of the learning process and how it was related to their respective concepts of the teaching process. In the English context, reflecting national values of empiricism and individualism, learning was related to enjoyment or fun, play, thinking, and discovery. The French concept of learning, reflecting national values of intellectualism, had a more structural basis and it consisted of 'leçons' to be understood and learnt. The teaching process was perceived more as an explaining one in the French context and a telling one in the English context. French pupils made a more direct link between the learning and the teaching processes, the teacher played a more dominant role in learning

Learning did not appear to have structure in the English context. It was, as has already been seen related to the concept of fun, as this excerpt from a Y2/Y3 group interview at Cotswolds shows:

Q Why do you come to school?

Boy 1 To learn

Boy 2 To have fun

Boy 1 Learning is fun

and, “Mrs Gibbs makes us learn hard things, she does it in a sort of fun way, you know, we enjoy ourselves doing I, sometimes” Y5/Y6 Cotswolds). English pupils also thought that learning and playing were interrelated, “In the bottom classes you play, but you learn by playing, you don’t really realise that you’re learning” (Y5/Y6 Cotswolds). English pupils made frequent reference to the term ‘finding out’ as a method of learning, “She (the teacher) tells us things, we find it out and we keep it in our brains” (Y5/Y6 Cotswolds). Finding out could mean thinking, consulting reference material, consulting peers or other adults. The English characteristic of learning through ‘finding out’ made learning in the English context less dependent on the teacher. The role of the teacher in learning was perceived to be that of telling pupils things, “When teachers get INSET days they get told things, then they tell you them” (Y5/Y6 Cotswolds), “She tells us things and then we remember, hopefully” (Y5/Y6 Cotswolds). Thus the English construct of the process of learning seemed to be that the teacher chose a task that would most help pupils, she would tell them what to do (and sometimes explain and demonstrate as well), pupils would then learn by finding out and automatically retain what they had learnt. As a Y5/Y6 Cotswold boy summarised, “She gives us work, what she thinks, where we have to find it out, then we just learn”.

The French construct of the learning process was one which went hand in hand with the teaching process, the two were structured together. French CM1 pupils in different groups at St George recounted the structure of the learning process, or lesson, and the dominant role of the teacher in it. First: “Le maître nous dit de regarder l'exemple au tableau”, “Il fait des schémas des dessins au tableau pour expliquer”, “il essaie de nous expliquer., Secondly the pupils listened and learnt from the explanation, “On apprend, en écoutant d'abord”. Thirdly there was the possibility of further teacher explanation, “Quand on a pas compris on lève le doigt”, and dialogue with the teacher, “Si on comprend pas on redemande au maître de nous reexpliquer”, “On pose des questions au maître et il nous répond toujours”. Fourthly the ‘leçon’, which took the form of a statement or set of rules) was presented by the teacher, “Le maître il nous explique tout au tableau et des fois on doit écrire une leçon”. The ‘leçon’ was defined as, “Quelque chose qui nous explique quelque chose qu'on ne connaît pas”. Fifthly the newly acquired concept were practised in exercises, “Après il donne un exercice, on fait l'exercice sur le cahier, le cahier il le corrige”. Learning in the French context was thus structured around the concept of learning a ‘leçon’, “On apprend nos leçons ..., en

écoutant bien, en écrivant, en entretenant bien les cahiers, parce que sinon on comprend rien.

Connected to the emphasis on structure and method in the French learning process and diversity and experimentation in the English context was the concept of individualism and creativity in learning output. English and French pupils were asked what they thought the teacher wanted to see in their story writing or their art work (unfortunately, given the findings of the QUEST report that English pupils used more individualistic and experimental strategies in maths than French pupils, pupils had not been asked about their teachers' aims in maths work). The concept of creativity was not as strongly held by English pupils as was expected, given the teachers' discourse on individuality, for example Mrs Burton's science and technology classes in Chapter 4. For both sets of pupils effort, presentation and avoidance of errors were important. The influence of national assessment was apparent in the English context. English pupils had internalised the assessment criteria:

"In creative writing the teacher wants full stops and capital letters" (Y5/Y6 St Paul's)

"She wants to see if you can use describing words" (Y5/Y6 St Paul's)

Nevertheless there was some evidence to show that English pupils were more aware than French pupils that their teachers valued originality and individuality in learning. This was particularly true in Cotswolds school. English national values of creativity and individualism did seem to be there. Some pupils were aware that their teacher was trying to encourage originality in their work:

"She likes paintings to have something that's different from the rest" (Y5 boy Cotswolds)

"She likes your poems to be different, for you to have your own ideas. She gives you the impression that you don't have to do it like this, you can do it differently" (Y7 boy reflecting on his previous year's experience with Mrs Gibbs at Cotswolds)

Pupils in the Y2/Y3 class also understood that their teacher was looking for 'interesting' and 'exciting' pupil work.

French pupils made fewer references to creativity. In the area of story writing they were more likely to make responses which invoked learnt spelling or grammar rules and not making errors:

"On doit faire des phrases correctes" (CM2 St Martin)

"Dans une poésie il ne doit pas avoir trop de fautes" (CM2 St Martin)

"Il faut pas avoir de fautes" (CP St George)

French pupils were aware of the importance of following teacher instructions: *"Elle veut ce qu'elle dit de faire"* (CP St George), *"Il nous donne des consignes"* (CM1 St George).

In art work, the concept of good work referred to manual skills and application. Careful and complete colouring was valued:

"Il faut bien colorier dans toute la feuille, pas laisser des blancs" (CP St Paul)

"Ca doit être bien colorié, sans dépasser" (CM2 St Paul)

5. 6. English and French pupil constructs of assessment

There was some variety in the concept of assessment and its role in pupil motivation. The French context was more clear cut. Even young French pupils were accustomed to receiving both positive and negative feedback, *"Si on a une mauvaise note il y a une punition, il faut refaire les fiches, c'est embêtant"*. (CP St Martin). Negative feedback created a certain amount of personal distress, *"Je me sens mal à l'aise"* (CM2 St Martin), parental retribution, *"Les parents nous punissent, je suis enfermé dans la chambre avec la leçon à faire"*, *"On est puni, mon père me donnera une claque"* (CM1 St George), and peer group ridicule, *"Je me sens gêné devant les autres quand c'est moins que la moyenne"* (CM2 St Martin). Although some French pupils claimed that they, or a few others, were unaffected, *"Il y en a qui s'en fichent complètement."* (CM2 St Martin), it must be assumed that the majority of French pupils were motivated by negative feedback in order to avoid the painful consequences.

The English pupils' perception of assessment and its role in motivation was more diverse. Pupils were exposed to very little negative feedback in the two Cotswold classrooms. However levels of negative assessment at St Paul's were close to those recorded in the French classrooms: *"If it's badly done she throws it in the bin"* (Y1 St Paul's), *"House points are removed if the teacher is really in a mood"* (Y5/Y6 St Paul's). There were both similarities and dissimilarities between how the English pupil and the French pupils reacted to negative feedback. Like French pupils English pupils felt; *"Embarrassed"*, *"You feel like hiding your face"*, *"I feel sad"* (Y5/Y6 St Paul's). Unlike French pupils they reported negative feelings towards the teacher, *"It makes you feel like you hate the teacher"*, *"It makes you angry with the teacher"* (Y5/Y6 St Paul's), also unlike the French pupils there was less parental involvement. This would indicate that negative feedback was not as motivating in the English classrooms as the French classrooms due to the different cultural context in which it was set.

5. 7. English and French pupil constructs of the parental rôle in their learning

The comparison of English and French pupils' responses about the factors involved in motivation revealed that parents were perceived to play a more dominant role in French children's learning. Not only were French parents more likely to impose their own negative sanctions when pupil achievement was low, as above, but they were also

more likely to reward positive achievement. French pupil references to parental rewards were common, for example, when a CM1 boy in St George was asked if he was motivated by the fear of repeating a year, he replied, *“Oui, parce que nos parents nous donnent moins de cadeaux, ils seront moins sympa avec nous, le grand cadeau de Noël, eh bien on l’aura, pas”*, or, *“Maman m’offre plein d’argent quand je travaille bien”* (CP St George). Figure 16 shows the extent to which French pupils responded that they were motivated by their parents, *“Nos parents nous félicitent, des fois les maîtres. Les parents, c’est plus important pour eux”*. (CM2 St Martin).

	English pupils	French pupils
Parents	2.4%	14.8%
Career	34.9%	38.3%
Self	21.7%	20.9%
Rewards/marks	33.7% (Y1/2/3 only)	6.2%
Social	-	3.7%
Not repeat	-	14.8%
Teacher	2.4%	1.2%
Secondary school	4.8% (St Paul’s only)	-

Figure 16 Percentage of English and French pupil responses to the question “Why do you want to do well at school?”

By comparison there was some diversity in the English pupils’ perception of the parental role. It was at its most positive at St Paul’s which prepared pupils for entry to selective secondary education, *“We get rewards from our parents if we get to the selective school”* (Y5/Y6 St Paul’s) but also at its weakest in this class and the Cotswolds Y5/Y6 class, (parental reaction to poor work) *“Nothing much, they don’t tell me off”* (Cotswolds), *“Sometimes my mum doesn’t even ask”* (St Paul’s).

5. 8. English and French pupil constructs of the role of the peer group in their learning

As has been reported both English and French pupils felt embarrassed and ashamed of low achievement in front of their peer group. This was a stronger issue in France; there were more comments of the type, *“On se moque de moi pendant la récré, surtout les garçons”*, partly because knowledge of individual low pupil achievement was more public in the French classrooms than the English ones. Another reason could be that French peer groups had a more positive function in motivation. There were instances

of English peer groups actually impeding pupil motivation, for example, *“I don’t feel happy (when publicly praised by the teacher) because I feel a show off”* (Y5/Y6 St Paul’s) and *“They think I’m the teacher’s pet”* (Y5/Y6 Cotswolds) In the French context where pupils gave the concept of learning and work a higher profile, there was no evidence of peer groups having a de-motivating function.

5. 9. Conclusion to Chapter Five

The main differences which arose in the English and French pupils’ concepts of school which might affect their motivation are summarised below:

English pupils	French pupils
School has an extended function, less emphasis on learning, work, qualifications and careers.	School has a more restricted academic function, more emphasis on learning, work, qualifications, and careers.
Work is less clearly defined.	Work is less clearly defined.
Pupil control through choice.	Pupil control through effort.
Teacher role is more extended.	Teacher role is more restricted dominant and authoritarian.
Learning process is less structured, more experimental, individualism is encouraged, teacher’s role is less visible.	Learning process is structured, teacher has a more dominant role.
Positive feedback is important.	Positive and negative feedback is important.
Less parental back-up.	More parental back-up.
Peer group more de-motivating.	Peer group less de-motivating.

It is suggested that English pupils had different ways of thinking about schooling than did French pupils. They held different concepts, which arose as a result of their experience of schooling in each country. Socio-cognitive constructs thus also seem to operate at the level of individuals. Two national pupil cognitive maps or frames can now be established. The French pupil cognitive map, presented in Figure 17, sees a more restricted academic function of school where learning and work are more highly valued and are seen as the passport to adult life, where work is more clearly defined, where the learning process is more clearly structured, where assessment has a clearer function in learning, where teachers are valued for the knowledge they possess and their pedagogic

skills to transfer it to pupils, where success is measured in terms of individual effort, and where the prevailing culture is more unified and clear about the aims of education. In the English cognitive map, presented in Figure 18, school has a more extended function in pupil lives, learning is less highly valued, the distinction between work and learning, and play and enjoyment is not always so clear, the teacher has a more extended role and is not the only source of knowledge, the individual pupil is valued for his/her unique contribution and the prevailing culture is more ambiguous towards education.

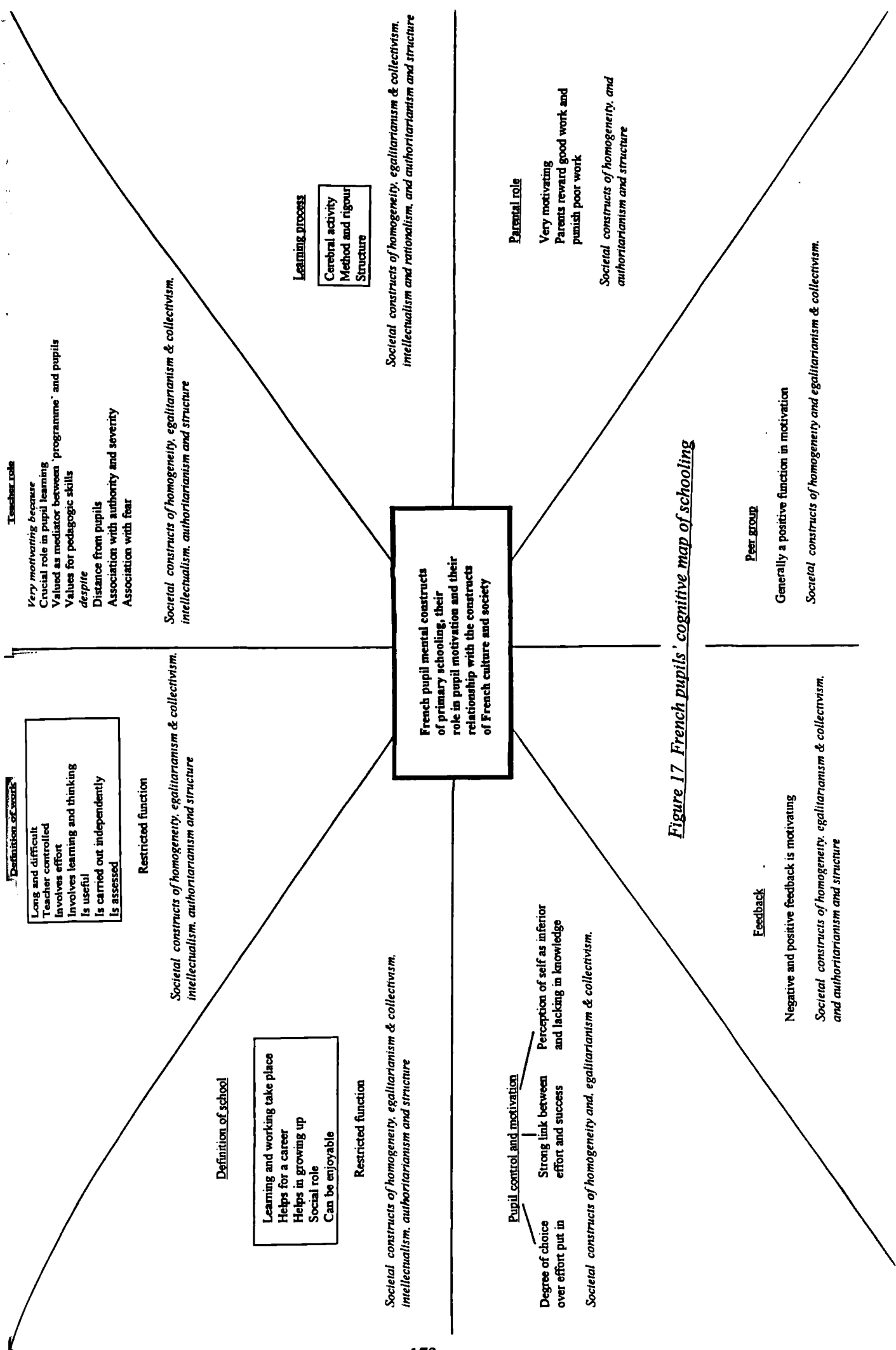


Figure 17 French pupils' cognitive map of schooling

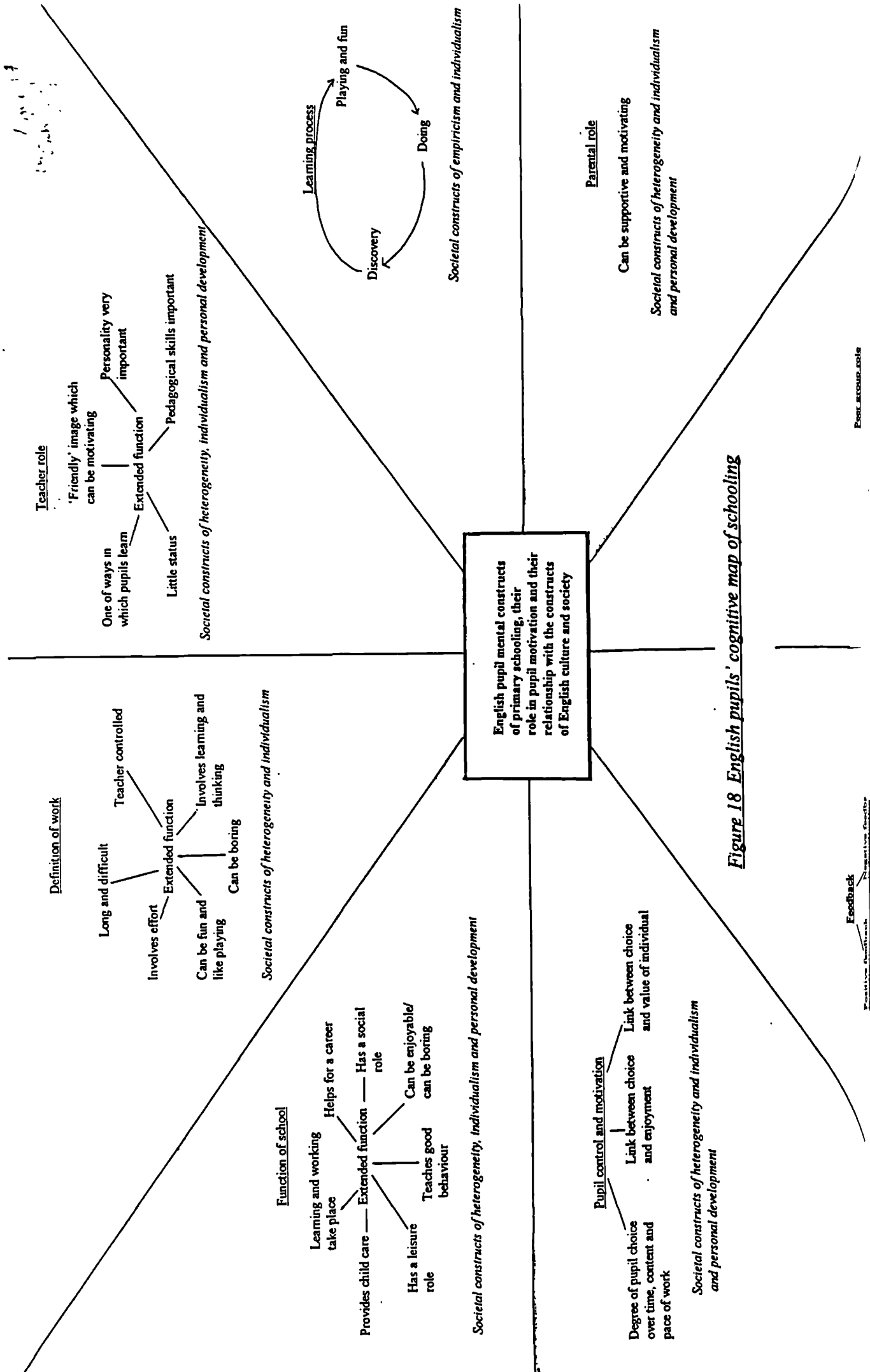


Figure 18 English pupils' cognitive map of schooling

Feedback

The cognitive maps go some way to explain how different approaches to learning can be meaningful in one context but not in another. The French pupils' understanding of the value of learning and the subsequent supporting structure and function of school, work, and teachers gives them more motivation. Furthermore French pupils attribute meaning to relatively difficult, repetitive and teacher controlled learning tasks because their cognitive map defines these as meaningful in terms of their structured and instructional type of learning. Whereas English pupils are less motivated by the learning function of school but more motivated by its extended function. English pupils attribute meaning to more open ended and loosely structured learning tasks because they define such tasks in terms of a cognitive map which values individualism, experimentation and has an extended definition of learning. The theoretical implications of the cognitive maps will be looked at in Chapter Eight.

It is argued that pupil socio-cognitive constructs affect pupil learning. What pupils thought about school - its function, what they thought about work - how they defined it, what they thought about the role of teachers, parents and peers, and what they thought about the learning process and assessment was important for their attitude to learning and thus their motivation to learn. Embedded within pupil concepts at the individual level about school, were national values such as, for example in the English context: diversity, empiricism, individualism and creativity.

To conclude Chapter Five, it has been suggested that socio-cognitive constructs, which were identified in the national context at the level of society, educational system and classroom processes, also exist at the level of national individual pupil perceptions. It is also suggested that these socio-cognitive constructs affect pupil motivation to learn and hence learning itself.

Chapter Six

A comparative analysis of the existence and the role of socio-cognitive constructs in pupil performance in language and maths

It was argued in Chapter 5 that individual pupil perceptions about school reflect the socio-cognitive constructs of the country in which they experience their schooling and that this in turn affects their attitude to learning. Chapter 5 thus explored the influence of socio-cognitive constructs on the 'input' of pupil learning. The findings from Chapter Five raise the tantalising question of whether the socio-cognitive constructs associated with any one country's national educational system could also affect the 'output' of pupil learning. Could English and French pupils' performance in the key subject areas of maths and national language be affected by the socio-cognitive constructs of their country? As stated in the introduction this line of enquiry was originally ruled out of the present study for practical reasons but it was pursued by the author as a member of the QUEST project⁴³, and more specifically in the QCA project⁴⁴. The aims of the QUEST project were to

"To examine differences in children's educational experiences, attitudes to school and learning outcomes in England and France in view of significant variations in the teaching approaches and curriculum emphases of primary schools in the two countries." (Appendix 1. 3.)

In the area of assessing learning output, the author was responsible for the selection and translation of items from English and French national assessments which take place at the end of primary schooling in the two countries⁴⁵. The author was also involved in the administration of the tests in the two countries, their assessment, analysis and dissemination of results.

The overall conclusions from the QUEST project were firstly that pupil performance reflected national curricular content. For example, English pupils performed better at a wider range of maths areas but the performance of French pupils was higher in a narrower maths range. Pupils were also found to be negatively affected by cultural unfamiliarity of test items in both language and maths. Secondly, the analysis of pupil scripts suggested a link between national educational values and pupil performance. French pupils appeared to perform better at assessment items which required pupils to follow taught methods whereas English pupils tended to perform better at items which prioritised individual thinking.

⁴³ Appendix 1. 3.

⁴⁴ Appendix 1. 2.

⁴⁵ Between 1996 and 1997, 600 English and French pupils in their last year at primary school from 16 socio-economically matched schools in the two countries, were assessed in a selection of items from both countries' national assessment and one specifically designed QUEST maths test.

The QUEST findings suggested that there were significant national qualitative differences between pupil scripts which merited closer attention. Funding was obtained from QCA in order to investigate:

“Pupil learning strategies in mathematics and language in the two countries and to examine the relationship of these to children’s educational experiences and attitudes to school.” (Appendix 1. 2.)

The QCA analysis was based on a sub sample of scripts and involved detailed analysis of pupil strategies in maths and language. It was found that some assessment areas were more significant than others. In maths, it was computation and problem solving items which revealed the most important qualitative differences between English and French pupils. In the area of language, it was story writing and reading comprehension which proved the most fruitful. The conclusions can be found in complete form in the QCA report (Planel 1998, Appendix 2. 4. They are also available in more concise form (Osborn and Planel, in Alexander, Broadfoot and Phillips 1999). The main findings are presented below and, unlike in the cited publications, the link between pupil performance and socio-cognitive constructs is made explicit.

6. 1. The existence of socio-cognitive constructs in pupil output in maths

The QUEST project’s qualitative results had already suggested the existence of the French socio-cognitive constructs of egalitarianism and national unity in pupil achievement in maths. There was less diversity in the overall French maths results than the English results. When pupil achievement was looked at in terms of school socio-economic status it was found that there was a greater spread of achievement in the English context than in the French. For example the gap in achievement levels in maths between schools in advantaged or disadvantaged areas was greater in England than it was in France. In 1996 57% of English achieved correct answers in the English maths test compared to 31% of English pupils from lower socio-economic scale schools (see Appendix 26). The figures for French pupils were 35% and 29% respectively. Similarly in the French maths test there was also a greater socio-economic gap in performance in the English context with 56% of English pupils from the higher socio-economic scale schools achieving correct answers compared to only 36% from the lower socio-economic scale of schools (Appendix 27). The French socio-economic gap was again smaller with 64% and 53% of pupils respectively achieving correct answers. Furthermore the scores for the QUEST maths investigation test in 1996 (Appendix 28) show French scores bunching around the average of a level 3 whereas the English results show greater variation as there were proportionally more English pupils achieving levels below and above level 3.

The QCA qualitative analysis of the three maths tests (two were taken from the English and French national assessments, and the third was a QUEST designed maths investigation item) showed that both the socio-cognitive constructs of empiricism and individualism were present in the English context (Planel 1998 QCA report, Appendix 1. 4.; Planel 1998 CESE Conference, Appendix 1. 6.). English pupils were found to use a more empirical and experimental approach in the area of number. They were more likely to devise and try out their own strategies (and were often unable to distinguish between efficient and non efficient methods using for example repeated addition and tallies instead of multiplication and addition algorithms). Individualism was also in evidence in the more individualist strategies which they used. These were occasionally very efficient (Appendix 29) but more often than not inefficient and unsuccessful. The range of strategies used by English pupils in computation was evidence of the presence of the English socio-cognitive construct of homogeneity. In the area of maths investigation the English constructs of homogeneity, empiricism, individualism and excellence were again present. English pupils used a greater variety of strategies. They were prepared to try out different ideas, think things out for themselves and they were freer in their self expression. There was more evidence of excellence in the English context with more pupils achieving a level 6⁴⁶. The socio-cognitive constructs of individualism and empiricism associated with the English national context were an advantage in this area of maths as they allowed English pupils to take the investigation further .

In computational items the French socio-cognitive construct of homogeneity could be seen in the similarities between the French pupils' scripts. French pupils used the same taught strategies in computation. Errors that were made fitted into a narrow range of types, unlike English errors which were much more diverse. The French socio-cognitive constructs of authoritarianism and structuralism, and intellectualism were all clearly visible in the way in which French pupils used the structure and method of standard algorithms. In the area of maths investigation the French pupils were almost handicapped by these constructs as they tended to follow a more logical or mechanical approach which was not so suitable to this area of maths.

6. 2. The existence of socio-cognitive constructs in pupil output in language

Pupil performance in reading comprehension (Planel 1998 QCA report, Appendix 1. 4.; Planel 1998 CESE Conference, Appendix 1. 6.) showed the existence of the French socio-cognitive constructs of homogeneity, and authoritarianism and structure. French pupil responses to the reading comprehension items provided some evidence that French pupils were performing less well at inferential reading because they were

⁴⁶ A level 6 is the maximum level pupils at Key Stage 2 (last year of primary school) can achieve in the English national assessments.

following a more structured and mechanistic model. There was a common pattern to their responses which fitted into a minority of types. Pupils were more likely to quote from the text, respond inappropriately in a 'Why?' 'Because..' sequence or make responses that were restatements of the original question. The English socio-cognitive constructs of heterogeneity, individualism and empiricism could be seen in the way in which English pupils tackled reading comprehension items. English pupils were found to use a more open ended and individual approach as well as use more extended knowledge and skills. This resulted in greater skill in inferential understanding.

The evidence from the English and French story writing scripts also showed strong evidence for the existence of English and French socio-cognitive constructs. The findings can be found in full in Appendix 1. 5. (Planel 1997). The French construct of authoritarianism and structure could be seen in the way in which French pupils were again more rule bound, conformist and structured in their approach to writing stories. Their story contents tended to conform to an existing Middle European 'fairy tale' structure, with a rural and historical setting, and where the central character was less likely to be the author him/herself. Great attention was paid to the structure of sentences, which tended to be short and well punctuated. The weaker stories consisted of four or five such sentences with minimal detail; and story development. The French socio-cognitive construct of authoritarianism was also in evidence during test administration. French pupils placed a high value on following instructions. They were more likely to ask, "*Est-ce que on a le droit de ...?*". English pupils were freer and more individualistic.

The English socio-cognitive constructs of individualism, creativity and excellence could be seen in the English scripts. They were more spontaneous and individualistic. They were often more imaginative (see Appendix 30) and the content was often centred around the author's own life. The main character was more likely to be ego and the setting was more frequently around ego's home (Appendix 31). There were also more examples of 'excellent' scripts. Although the QUEST quantitative results did not show a major difference between English and French pupils' performance overall the qualitative analysis showed that more English scripts could be judged to be excellent. French scripts had achieved high scores because they had matched the demands of the original marking scheme. However it is arguable whether the socio-cognitive constructs of homogeneity or heterogeneity were related to the French and the English scripts respectively, as both sets of scripts were homogenous in the sense that they were conforming to a national story writing model. The difference between English and French scripts was that the models to which they were conforming were dissimilar. The

English model showing evidence of the socio-cognitive constructs of individualism and creativity. The French model revealed values about authoritarianism and structure.

6. 3. Conclusion to Part Three

The quantitative findings from the QUEST project, and more particularly the qualitative findings from the QCA project, showed that there was indeed evidence that pupil output in learning was related to national values. The socio-cognitive constructs found in the educational systems and societies of the two countries, and the classrooms of the two countries, was also in evidence in pupils' learning. The constructs were identified in the input of pupil learning (pupils' attitude to learning) and in this section they have been shown to exist in learning output (pupil performance at maths and language). The existence of socio-cognitive constructs in English and French pupils' learning output is summarised below:

	<u>Maths</u>	<u>Language</u>
<u>English pupil scripts:</u>	Empiricism	Excellence
	Heterogeneity	Individualism
	National diversity	Creativity
	Excellence	
	Creativity	
	Individualism	
<u>French pupil scripts</u>	Homogeneity	National unity
	National unity	Authoritarianism
	Egalitarianism	Intellectualism
	Collectivism	
	Authoritarianism	
	Intellectualism	

Figure 19 Existence of national socio-cognitive constructs in English and French pupils' output in language and maths

The findings presented in Chapter 5 and 6 therefore suggest that the 'ways of thinking' that underlie national values do affect pupil learning.

Part Four

Conclusions

Chapter Seven

Substantive conclusions

7. 1. A review of socio-cognitive constructs in the national contexts and in pupil learning in England and France.

English and French education have been found to differ at all levels in terms of the underlying values of each society. It has been suggested that values are defined by 'ways of thinking' or socio-cognitive constructs, and that these exist both consciously and unconsciously at the national and individual level. Using both secondary source material and empirical study several socio-cognitive constructs have been identified and explored in the contexts of the two countries and in pupil learning. In terms of contexts, the constructs were observable in the socio-historical cultural background, teacher perceptions, national assessment systems and classroom contexts. In the area of pupil learning: they were observable in pupil input (pupil attitude to school) and pupil output (pupil performance in language and maths). Each area that was investigated functioned as a window into the world of socio-cognitive constructs in society. The identification of socio-cognitive constructs in different areas serves to triangulate their existence as a whole.

In this section the evidence for the existence of these socio-cognitive constructs will be reviewed using data from this study, which is also triangulated by other studies. The constructs are presented under the headings given in Chapter 3, which are based on the Berlaks' model of dilemmas. As explained in Chapter 3 these dilemmas are presented in pairs because they represent alternative values. English and French education make particularly interesting study in comparative education as their positions contrast in each pair of dilemmas. To recap on Chapter Three the contrasting pairs are: heterogeneity or homogeneity (which includes national diversity or national unity); individualism or collectivism; creativity or authoritarianism; empiricism or intellectualism, and excellence or egalitarianism. It is argued that it is not coincidental that a socio-cognitive construct should be an observable phenomenon at the level of the cultural context and at the level of pupil learning, but that that the two domains are related. It is held that national socio-cognitive constructs affect pupil learning.

7. 1. 1. The English socio-cognitive construct of heterogeneity and the French socio-cognitive construct of homogeneity

English and French contexts

Looking first at the socio-cognitive constructs of heterogeneity or homogeneity, there is strong evidence to suggest that they are embedded in the respective national contexts of France and England (Part Two) and that they affect pupil learning (Part Three). Heterogeneity was seen in Chapter Three, Section 3. 1. 1., to be more identifiable with English society in general and with the history and structure of the country's educational system than with the French context. Heterogeneity was also more in evidence in the English context of teacher perceptions and pedagogy (Section 3. 1. 2.). The relative degree of heterogeneity in the English school context and homogeneity in the French context was confirmed by existing empirical work in this area: more homogeneity in French teacher appointments (Beattie 1996); more homogeneity in French teachers' role perceptions (Osborn 1992); and more homogeneity in French classroom practice (Broadfoot and Osborn 1988, 1993; Sharpe 1992,a). Chapter Four, which presented this study's empirical data from the classroom observations, confirmed and extended our understanding about the relative importance of heterogeneity in the English context. It revealed more heterogeneity in the English teachers' use of a collectivist teaching approach, more heterogeneity in the importance that English teachers attributed to individualism, more heterogeneity in the English teachers' use of authoritarianism, more heterogeneity in the degree to which English teachers took on a dominant role in their pupils' learning and more heterogeneity in the English teachers' empiricist approach to learning.

Learning in England and France

The findings from Part Three on pupil learning indicated that the socio-cognitive constructs of homogeneity or heterogeneity were also observable in pupil input into learning (pupils' perceptions) and in pupil output (pupil performance in maths and language). This suggested that the socio-cognitive construct was indeed influencing pupil learning. The empirical data from the pupil perceptions showed more heterogeneity in the English pupils' perception of the function of school, more heterogeneity in their positive or negative attitude towards school, more heterogeneity and even conflict in the English pupils' construct of schoolwork. There was also more heterogeneity in the English pupils' perceptions of the degree to which they had control over their work. Heterogeneity in the English context was visible at all levels: the level of the individual pupil and his/her inner conflicts about school definitions; individuals holding more varied opinions within groups; and more heterogeneity between groups, between classes and

between schools. English pupils generally also portrayed their teachers as having more diverse roles than did the French pupils. The perceptions that English pupils held about the learning process were less clear cut and more extended. Furthermore there was more diversity between the English schools (their socio-economic status) in terms of the pupils' perceptions of their parents' role in their education. Looking at the research literature it also suggests that compared to the English context there was more homogeneity in French pupils' perceptions. The QUEST report found that there were more differences in pupil attitudes from socially advantaged and socially disadvantaged areas in England than there were between the two areas in France (Osborn 1997, pp. 13-14). English pupils from lower socio-economic zones tended to emphasise more the affective, personal and social functions of school (reflecting their teachers' values of differentiation). Heterogeneity in the national context and in pupil perceptions was linked to national diversity in the English context whereas the relative homogeneity of the French context served to reinforce national unity in France.

Part Three, Chapter 6, also argued that there was more heterogeneity in the performance of English pupils than French pupils. English pupils' assessment results showed more variation by social class. Qualitative assessment of pupil performance also showed that English pupils employed more diverse strategies in their approach to maths.

7. 1. 2. The English socio-cognitive construct of individualism and the French socio-cognitive construct of the collective.

English context

There was strong evidence to suggest the existence of an English socio-cognitive construct of individualism in the background socio-historical cultural context of English society and education, and English schools, teachers and classroom practice. Concepts such as freedom of personal conviction and individual choice were shown to have a long history in English culture. They were seen to underpin the traditionally decentralised and heterogeneous educational system of England. English teacher perspectives were also seen to reflect the national context's emphasis on a more direct link between teachers and individuals, without passing through the collective. English teachers were reported to teach according to the perceived needs of individual pupils. The personal development of the whole individual child was important to them. Empirical findings from the classroom contexts illustrated many of these concepts and showed that, despite greater heterogeneity in the English classrooms English pedagogy was more directed at individuals. English teachers valued individual pupils more for their individualism than did French teachers and they encouraged pupils to think more for themselves.

Learning in England

Despite the clarity with which the socio-cognitive construct of individualism stood out in the English context, as compared to the French, it is unfortunately difficult to claim a strong relationship from the empirical data between their existence in the context and in pupils' attitude to learning. The findings from the pupil perceptions showed surprisingly little evidence that English pupils were aware of the concept of individualism. The lack of evidence may be due to the age of the children concerned. However the performance data on pupil learning does confirm the existence of individualism as an English socio-cognitive construct. Stories written by English pupils were more varied and individualistic. English responses to reading comprehension were also more individualistic. French reading comprehension errors were easier to classify into categories. In maths the strategies used by English pupils relied more on individual solutions to problems than taught methods. The data from pupil learning output does therefore suggest that the socio-cognitive construct of individualism was affecting pupil learning.

French context

The influence of the socio-cognitive construct of the collective in French education on pupil learning is clear. The importance of the collective in French culture and education was established in Chapter Two. Durkheim's crucial contribution was pointed out. Durkheim's understanding of the important function of the role of morality in maintaining the collective will be seen to be directly relevant to pupil learning. Also very relevant is his view of the superiority of the collective over the individual, where the individual is liberated by and through his/her involvement with the collective. The section on classroom contexts showed the extent to which the concept of the collective was seen to underpin French teaching and learning. Teaching was aimed at the collective, either directly, or through an individual pupil, where an individual was defined as a unit of the collective. Learning was a shared activity which acquired individual ownership as learning progressed. The French class as a collective was encouraged to follow rules, to conform and to influence pupils' learning and behaviour. Collectivism existed in the English context but to a lesser extent. There was more diversity in the English teachers' use of the collective and the meaning of the collective was more likely to be associated with the whole school and the local community rather than the French concept of the class as a micro society. The instruction of morality tended to be channelled through the collective of the class in France and either through the collective of the school and the class in England, but also more directly through the individual pupil. This study's empirical findings of stronger collectivism in the French context and

stronger individualism in the English context is also confirmed by Osborn's (1992), Broadfoot's (1987) and Sharpe's (1992,a and b) work on English teacher particularism and French teacher universalism as well as Planel's (1998) and Osborn's (1999) findings of a more individual pupil learning context in England than in France.

Learning in France

The influence of the construct of collectivism on pupil learning can be seen firstly in the pupils' perceptions. French pupils described in Chapter Five, showed that they were more motivated towards learning and school, than were English pupils, by their understanding that it was through learning and school that they would become adults. There was an understanding that French pupils were only children, they were small and they were inferior. Learning and school were almost rites of passage which they had to pass through in order to become adults. This socio-cognitive construct of the importance of the collective, its power to liberate individuals who have previously submitted themselves to it may well help to explain French pupils' acceptance, conformity and passivity to the 'collective' which at school encompassed, dominant teachers, difficult work and a class learning context which can be punitive and humiliating. It is a good example of the effect of cultural socio-cognitive constructs on pupil learning.

The construct of collectivism in the French context was also related to the French construct of homogeneity and national unity. There was less diversity in French socio-cognitive constructs both overall and at the pupil level. This may have resulted in a greater sense of collectivity as there was more uniformity in pupils' understanding of meaning.

Another way in which the socio-cognitive construct of the collective also influenced pupils' learning was through the influence of the peer group. Again there is a link between the two constructs of collectivism and homogeneity. Because there was more likely to be more conformity in French pupil perceptions and because French pupil attitudes to school were more positive peer group attitudes to learning were more likely to support learning. There was less French negative peer group pressure. The research literature on pupil satisfaction in the two countries confirms that though English and French pupils both enjoy school French primary pupils tend to show even higher level of satisfaction (Broadfoot 2000). The research literature also backs up this study's suggestion that peer group pressure is less negative in the French context. The sub-groups identified in English primary school (Pollard 1985, Measor 1984, Harris 1994) were not seen to the same extent in the QUEST sample of French primary schools (Osborn 1997). There is however little direct evidence of the existence of a collectivist

mentality in the perceptions of pupils at this young age. Perhaps pupils at primary school are developmentally more individualistic⁴⁷?

There is some evidence from the achievement data to suggest that the construct of the collective influenced pupil learning. It has already been seen that the QUEST assessment data showed less variation, a smaller spread of achievement in the French context. This would suggest that French pupils were more likely to achieve results which were close to a collective class, year and national level, since the results were more homogenous.

7. 1. 3. The English socio-cognitive construct of creativity and the French socio-cognitive construct of authoritarianism

English context

It is difficult to disentangle the socio-cognitive construct of creativity, that is associated with the English context, from that of individualism. For what is cherished in the English context is individual creativity. As explained in Section 3. 5. the present study uses the term in the sense of individual thinking and individual expression. Although the English are stereotyped as eccentric by the French there is little long-standing evidence of creativity in English society and education. The concept is relatively new in education and is associated with the philosophy of teaching the whole child. There was little data from the research literature to show that English teachers perceived creativity to be more important than did French teachers, but this is thought to be due to absence of research in this area. The research literature on classroom contexts does show English teachers encouraging individual creativity more than French teachers. This study's empirical work in the classroom (see Section 4. 1. 2.) confirms and extends the English teacher's emphasis on pupils thinking for themselves and thinking creatively.

Learning in England

The data on the extent to which creativity exists as a socio-cognitive construct in pupil learning is somewhat paradoxical, as it was with the construct of individualism. On the one hand there was little evidence from this study of pupils' perceptions that pupils' were aware that teachers wanted them to think creatively (interestingly it was only children whose parents were artists who took this position). One explanation for this might be the priority that young children give to conformity. However on the other hand there was strong evidence from pupil scripts to show that English pupils were thinking more creatively than were French pupils, both in maths and language items. There would

⁴⁷ There is evidence of French pupil awareness of collectivism at secondary school. (Planel 1999)

thus seem to be a strong association with the degree to which the socio-cognitive construct of creativity was affecting pupil performance in learning.

French context

The importance of authority and structure in French society and the French educational system was made clear in Chapter Three. The two concepts are strongly related to homogeneity and centralisation and the concept of the collective. They are also related to the Durkheimian and French concept of children as pre-socialised and incomplete humans who almost pose a threat to the order of society and have to be broken in (Dubet 1996, p. 31). Discipline was seen to be crucial in non-secular French education because discipline represented morality and morality was what held the collective together. These Durkheimian concepts were seen in Chapter Four to underlie the French teachers' more dominant and authoritarian approach in the classroom. French teacher discourse was harsher and more negative. French teachers had a more dominant role over pupil behaviour and pupil learning. French teachers were more likely to use punishments, public humiliation and physical force. This study's findings that French teachers follow a more authoritarian model than English teachers in their control over their pupils is also in line with Sharpe's (1992,b) use of the analytical term 'catechistic teaching' in the French context, and Osborn and Broadfoot's (1992) and Osborn's (1999) conclusions about stronger teacher control and use of negative feedback in the French context. In the French context Douet (1987) looks at French teachers' physical and verbal violence as does Dubet (1996). Confirming this study's findings that teachers were not the only source of learning for English pupils, peers were seen to play an important part in English pupils' learning (Cullingford 1988, Mortimore 1988). The research literature on French pupils' perceptions also confirmed this study's argument that learning in French primary schools is more associated with a dominant teacher role. (Broadfoot 2000)

Learning in France

There is some evidence to suggest that the socio-cognitive construct of authoritarianism did indirectly affect pupil learning. Indirectly because the concepts of authoritarianism was linked to the value placed on learning in the French context. Looking at the pupil perceptions the responses first confirmed the relative authoritarianism of French teachers compared to English teachers. Secondly and more importantly the French pupil perceptions of the teacher's pivotal role in their clearly structured learning process and therefore their pivotal role in the pupils' access to adult life was fundamental to the pupils' acceptance of the teacher's position of power. French pupils wanted to 'follow' their teachers and not choose for themselves, they largely

accepted the teacher's intimidating tactics because they perceived that the teacher was on their side. By contrast English pupils saw their teachers' role as less central in what was a more diverse learning situation. The socio-cognitive constructs of authority and structure combined with the value placed on learning provided French pupils with a motivation to learn that accepted authoritarian teachers. This explains the apparent paradox of why French pupils, accustomed to authoritarian teachers, appear to be more positive about their teachers than do English pupils who are accustomed to teachers that present a more friendly image. Existing research shows that both English pupils have a positive view of their teachers (Keys 1993) as do French pupils (Institut Louis-Harris 1990) but the QUEST findings confirm that French primary pupils are even more positive towards their teachers than are English pupils (64% of French pupils strongly agreed with the statement 'I like my teacher' compare to 30% of English pupils.) There is also some evidence to show that English teachers are perceived to have a more extended role and less clear learning role than French teachers⁴⁸.

The influence of the socio-cognitive constructs of authority and structure on learning could also be seen in the empirical findings on learning, of pupil performance. In language tests French pupils' used more rule bound and structured approaches in their reading comprehension responses and their story writing. In maths French pupils used a more structured approach in computation.

7. 1. 4. The English socio-cognitive construct of empiricism and the French socio-cognitive construct of intellectualism

English and French contexts

The socio-historical cultural background showed the extent to which the child's mind is the main focus of French education. French society and schooling were seen to value the cognitive domains of intellectualism, logic, lucidity, reason and knowledge. English education was more concerned with non cognitive aims such as character development and a less cognitive and more empiricist approach to learning. The comparison of the English and French classroom contexts showed the importance of the above constructs in the teachers' approach to their teaching and their pupils' learning, Thus French teachers favoured structured lessons built around a cognitive learning step or 'leçon', which moved from simple to complex, with logic, method and rules were valued and where the emphasis was on pupil thinking. English teachers though showing more variety in their approach, used a less structured approach to their teaching, gave more emphasis to pupils finding out for themselves (using other resources than the teacher) and valued a more hands on rather than cognitive approach to learning. The existing literature

⁴⁸ 50% of French QUEST pupils agreed with the statement 'The teacher's job is just to make you learn' compared to 30% of English pupils.

confirms this study's conclusion that intellectualism is more associated with French classrooms and empiricism with English classrooms. It is also reflected in literature on textbooks in the two countries (Harries and Sutherland 1998); previous work on French teacher perceptions as transmitters of knowledge (Broadfoot and Osborn 1988); and the relative presence of structure in the teaching process in France compared to discovery methods in England (Sharpe, 1992,b; Vincent, 1980, Osborn and Broadfoot 1992).

Pupils' perceptions about learning in England and France

There is a strong relationship between the existence of these socio-cognitive constructs in the cultural context and their presence in pupil learning. The pupil motivation aspect of learning showed that French pupils attributed both a more restricted learning function to school and a more career function. This was confirmed in the research literature (Hollen Lees 1994, Broadfoot 2000).

The section on pupil perceptions also showed that French pupils not only were aware of the importance of personal effort in learning they were also more clear about where to direct their effort. The distinction between working or learning was clearer to French pupils than English pupils. French pupils made a more direct link between pupil learning and teacher teaching. The structure of the teaching process and the teacher's dominant position in it was clear to them. English pupils thought that they often learnt through an experimental approach to the various tasks the teacher had set them.

The research literature on learning supports this study's argument that the English pupil construct of learning has an experimental and practical element (Cullingford 1991, Broadfoot 2000).

Pupil performance in learning in England and France

It is difficult to relate the socio-cognitive constructs of intellectualism and empiricism to the respective performance of French and English pupils in maths and language as the national assessment tests were not designed for this task. Nevertheless there is some evidence that English pupils did have a more experimental approach to maths in that they performed better at items which were more visual and 'hands on'⁴⁹. Also there was some evidence that more English pupils were using a strategy of trial and error. The incidence of French scripts that followed a structured, methodical and rule based approach to maths is a further illustration of the effect of the construct of

⁴⁹In the QUEST 1996 project, out of a sample of 190 English pupils and 210 French pupils, 48% of English pupils achieved correct answers in visual items compared to 37% of French pupils in French national assessment items. Maths test items from the English national assessments showed the same trend: 59% of English pupil achieved correct answers in visual items compared to 33% of French pupils.

intellectualism on learning, and of its complex relationship with homogeneity, collectivism and authoritarianism.

7. 1. 5. The English socio-cognitive construct of excellence and the French socio-cognitive construct of egalitarianism.

English context

As with the socio-cognitive construct of creativity, the construct of excellence is strongly connected with individualism. The review of the socio-historical context of English society and education showed that it was individual institutions, teachers and pupils whose excellence was cherished. Section 3. 3. showed how excellence was also linked to heterogeneity in English society and education. It is, and was, the diversity of the system which encouraged the concept of excellence. The research literature on education also showed that English teachers required excellence for their pupils but that they defined this in terms of what the individual pupil was deemed to be capable of. Thus what was excellent for one pupil might be average for another. The empirical part of this study on classroom contexts confirmed previous findings that English teachers favour individual excellence and that they pursue this through the pedagogy of differentiation.

Learning in England

The data on the existence of the socio-cognitive construct of excellence in learning is incomplete. There is little data from pupil perceptions to suggest that it exists more in England than it does in France. The reasons for this are that it was not an area that was built into the original research instrument. The construct arose as a consequence of later analysis. It is an area which would benefit from further progressive focusing. However the data does show, at the level of pupil performance, that English pupils were affected by this construct in their learning. The existence of more 'excellent' English stories and more English level 6s in the maths investigation showed the effect of differentiation and the underlying construct of excellence.

French context

Turning to the socio-cognitive construct of egalitarianism, which was found to be associated with the French context, it is more difficult to posit a close relationship between this socio-cognitive construct and pupil learning. Egalitarianism was seen in the socio-historical cultural background to be held as an ideal in French education, it was an observable characteristic in successive government statements and reforms, in the structure of the primary school and in teacher perceptions. Some of the empirical data from the classroom contexts (Chapter Four) confirmed this characteristic. For example,

the French teachers' approach to teaching the class as a collective with common aims and achievement levels for all pupils was an observable instance of the concept of egalitarianism. However some of the more negative French teacher discourse in Chapter Four aimed at lower achieving pupils also showed that in practice some pupils were not treated as equally as others. Thus teacher practice did not always reflect the national socio-cognitive construct of egalitarianism. There was inconsistency in the cultural context. This may be because we are dealing with an 'ideal type', which is not always present in reality. Pressures too, such as the social class origin of teachers and their perception of professional accountability may be playing a role.

Learning in France

There was evidence to show that the socio-cognitive construct of egalitarianism was present at the level of pupil learning in pupil socio-cognitive constructs and in pupil performance. The link between the presence of the construct in the context and its presence in pupil learning was not always clear, perhaps because of inconsistencies in the context. One way in which the context may have affected pupil motivation and learning is in area of pupil attribution of success. Following attribution theory and the role played by pupil control over effort rather than ability in motivation and learning (Weiner 1984), as described in Section 1.3., this study's findings suggested that French pupils felt that they were more equal than English pupils in that they attributed success at school to individual effort rather than to innate ability. The French pupils' concept of success in learning was less limited by an innate and unequal ceiling of ability. Evidence from the research literature about pupil control in the two countries to support this finding was however sometimes inconclusive (Cooper 1994; Branwhite 1998; Cullingford 1991; Robinson 1989, 1990, 1992; Charlot 1992).

There is further evidence that the socio-cognitive construct of effort and egalitarianism dominate the French learning situation from teacher perceptions. One class teacher in this study declared, "*Il y en a très peu qui ne sont pas capables*"; and an English and a French teacher in this study observed of the same pupil, "*Elle travaille bien*", "*She's bright*". Outside of this study a headteacher was quoted, "*Je montre les élèves les plantes dans la cour, et je leur fait remarquer que même si je les arrose toutes de la même manière, certaines fleurissent plus vite que d'autres; toutes fleuriront. Et tous les élèves réussiront, même si certains doivent y mettre plus de temps*" (Le Monde de l'Education 1995 p. 50).

To what extent did the French socio-cognitive construct of egalitarianism affect French pupil achievement in learning? It is clearly not the case that pupil achievement in France is unaffected by social class as the result of the existence of the socio-cognitive

construct of egalitarianism in French education! There is an abundance of research literature testifying to inequality in French education, (Duru-Bellat 1993, Euriat 1995, Louis-Etxeto 1998). Nevertheless this study argues that the socio-cognitive construct may have had some influence, in that there is arguably more inequality in the English system than in the French system. The QUEST assessment results, particularly in mathematics, indicated that working class French pupils were falling less behind middle class pupils than was the case in the English context. The research literature supports this suggestion. Hollen Lees (1994) attributes the wider spread of English and French pupils' maths performance in the 1992 IAEP survey (International Assessment of Educational Progress) to different learning cultures.

Conclusion to 7.1.

The consistency with which socio-cognitive constructs have been identified at the national context and in pupil learning is significant. The presence of socio-cognitive constructs in national contexts and in pupil learning is set out in Figure 20. There is some lack of consistency in the extent to which these constructs were found in the learning data on pupil perceptions. However, this was related to the developmental age of the children concerned. Recapitulating on Chapter One it is argued that socio-cognitive constructs are held consciously or unconsciously by social actors and by the 'collective'. It is suggested that they underlie what are generally referred to as values. This thesis has shown the extent to which socio-cognitive constructs exist in two national contexts and in pupil learning.

	Context		Learning	
	Socio-cultural historical background, schools, national assessment systems ¹ and teacher perceptions	Classroom contexts	Pupil perceptions	Pupil performance
English socio-cognitive construct of heterogeneity	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
English socio-cognitive construct of individualism	Strong	Strong	<i>Weak</i>	Strong
English socio-cognitive construct of individual creativity	Strong	Strong	<i>Weak</i>	Strong
English socio-cognitive construct of individual excellence	Strong	Strong	<i>Weak</i>	Strong
English socio-cognitive construct of empiricism	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
French socio-cognitive construct of homogeneity	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
French socio-cognitive construct of egalitarianism	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
French socio-cognitive construct of authoritarianism	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
French socio-cognitive construct of collectivism	Strong	Strong	<i>Weak</i>	Strong
French socio-cognitive construct of rationalism and intellectualism	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong

Figure 20 Presence of English and French socio-cognitive constructs in the national contexts and in pupil learning

¹ See Appendix 2. 3. (Planel 2000) for an analysis of English and French national assessments

When the contexts of the two countries and pupil learning are taken together as a whole, a web of socio-cognitive cognitive constructs can be defined for each country. This is summarised in Figures 21 and 22 below:

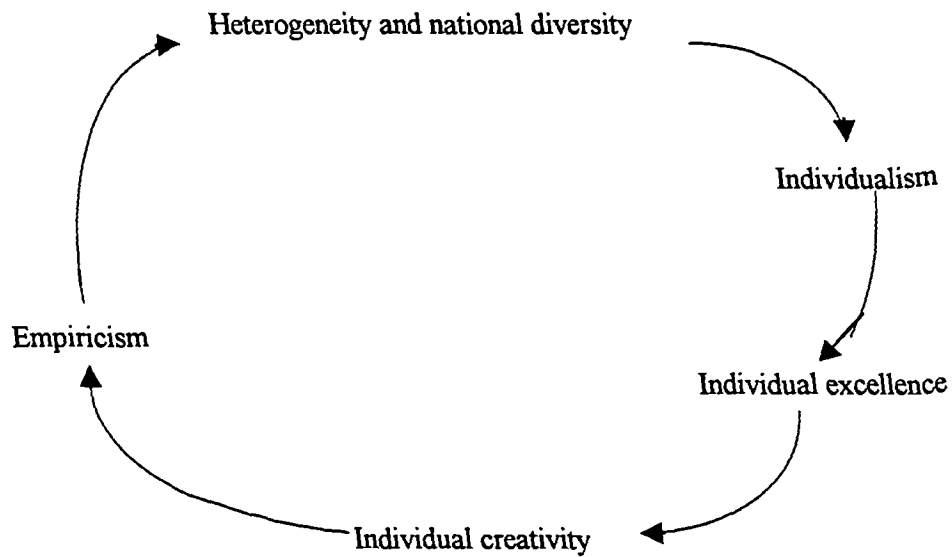


Figure 21 English socio-cognitive constructs in education

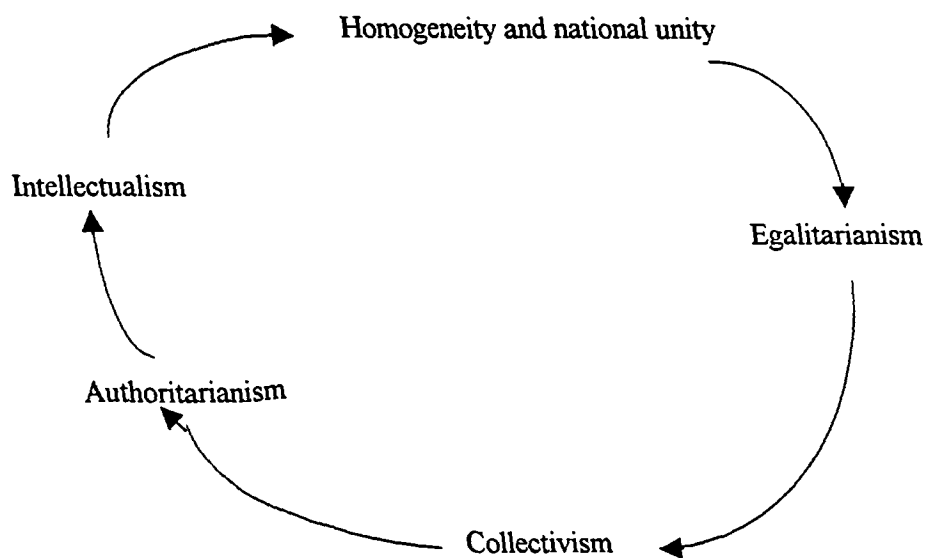


Figure 22 French socio-cognitive constructs in education

It is argued that the above models indicate that national context, defined in terms of 'ways of thinking' or socio-cognitive constructs, do affect pupil learning. The identification of the above socio-cognitive constructs helps to explain both **how** and **why** culture can affect learning.

7. 2. Discussion

This study's findings have important implication for methodology, the relationship between teaching and learning and comparative education.

Methodology

The value of small scale ethnographic research in answering questions of the 'Why?' and 'How?' type has been demonstrated. The underlying but fundamental differences between English and French education have been identified and explored. Because the empirical research looked in depth at a small sample it was possible to look at the underlying values which exist in national educational systems and classrooms (and which are held by teachers) and within a particular country. The exploration of social facts through multiple perspectives and sources of data, as presented overall in Figure 22, has been demonstrated. The value of triangulating qualitative data with the quantitative data of existing research has also been seen. The inherent theory problems associated with the method of ethnographic research of subjectivity, sampling and generalisability have been balanced by continual reference to other studies in the research literature. Furthermore, significant steps into the domain of qualitative assessment and its relationship with quantitative assessment were made in the separate empirical study funded by QCA into English and French pupil performance in language and maths.

Teaching and learning in England and France

At the descriptive level, this study has extended existing empirical understanding of English and French classrooms. As an ethnography it has been able to build upon Sharpe's work and it has probed classroom issues raised by Broadfoot and Osborn's more quantitative approach, in order to further our understanding of the teaching and learning process in English and French primary schools. This increased understanding is not however limited to English and French classrooms but by comparing the two the present study's findings have consequences for our understanding of teaching and learning in general. Thus the qualitative differences between whole class teaching in the two countries have been described. The particular features of French whole class teaching, the common structure, the use of individuals as units of the whole in the process of developing shared learning into the individual context, and the dominant scaffolding role of the teacher may inform our understanding of whole class teaching in general. As well

as throwing more light on the concept of whole class teaching this study has also increased our understanding of the relative definition of an 'individual' in the two classroom contexts and has shown how the French teachers make use of the collective in their teaching. The relative clarity of the learning approach in the French classrooms has been demonstrated. This was ascribed to the common teaching structure, the explicitly stated aims of each lesson, the sequencing of learning, the importance of a given method and the importance of rules and logic. Another contribution has been to indicate the importance of the more cognitive or intellectual approach of the French context. These findings may help our understanding of the relative advantages and disadvantages of teaching and learning in the two countries. Finally, looking at the teacher's role in motivation when set in a given cultural context, important questions have been raised about the role of positive and negative feed back.

Culture and learning

In the current climate of international comparisons of educational achievement, and the ensuing search for reasons to explain the differences in levels of educational performance between countries of comparable economic performance there is growing interest in the effect of the background national culture on pupil learning. For example the International School Effectiveness Research Project was set up in 1990 to look at the complex area of the interaction between national culture and educational systems. There is a growing body of knowledge dating back to the 1960s in this field. Henry (1966) showed how learning in American schools was connected to the two American values of competition and what he termed 'instant release and fun'. Spiro (1966) outlined values of co-operation and intellectual curiosity in the Israeli learning context. Dumont and Wax (1971) identified Cherokee values of restraint, caution and non-conflict in pupil opposition to American schooling (which American teachers had misinterpreted as docility), in their explanation of poor Cherokee pupil school performance. Bronfenbrenner (1974) identified homogenous cultural values in Soviet education. Chan (1979) looked at values of 'social self' in the Chinese learning context. Lee Wing On (1996); Marton et al (1996); Salili (1996) and Domino (1987) outlined Chinese values of self determination, intrinsic and achievement motivation, and a 'deep approach' to learning. Even international marketing strategists are aware that children's learning and playing is influenced by national culture, as the following quotation shows:

"Standards vary from country to country. In Germany, for example, children can be challenged hard (by Meccano), whereas in the US they give up with hardly a struggle. In Japan ... the children believe they have to build all the models as quickly as possible."
(Bowen, 1996, p. 5)

This study has shown that underlying national culture plays a significant role in children's learning. The findings suggest that a similar approach could be used to determine the effect of ethnic, regional, social class, gender and other cultures in children's learning. An explanation has been given for why English and French teachers teach in their different ways and how English and French pupils learn in their different ways. Pedagogy which might be judged inappropriate and ineffective in one context can be mediated by another context to be more effective and appropriate than was the case in the first context. For example rote learning is considered a poor or surface approach to learning in Anglo Saxon countries but functions as a deep strategy in Chinese culture:

"If the point of learning is to understand and repetition is seen as a way of coming to understand, then repetition becomes a deep strategy"..... "The central thrust of the systems theory; we should interpret a piece of action in terms of the system of which it is part" (Biggs, 1996, p. 54)

In depth qualitative studies in the field of comparative education can show that the meaning and effectiveness of teaching styles in the classroom can depend upon the cultural context.

Culture is a factor in learning which non comparative educationalists can all too easily ignore. In the search to improve pupil performance it is important to understand that educational innovations whether 'borrowed' from other countries, revised versions of past practices or genuinely new innovations, have to function against a context. The effect of the context cannot be discounted. In the same way as light is refracted through water so educational innovations can be altered by the context as they pass through the system; through schools, teachers and pupils (Pollard 1994). Understanding the context and its salient socio-cognitive constructs allows not only greater understanding of current schooling but it might enable predictions to be made about the possible effects of introducing change into the educational system. Taking as an example Japanese ideas about introducing measures into their system of education with the aim of producing students who think more independently and creatively, the conclusions of this study that these two characteristics are contextually related, might suggest that traditional Japanese socio-cognitive constructs would act as a 'brake' or would modify the original intentions of the innovation.

The conclusions presented here are also relevant to teacher mobility. They help to explain why national foreign language teachers often experience difficulty in teaching their language in a different national context. The socio-cognitive constructs which teachers consciously or unconsciously hold may come into conflict with the constructs held in their new national context. The period of learning and adjustment which both the teachers and their pupils must go through could perhaps be shortened by improving

teacher understanding through prior training about the relevant national contexts and their prevailing socio-cognitive constructs.

The definition of culture as symbolic group identity used in this thesis (see Section 1.2) encompasses not only national culture but ethnic social and gender culture. This study argues that in the same way as it has identified English and French socio-cognitive constructs so the socio-cognitive constructs of social class ethnicity and gender could be identified. Bernstein (1996) showed the existence of social class linguistic codes. Language, as this study has argued, is an aspect of the cognitive phenomena that are culture, so that future research might try to go further than linguistic differences, and further than existing educational research on inequality, by trying to identify the socio-cognitive constructs which define the identity of social class, ethnic and gender groups. There are tantalising glimpses that these socio-cognitive constructs do exist. Much of the literature on pupil perceptions reported in this study has indicated social class as well as national differences. There were suggestions from the QUEST data on pupils' story writing of pupils conforming to social class models of writing as well as conforming to national context models. It is suggested that future research might draw up contextual socio-cognitive constructs which relate to the culture, the identity, of social groups by social class, ethnicity, gender, religion or region. It is argued that the increased understanding that would come from such research could improve pupil learning. Taking as an example the problems of multiculturalism and unequal pupil performance by ethnic group, inequality could be lessened by improving both teacher and pupil understanding of the socio-cognitive constructs associated with different cultures:

“Teachers need to understand their students' conceptions of learning and how they can facilitate conceptual change” (Watkins and Biggs 1996, p. 6)

Greater teacher overt understanding of the socio-cognitive constructs of his/her own national educational context as well as improving his/her understanding of their pupils' frames of reference might enhance ethnic group pupil performance.

Conclusion to 7. 2.

In conclusion, by looking in depth at teaching and learning in England and in France, this study has increased our understanding of the relationship between teaching and learning in general. Teaching and learning do not take place in a vacuum, they take place in a cultural context. Teachers are a product of their cultural context. Pedagogy is made meaningful by its contextual setting. Pupils interpret their experiences in the classroom according to the cultural context around them and learning is maximised when school and home contexts share the same cognitive constructs. It is hoped that a practical

contribution has been made to our understudying of the extent of the importance which the cultural context has on learning.

Chapter eight

The theory of socio-cognitive constructionism

It was concluded in Chapter Seven that English and French education were underpinned by national values. What distinguished English education from French education was that values of heterogeneity and national diversity, individualism, individual creativity, individual excellence and empiricism were more in evidence in English education than they were in French education. In contrast French education was defined by the underlying values of homogeneity, egalitarianism, collectivism, authoritarianism and intellectualism. It was suggested that since the same national values were identified not only at the level of context but also at the level of pupil learning in each country, that the former was affecting the latter. An important part of the thesis has also been that values are made up of conscious and unconscious 'ways of thinking'. As Section 1. 4. had suggested, what is needed is a theory which belongs to social constructionism but gives priority to the cognitive domain; a theory which would explain how culture could affect learning. The aim of this chapter is to outline such a theory.

8. 1. The antecedents of socio-cognitive constructionism

Returning to where Section 1. 4. on social constructionism left off, what are the rootstocks onto which a theory of socio-cognitive constructionism could be grafted? Firstly, the concept that culture can be defined in terms of cognitive phenomena is not a new one. In much of the literature from sociology and anthropology, starting from Durkheim's '*penser en commun*', '*system of ideas*', '*une constitution mentale*', cognition or cognitive constructs were included in the definition of culture. Reference was made to '*la pensée*' in structural anthropology; Bourdieu's '*master patterns*'; Bernstein's '*mental structures*'; Bruner's '*modes of thought*'. Jones (1988, p. 179) refers to a distinctive "*Englishness of thought*". Sometimes, again proceeding from the socio-cultural angle, an explicit link has been made between culture (in the sense of different ways of thinking) and learning. Bernstein, Bourdieu and Bruner all explored the idea that the cognitive structures acquired through socialisation and education could affect children's learning: Bernstein and Bourdieu explored theories of cultural reproduction where the type of cognitive culture in question was one of social class. Bruner, coming from a more psychological tradition also looked at how culture affected learning. Bruner's belief in a cognitive definition of culture was summarised in his quotation from Shore (1966). Bernstein, Bourdieu and Bruner all worked through these two steps of acknowledging a cognitive definition of culture and seeing that there was a relationship between culture

and learning. However the direct connection between cognitive cultural values and learning was only rarely made and where it was made it was not emphasised. An example can be found in Bernstein's work (1990, p. 76) where he was exploring the relationship between visible pedagogies and socio-cognitive constructs:

"A visible pedagogy is likely to distribute different forms of consciousness according to the social class origins of acquirers."

The link between cognitive cultural values and learning was not the main preoccupation of Bernstein, Bourdieu or Bruner but the seeds of a new theory were there.

Social and cultural psychology also show that this study's position about the cultural relativity of ways of thinking is not a new one. It was acknowledged in the research literature of cognitive psychology (Section 1. 3.), but not explored, that 'schemata' had to vary from one culture to another. Moreover cognitive anthropology which regarded the mind as a classifying machine (D'Andrade 1995) did examine cultural differences in systems of classification. What neither cognitive anthropology nor cognitive science did then do was to look at how different systems of classification might affect learning. It was again outside of their interests and fields, but once more there were the beginnings of an embryonic theory. The literature has thus shown two strands of thinking about how the mind works and how cultural values, which are cognitive in origin, might affect children's learning. Thus the disciplines of psychology and anthropology were starting to share common ground. What is needed is to find one theory that connects the two strands. A tantalising move in the right direction started to occur when Bernstein (Bernstein, 1975, Introduction) and the anthropologist Mary Douglas worked together. A connection was made between the more cognitive field of anthropology and that of education, the beginnings perhaps of an explicit link between cognitive cultural values and learning. Bernstein used anthropological concepts of classification, the strength of boundaries between categories and the danger areas of unclear classification in his development of classification and framing in education. His main concern however was with relations of power and so the link between the two disciplines was left dormant.

The connection between cognitive cultural values and learning is also to be found in cross cultural research in the area of pupil performance (Cumming 1996, p. 168). Pupil performance and culture have also been linked by Kaplan (1966 p. 1) who provided the term contrastive rhetoric to describe the cultural differences in students' written compositions. Takala (1982 p. 324-325), Bickner and Peyasantiwong (1988), Indrasuta (1988), Kachan (1988), Purves (1988 p. 12) and Vahäpassi (1988) have extended the field.

8. 2. Socio-cognitive constructionism

The basic element - a socio-cognitive construct

As indicated in Chapter One, a theory which sets out to explain how cultural values affect learning, needs to bring together the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, psychology and the field of comparative education. Both culture and learning are seen to be affected by cognition so that what is required is a theoretical building block on which a socio-cultural cognitive theory can be constructed. A key concept is needed to describe cultural values which are cognitive in origin. A concept which is thus a common denominator of context and learning. It is for this reason that the concept of socio-cognitive constructs is proposed. The term construct is used because it reinforces the cognitive emphasis of the theory. It conveys the notion that ideas are constructed or classified into systems or maps. Thus 'construct' relates to classification in anthropology and frames in cognitive anthropology and ideas about learning in education. The term 'construct' is also a linguistic reminder that the theory follows the perspective of social constructionism. The term socio-cognitive is used because socio-cognitive constructs are cognitive and social in origin. Constructs are social in that firstly their external boundaries and internal content are contextually dependent. Secondly they develop through social interaction. Socio-cognitive constructs are not self contained units, they overlap with other constructs to form complex networks. Thus the theory of socio-cognitive constructionism rests upon the key element of a socio-cognitive construct. This is defined as a cultural value which is cognitive in origin.

The location of socio-cognitive constructs

Socio-cognitive constructs exist at two levels, firstly at the group level (the national group in this study, but they also exist at the level of religious, social class, ethnic, gender, etc., group levels). National values are the expression of societal socio-cognitive constructs. Societies do not 'think', but they have values or 'ways of thinking' which are associated with them. Socio-cognitive constructs form part of the 'conscience collective'. It is suggested that education provides particular insight into the existence of constructs at the level of society and their effect upon individual socio-cognitive constructs, as it is the institution which is closest to the identity of a country. However it is expected that a similar comparative analysis could have been carried out on, for example, the national health systems, the legal systems, town planning etc. of the two countries, with similar results. It is suggested that the English and French societal constructs, which have been identified, underpin, to a greater or lesser extent, all aspects of society.

Secondly socio-cognitive constructs exist consciously or unconsciously at the level of individuals. The English and French pupil cognitive maps of their primary schooling (Figures 17 and 18) are an example of a network of constructs at the individual level (although the interrelations between constructs are not expressed). These constructs are related to the 'schemata', 'scripts', 'plans' and 'frames' of cognitive anthropology, the kinship diagrams of social anthropology and the classificatory schemes of anthropology. These all represent attempts to portray how informants think about the worlds in which they live and how one concept is related to another. The study argues that the principles behind cultural definitions of for example: how a stool is defined as different from a chair; how a mother's brother is seen as different from a father's brother in a matrilineal decent system; of how the constructs of people: self, sister, cousin, neighbour, stranger can be paralleled by classifications of the animal world: self, pet livestock, game wild animals and have linguistic equivalents (Leach 1964); and of how teachers, school work, learning and school itself are defined differently in England and France, are instances of the same phenomenon. Individuals in society classify what they see around them according to their social experiences and their needs and priorities.

Socio-cognitive constructs and social action

Another key element in socio-cognitive constructionism is the notion that 'ways of thinking' or cognitive classifications, affect social action. It has already been seen that socio-cognitive constructs arise out of social action but it is also maintained that they affect social action. At the level of society or national culture, the particular socio-cognitive constructs that are associated with that society and the particular criteria that are used by that society to classify ideas into constructs, help to determine how people behave. To illustrate this with a hypothetical example, a tomato may fit into the construct of a fruit in one European culture but that of a vegetable in another European country. Tomatoes might be eaten as an entrée in one society because they are thought to be vegetables, but as a dessert in another society, where they fit into the socio-cognitive construct of fruit. In other words how a tomato is classified in society determines to some extent how people behave towards it. A historical example of how cognitive constructs can affect social action in the Nazi treatment of Jews, gypsies and Russians in the Second World War. The actions carried out against them was made possible as a result of their cognitive classification in Nazi ideology as 'non-human'.

Socio-cognitive constructs and identity

Ultimately, national socio-cognitive constructs define the identity of a society or culture. Socio-cognitive constructs serve to define a group in terms of the fact that members of that group think differently from another group. For example, what Muslims think about pork (and the surface manifestation of how they behave towards pork) is one of the ways in which Muslims distinguish themselves from Christians. Thus the term 'culture' refers to how one group of people thinks differently from another, their socio-cognitive constructs define their group's identity (their culture). The similarities found between pupils in the national contexts of England and France stem from the socio-cognitive constructs associated with the national context, which the pupils have internalised in their social interactions in and out of school. The socio-cognitive constructs held by English or French pupils give them their national identity. At the level of individuals, multiculturalism is thus the acquisition of socio-cognitive constructs from several groups or cultures and the ability of individuals to switch correctly between contexts.

8. 3. Socio-cognitive constructionism, socialisation and education

It is argued that a society is defined by its socio-cognitive constructs and that these influence the constructs of individual pupils, and ultimately pupil performance in learning. Using a model derived from Bronfenbrenner (1979) the sources of influence surrounding individual pupils can be represented in the following diagram:

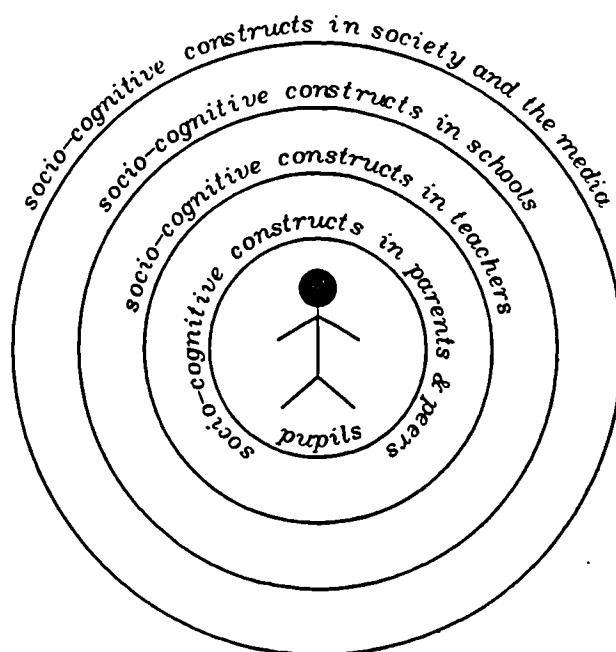


Figure 23 Layers of socially embedded constructs influencing pupils' individual formation of socio-cognitive constructs

Pre-socialised young children use classificatory schemes or cognitive constructs that may be highly individualistic as they create their own schemes (for example, a four year old was heard to classify a bishop's mitre as a 'party hat' as it fitted into her cognitive construct of the classification of hats). Socialisation is seen as the process through which individuals negotiate and acquire the socio-cognitive constructs of their society (and in the process gain a national identity).

8. 4. Socio-cognitive constructionism and pupil learning

How can the concept of a socio-cognitive construct explain the effect that culture has on learning?

Socio-cognitive constructionism and pedagogy

The degree to which styles of pedagogy are meaningful and efficient depends on how pupils interpret them. A child entering school is equipped with socio-cognitive constructs and the degree to which the learning situation which he meets 'fits' and can be made meaningful, depends to a large extent on the match between his/her socio-cognitive constructs and those of the school (as well as his/her own particular adaptability). Pupils' socio-cognitive constructs of school affect learning as they give meaning to school situations and tasks and motivate pupils to learn in different situations; situations, which observers with a different set of socio-cognitive constructs, might find lacking in meaning. Problems arise when pupil subcultural frames related to social class, ethnic group, religion, gender or regional area differ markedly from the 'mainstream' socio-cognitive constructs.

Socio-cognitive constructionism and the definition of learning

When learning takes place and a new concept or skill is acquired its meaning will be judged according to existing frames or socio-cognitive constructs. The more a new concept is meaningful in terms of existing frames, the more easily it will be understood and retained. As pupils learn, constructs operate as groups into which ideas are classified. When new ideas are acquired they slot into pre-existing constructs, constructs may be altered or a new construct may be created. It is in this way that culture affects learning as the societal constructs set the frames into which learning has to fit. Before attending school, and as pupils, children develop their classification of school and learning from their encounters with school, teachers, peers, parents, other adults, and the media.

Socio-cognitive constructionism and the process of learning

In school, and in the classroom in particular, teacher and pupil exchanges serve to define, extend, redefine, etc. pupil socio-cognitive constructs. For example, during the process of teaching, learning and assessment English primary pupils learn the English 'story' about learning: that everybody is different, that some people are good at some things, and that other people are good at other things. They learn that learning is 'fun' and that it involves finding out things, that you have to pay attention and listen to the teacher, work hard and not be distracted, and give your own ideas and opinions. They learn that if you want to really succeed you must go further than the teacher asked. French primary pupils learn the French 'story' that everybody can succeed and get to the right level though some may take longer than others. They learn that learning involves doing as you are told and working hard, that learning means knowing something that you didn't know before and that in order to learn you have to pay attention and listen to the teacher, practise and learn your 'leçons', and that you will progress slowly to the next lesson until you have learnt all the lessons for that year. French pupils learn that if they really want to do well they have to get the best marks in the class and always be able to answer all the teacher's questions. At the same time, through teacher pedagogy and teacher assessment and their interrelationship with pupil learning, English and French pupils learn what is expected of them in terms of output. Pupils learn from their teachers what type of work is expected and their learning is reinforced by teacher evaluation of pupil work. English pupils learn that individual strategies are regarded positively. French pupils learn that presentation, method and following taught procedures are regarded favourably.

The above examples show how national socio-cognitive constructs are embedded in English and French teacher expectations. Socio-cognitive constructs which underlie society and teacher practice are 'hidden messages' that are transmitted through a series of teacher pupil (not excluding peer and parent) negotiations. It is in this way that they affect both pupil socio-cognitive constructs and pupil performance in learning. Figure 24 depicts some of the interaction points between pupil and teacher where pupils' understanding of socio-cognitive constructs is formed:

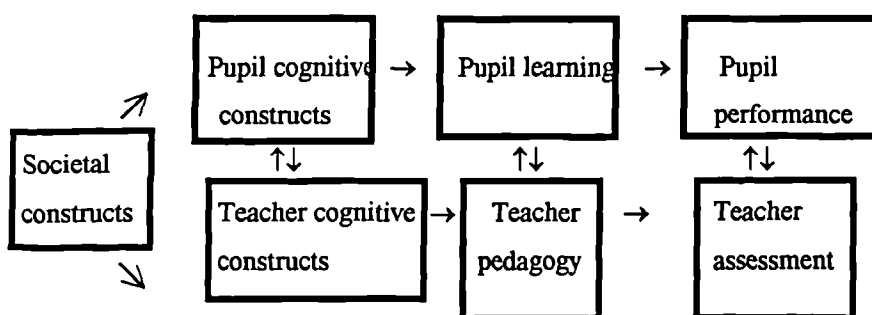


Figure 24 Interaction points in the formation of pupils' socio-cognitive constructs

It was argued that education is polyphasic, that like an iceberg, most of it is not visible, it contains 'hidden messages'. Socio-cognitive constructs underlie social interaction between teacher and pupils, as outlined in the above figure. National values, or socio-cognitive constructs, embedded in society affect the constructs of individual teachers and pupils. Teachers and pupils develop their socio-cognitive constructs as they negotiate meanings in the national context of classrooms. Pedagogy and teacher assessment also convey and reinforce socio-cognitive constructs. Pupil performance in reflecting national and teacher requirements also reflects the socio-cognitive constructs of society and culture. Thus socio-cognitive constructionism can explain both *how* and *why* pupil performance differs from one educational system to another.

Two important points remain about the above diagram. Firstly it is restricted to pupil and teacher interaction and does not take into account strategic interactions with peers and parents which also develop pupils' socio-cognitive constructs. Secondly interaction between society and individuals, and between teachers and pupils is two way. The socio-cognitive constructions embedded in society not only affect teachers but those of teachers also affect those of society. Teacher socio-cognitive constructs not only affect those of pupils, but pupils also affect teachers. This is an important point and will be returned to in section 8. 5. (socio-cognitive constructionism and change).

A Socio-cognitive constructionist model of how culture affects learning

Pupils tend to produce work which reflects societal demands, as mediated by the educational structure, schools and teachers. Using the key concept of a socio-cognitive construct, which exists at the levels of: society, educational systems, institutions, teachers and pupils, the theory can show how the constructs in embedded in society re-surface in pupil performance. This is presented diagrammatically in the figure below:

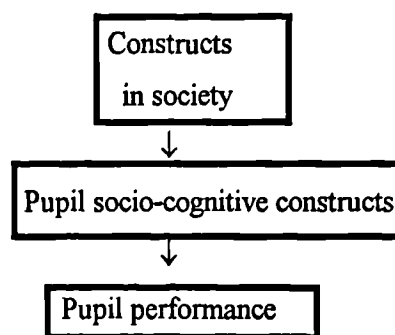


Figure 25 Socio-cognitive constructionism in pupil learning

8. 5. Socio-cognitive constructionism and change

An obvious criticism of the above model is that it is too deterministic. Individuals are not carbon copies of national ideals. Individual teachers' and pupils' socio-cognitive constructs do differ from each other. As the empirical research on which this study is based showed, there was considerable variation in the pupils' responses. Many pupils' perceptions did conform to an ideal national model, but not all. Hence the importance of the 'ideal type' in this thesis, referred to in Chapter One. The empirical work also showed that there was some diversity in pedagogy in the classroom contexts within each national context, and some overlap between the two national contexts. Furthermore the discourse between teacher and pupils in the classroom contexts revealed that there was also variation between individual pupil's 'ways of thinking' and those of their teachers. Although this study did not explicitly focus on this area, the discourse suggested that negotiation often had to take place between teacher and pupils in order to try to establish shared socio-cognitive constructs so that learning could take place. Not only are there differences at the individual level within any one society or country, but at the level of society there are overlapping subcultures each with their own sets of overlapping socio-cognitive constructs. Thus only rarely is there perfect harmony between pupil socio-cognitive constructs and those of the classroom and society.

It is important to recognise that individual socio-cognitive constructs do differ. It is also important to understand that individuals, whose 'ways of thinking' may differ, have to negotiate shared meanings in order to communicate with each other (for example, pupil to pupil, pupil to teacher, headteacher to teacher interactions). Changes to individuals' 'ways of thinking' may occur unconsciously or consciously. During the process of negotiation between individuals the qualitative differences between their socio-cognitive constructs may become explicit. Communication at a deep level implies the understanding that another person may have a different point of view or a different

way of looking at things. Even if the other person's 'way of thinking' is taken to be erroneous, the very acceptance by one individual that the 'ways of thinking' of other are different is important. Whether alterations in socio-cognitive constructs occur consciously or unconsciously there are significant implications for change.

Change occurs during social interaction when different or conflicting socio-cognitive constructs come into contact. As pointed out in Section 8. 4. social interaction is a two way process. Teachers' 'ways of thinking' affect pupils but pupils with socio-cognitive constructs from different social groups also affect teachers. Subsequent negotiations between teachers, teachers and headteachers, and headteachers and those in the hierarchy above them, are the process by which change percolates upwards through the perceptions of individuals in the educational system. Ultimately, as education reacts to the changing socio-cognitive constructs of its actors, the underlying constructs of society also undergo change. Change can also be deliberately initiated from the top down in the form of policy change. By a similar process of individual negotiation in 'ways of thinking', but in reverse direction (from the top down), change which was initiated in governmental reform at the level of society, may affect the socio-cognitive constructs of pupils. For example, since this thesis's empirical work was carried out there is some evidence to suggest that pupil socio-cognitive constructs have changed in the English context, following the introduction of the national curriculum and national assessment. There is also evidence of change from the bottom up. Heterogeneity appears to be increasing in the French educational context as the French educational system is progressively affected by the increase in the cultural heterogeneity of its pupil intake. Thus change is an implicit part of socio-cognitive constructionism because socio-cognitive constructs are negotiated in social interaction and social interaction is seen as a two way process. The figure below depicts the socio-cognitive constructionist view of change, where change can occur as the result of societal change from below and policy change from above:

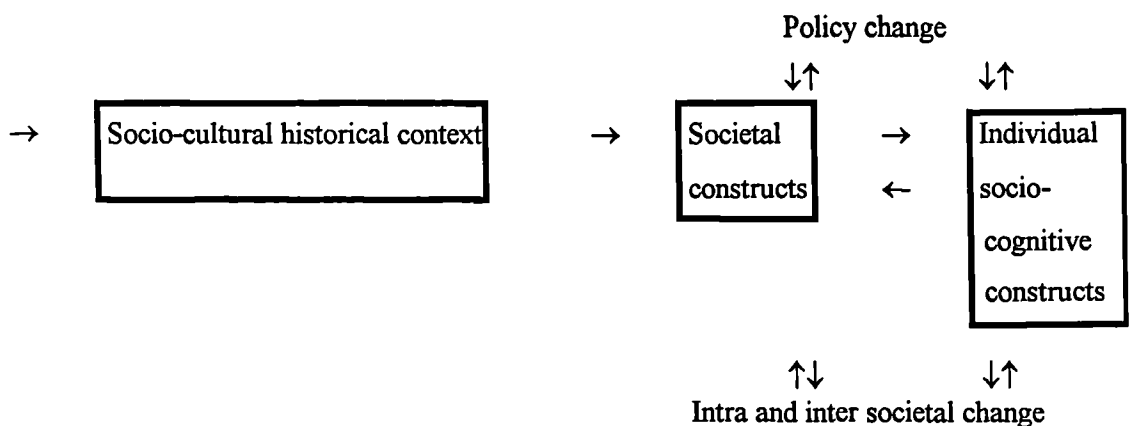


Figure 26 Socio-cognitive constructionism and change

The above model shows that social actors in educational systems have an important role to play in the process of change. Socio-cognitive constructs may come into conflict as the result of: policy change, the confrontation between intra-national socio-cognitive constructs, and confrontation between inter-national socio-cognitive constructs. It is through the interaction and negotiation of meaning that takes place between individuals holding conflicting socio-cognitive constructs that socio-cognitive constructs change, at the level of the individual and ultimately at the level of society. What this thesis has tried to establish, in emphasising the importance of context in education, is the underlying effect of the socio-cognitive constructs of the socio-cultural national background. The effect of the latter on socio-cognitive constructs of individuals can be likened to that of a pair of tinted glasses. For example, the way in which individual teachers react to policy change from above and the demands of societal change from below is coloured by their national 'ways of thinking'. Pupils introduce change into the system as they negotiate meanings between their socio-cognitive constructs and the national socio-cognitive constructs they are meeting. Pupils, like teachers, also interpret policy change according to their individual understanding of socio-cognitive constructs in the national context. The socio-cultural historical context is seen as providing the main impetus but, through the negotiation of individuals, intra and inter societal change and policy change can influence the direction of change as the latter gradually integrate into a 'newer' version of the socio-cultural historical context.

Individuals and nation states are increasingly faced with similar issues and problems as communications and a world market economy develop. Although understanding of events and their consequences are interpreted according to the socio-cultural background of individuals and countries, the move towards globalisation implies that differences between countries, and the differences between the socio-cognitive constructs of individuals may with the passage of time become less strong.

8. 6. Conclusion

This concluding chapter has attempted to start to develop a theoretical framework which would link culture and learning and provide an explanation for the findings of this study. Without denying the relevance of other models, socio-cognitive constructionism can provide a dynamic theoretical model to explain how culture, both present and past, can affect learning. It is a theory which increases our understanding of education at the individual and the national level. With the understanding that education, in terms of systems, institutions and individuals is affected by cultural values which are cognitive in origin, pupil learning could be improved. Socio-cognitive constructs in a given society

need to be understood and made explicit, as do those at the individual levels of teachers and pupils. Teachers need to be aware of their own 'ways of thinking' and those of their pupils, and of how the two might differ. Teachers' increased understanding of pupils' socio-cognitive constructs could lead to more efficient pupil learning. At the level of a national educational system, measures introduced by governments to improve pupil learning would benefit from a prior understanding of socio-cognitive constructs within society. Although the type and degree of change cannot be predicted an understanding of socio-cognitive constructs at the level of society could suggest possible directions of change. Thus the theory of socio-cognitive constructionism has implications for pupil learning. It helps to explain not only how pupils learn but how learning could be improved.

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**Two Worlds Two Minds: An ethnographic
study of primary schooling in England and France
Volume 2
Appendices**

Claire Dominique Planel

A thesis submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the
requirements of the degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Social Sciences,
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Appendices

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ENCOMPASS
Education and National Culture:
A Comparative Study of Pupil Attitudes to Secondary Schooling

Funding body:	ESRC
Amount:	£148,671
Duration:	01/01/98 to 31/12/99
Project directors:	Dr Marilyn Osborn, Professor Patricia Broadfoot, University of Bristol
Overseas collaborators:	Dr Birte Ravn, Professor Thyge Winther-Jensen, University of Copenhagen Dr Olivier Cousin, University of Bordeaux II
Project team:	Elizabeth McNess, Claire Planel, Pat Triggs
Project secretary:	Stephanie Burke

This study is the latest in a series of comparative projects which have been carried out in the Graduate School of Education. It is designed to investigate the views of pupils in the early years of secondary schooling in three very different European countries - England, France and Denmark. The focus is on the way in which pupils engage with their schooling, their teachers and their friends in order to understand the influences on their views of themselves as learners. Another aim is to investigate the extent to which pupil experience across Europe is similar or different in the light of internationalisation and globalisation.

Methods

The study builds on previous comparative work and is being undertaken by an international team of researchers, drawn from each of the three countries. An innovative method of working cross-culturally has been developed, which provides for both international and intra-national comparisons to be investigated. Data has been collected at three levels, the national policy level, the school level and the pupil level, in three phases over the course of two years. Methods of data collection include pupil questionnaires, classroom observation, semi-structured interviews with head teachers and teachers, and both individual and group interviews with pupils, together with a review of national and institutional documentation.

Potential impact of the research

We hope that the research will contribute to an understanding of the effectiveness of different approaches to school organisation and teaching, and to knowledge of how children acquire positive attitudes to learning and schooling. It has been designed to address the concerns of policy-makers about the raising of standards in schools and about behaviour, discipline and motivation to learn, and is expected to provide a basis on which informed policy choices may be made.

QCA project

**A comparative analysis of English and French pupils' attitude and performance
in mathematics and language (based on data from the QUEST project)**

Planel, C., Osborn, M., with Broadfoot, P., and Ward, B.

October 1997 - March 1998

In the light of growing international interest in raising educational standards and in comparing national levels of achievement, this study set out to carry out further analysis of data comparing primary school children's learning outcomes in mathematics and language in England and France. The overall aim of the research was to examine the interrelationship between the various factors which potentially affect learning and in particular to investigate pupil learning strategies in mathematics and language in the two countries and to examine the relationship of these to children's educational experiences and attitudes to school in view of significant variations in the teaching approaches and curriculum emphases of primary schools in the two countries.

The specific objectives of the research were as follows:

To carry out a further analysis of existing data from the ESRC funded QUEST (Quality in Experiences of Schooling Transnationally) project in order to:

- i. explore the relative strengths and weaknesses of English and French pupils in mathematics and language
- ii. link pupil performance in assessments, in terms of achievement and strategies used, to the QUEST pedagogical and attitude data
- iii. identify English and French pupil profiles, from a series of case studies in order to link features of pupil performance with the pupils' educational experiences, drawing out similarities and contrasts between France and England
- iv. consider the conclusions and possible policy implications for both the review of the English National Curriculum and the teaching and testing of language and mathematics.

6.0 QCA report conclusion

6.1 *The background*

6.1.1

The various sections of this report have described both the rationale for, and the findings, of this detailed investigation into the relative strengths and weaknesses of English and French pupils in maths and Language. Section 1 of the report described the overall goal of the QUEST project. We made clear that the project was a response both to the increasing interest in international comparisons of learning outcomes and to concerns about the overly simplistic use that has frequently been made of such performance data. This project therefore started from the assumption that, for such data to be used constructively, they need to be embedded in an understanding of the national context and the way in which this impacts on the different aspects of the learning process. *Thus the objective of the research reported here, was to examine differences in children's educational experiences, attitudes to school and learning outcomes in England and France in view of the significant variations in teaching approach and curriculum emphasis of primary schools which exist in the two countries. The research also takes into account the potentially different impact on learning of broader social factors in the two societies such as the way in which education is valued; the impact of social class and gender; the institutional traditions and underlying ideologies which have come to characterise the two systems over many decades.*

6.1.2

Using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methods including questionnaires, interviews, systematic and non-systematic classroom observation and extracts from both countries' national tests, the study revealed significant differences between French and English children in terms of pupil attitudes and motivation; their experiences in the classroom and their achievements.

6.1.3

Sections 3 and 4 report the finding that, in spite of the many pressures towards greater homogenisation of educational systems, the national culture and educational traditions of England and France continue to lead to both significant differences in pupils' *attitudes* to their own learning and the role of the school, and in their learning *outcomes*. It suggests that pedagogy needs to be understood in terms of the larger cultural context and that without such understanding, the effects, and hence the potential value, of any particular educational intervention, cannot be predicted.

6.1.4

We suggested that these significant educational differences between the two countries may be explained by the influence of cultural factors of various kinds. Firstly, the study revealed that the French education system places great value on the learning of established procedures and following rules in contrast to the English system which gives greater prominence to children thinking for themselves and developing their own solutions to problems. These differences were clearly reflected in the national tests set by each country which in turn also help to

reinforce them. Secondly, we suggested that these fundamental differences in educational ideology are reflected in differences in the curriculum and teaching approach of the two countries. Thirdly we traced the influence of these cultural differences in the pattern of strengths and weaknesses evidenced by English and French children, the latter typically performing better where the task required the application of a known procedure and the former doing better on more open-ended tasks where the procedure to be followed was less obvious. Fourthly, we linked these learning strategies and outcomes to classroom processes and pupil attitudes to education, in order to demonstrate more clearly the links between national educational goals, school and classroom factors and individual pupil learning styles.

6.1.5

In section 5 we illustrated these broad generalisations with detailed case-studies of individual children. From these it is apparent that French and English children share many features in common as might be expected. Moreover, the profiles illustrate the very significant differences in both countries between the educational experiences of 'successful' pupils and those of 'lower attainers' and how these affect their subsequent motivation, confidence and aspirations. The case-studies provide an in-depth illustration of the picture of national differences which is the main subject of this report in illuminating how, in both countries, but more particularly in England, there is a substantial number of lower achieving pupils who are not being well served by their current systems.

6.2 *The findings*

6.2.1

Perhaps the most important general finding of the study was that English pupils' achievements in these two key areas of maths and language compared favourably in many respects with their French counterparts. Their combined results on all the QUEST tests which included both English and French National Assessment items showed that English pupils were outperforming the French in many aspects of language and maths.

6.2.2

In particular, there were significant national differences in pupils' levels of confidence and their willingness to 'have a go' and to take risks. English pupils were much stronger in this respect, whereas French pupils seemed to be constrained by their desire to avoid making mistakes and to refer constantly to authority.

6.2.3

The detailed comparative analysis of the pattern of errors made, which is the focus of this report, revealed that the source of these differences in *orientation*, as well as *performance*, could be traced back through differences in pupils' classroom experiences, as well as to the particular traditions and assumptions about education of the two national cultures.

6.2.4

Furthermore, given that both sets of pupils performed better on their own national tests, this suggests the importance of curriculum validity and task familiarity as influences on pupil achievement and raises questions concerning how meaningful international 'league-tables' of national comparisons really are.

6.2.5

The findings suggest that, at the level of the individual pupil, task engagement and overall achievement may not be directly linked with particular pedagogical contexts. However, the success of French pupils in computational skills may be linked to the French teachers' dominance in the traditional *leçon*, with its emphasis on structured progression and repetition at each stage until each principle is thoroughly learned.

6.2.6

Conversely, the individualised and differentiated pedagogy of English teachers may place English pupils in a better position to develop the strengths they display in problem solving skills in maths and creativity in writing.

6.3 Discussion

6.3.1 Pedagogy

6.3.1.1

As the main body of this report makes clear in detail, English pupils' willingness and ability to tackle unfamiliar tasks would seem to reflect the well-established differences in pedagogic approach between the two countries which are further confirmed by the Quest findings (Osborn and Broadfoot, 1992; Sharpe, 1993). In France, the approach may be characterised as one of 'induction' of pupils into the established bodies of knowledge; a process that Sharpe refers to as 'catechistic'. Teachers are often 'drillers', their model of the goals of education largely a convergent one. This French emphasis on correct performance was reflected in weaker pupils not always knowing which approach to take in order to solve a particular problem as well as demonstrating a fear of getting a wrong answer by not answering questions to which they did not know the answer.

6.3.1.2

By contrast, the established pedagogic tradition in English primary schools has been one that emphasises discovery and the search on the part of each pupil for a solution to a given problem. Pupils have been encouraged to think for themselves and their efforts have been valued in these terms. The effects of these different emphases, which of course vary in degree from teacher to teacher and school to school, are reflected in maths, for example, by the finding that some English children tried to develop their own strategies to do long multiplication tasks involving decimal points. High achieving children in particular were able to develop their own efficient strategies in number and investigative maths. They also had a better sense of the correctness or otherwise of their answers than French children. However,

one less desirable consequence of this stance was the tendency to use non-standard, inefficient methods for procedures in relation to numeracy and, more generally, not being able to distinguish between efficient and inefficient methods.

6.3.1.3

Again these different pedagogic emphases are reflected in the fact that English children showed less understanding of number per se and less expertise than French pupils in the application of the standard algorithms in number; their lack of routine drilling perhaps accounting for their sometimes knowing what to do but being weak in the execution of the required procedure.

6.3.2 Curriculum

6.3.2.1

Differences of curriculum emphasis are similarly reflected in the different pattern of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the two countries. The English maths curriculum is much broader than that of French primary schools (Harries and Sutherland, 1998) with the result, it seems, that French pupils have a deeper, but narrower range of understanding and skills. For example, French pupils were better at using the standard algorithms but English children showed understanding of more aspects of maths than their French counterparts and were better at handling data. However, the study confirms the already-acknowledged weakness of English children in the area of numeric skills and understanding which the Numeracy Task group is even now addressing but also provides useful evidence concerning the underlying causes of this.

6.3.2.2

These same, culturally-rooted differences in curriculum were also reflected in the relative strengths and weaknesses of English pupils in language work. French pupils were typically 'technicians' applying skills they had been taught often in a decontextualised way, whereas English pupils were more likely to be 'explorers' coping well with tasks where the route was not clearly laid out. Indeed the language findings are significant in this respect, with English pupils consistently outperforming their French counterparts on creative writing, spelling, inferential reading and some aspects of punctuation. It would seem that, although French pupils may undertake extensive exercises in grammar, this knowledge is not readily transferred when required to be applied in a holistic way in, for example, in writing a story.

6.3.2.3

Clearly these differences also reflect the different pedagogic approach to the teaching of language in the two countries, the one emphasising the teaching of language in a more formal, even mechanistic way; the other teaching language through using it in the process of reading and writing. However, they highlight two important points concerning assessment.

6.3.3 Assessment

6.3.3.1

Firstly, the strengths of the English tradition need to be recognised. Whilst paying due regard to the limitations of any measures used to judge comparative national performance in terms of both validity and familiarity, our data show clearly that English children have some significant strengths both in terms of their general approach and their skills in language and in maths which perhaps have not been sufficiently well recognised in more conventional international tests.

6.3.3.2

Secondly, it was clear from a detailed scrutiny of children's performance in the two countries that in some of the language questions, notably the reading comprehension, the mark scheme was not reflecting children's performance. Whilst it was clear from the context, for example, that many French children knew the answer to the inferential reading questions, they did not answer in a way which allowed them to gain marks. An analysis of how well the marks awarded reflected the overall quality of the children's performance in terms of the understanding and skills called for by a particular question suggest that insufficient attention had been given to the careful development of mark schemes and of instructions to examiners in England.

QUEST project

The Quality of Primary Education: Children's experience of schooling in England and France.

ESRC R000235960

Broadfoot, P., Osborn, M., Sharpe, K., Planel, C., Ward, B.

1. 10. 94 - 30. 9. 97

The aim of the QUEST project was to explore how and why different educational policies may contribute to raising standards of achievement. In the light of increasing interest in international comparisons of learning outcomes the study sought to examine the interrelationship between the various factors which potentially affect learning. The overall aim was to examine differences in children's educational experiences, attitudes to school and learning outcomes in England and France in view of significant variations in the teaching approaches and curriculum emphases of primary schools in the two countries.

Using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methods including questionnaires, interviews, systematic and non-systematic classroom observation and extracts from both countries' national tests, the study revealed significant differences between French and English pupils in terms of the four dimensions which formed the focus of the study: pupil attitudes and motivation; their views of their national identity and citizenship; their experiences in the classroom and their achievements.

The study found that, in spite of the many pressures towards greater homogenisation of educational systems, the national culture and educational traditions of England and France continue to lead to both significant differences in pupils' *attitudes* to their own learning and the role of the school, and in their learning *outcomes*. It suggests that pedagogy needs to be understood in terms of the larger cultural context, and that without such understanding, the effects, and hence the potential value, of any particular educational intervention, cannot be predicted.

The research suggested that, in English classrooms, the teacher typically made much more effort than was observed in France to motivate children through arousing their interest and avoiding negative feedback. Yet, despite experiencing classrooms which were typically more formal and authoritarian French primary children appeared to be more positive and enthusiastic overall about their school and their teacher. They saw their teachers as helpful and useful to them and wanted the teacher to make them work hard. Compared to English children, they appeared to be more strongly motivated towards educational success and academic goals. Our findings further suggest that, as a result, the personality of the teacher is less important to French children. French pupils were much more likely both to understand and to share teachers' values and to be more strongly motivated towards educational success. These national differences were more significant than any other factors such as the socio-economic and geographical location of the school or the gender of the pupils.

One explanation of the differences between the two countries is the much clearer delineation between 'work' and 'play' in France and the fact that the culture of the school is clearly and narrowly focused on academic learning. Also the influence of the peer-group which is so significant in England seems to be both less strong and more positive towards school in France. However both these findings are reflections of significant differences in the values and culture of the wider society in general and of parents in particular. The research showed that not only do French children have a much stronger sense of their national identity - at least at the primary stage studied - they themselves, their parents and the wider society share a common understanding of the organisation and content of schooling and an appreciation of its importance. This clear awareness of a national 'ladder

of progress' linking the various stages of schooling was reflected among French children in their clear targets for the future compared to English children's typically much more vague notions of the future and of their own goals.

The study also revealed significant differences in learning outcomes. These too may be explained by the influence of cultural factors. The national tests set by each country reflected, in the French case, the cultural value placed on learning established procedures and following rules whereas the English tests gave greater prominence to children thinking for themselves and developing their own solutions to problems. These fundamental differences in educational ideology which are in turn reflected in differences in the curriculum and teaching approach of the two countries, resulted in French children typically performing better where the task required the application of a known procedure and English children doing better on more open-ended tasks where the procedure to be followed was less obvious.

A comparative analysis of the pattern of errors made revealed significant national differences, as well as links between pupils' levels of confidence and their willingness to 'have a go' and to take risks. These could be traced back through differences in their classroom experiences to the particular traditions and assumptions of the two national cultures. Furthermore, given that both sets of pupils performed better on their own national tests, this suggests the importance of curriculum validity and task familiarity as influences on pupil achievement and raises questions concerning how meaningful international 'league-tables' of national comparisons really are.

The results suggest that comparative studies of learning outcomes are only a useful policy tool if they are contextualised within an analysis of the national culture, pedagogic traditions and educational priorities of a particular country. Whilst decontextualised comparisons may be technically defensible, it is hardly useful to judge the quality of the educational provision of either individual schools or countries as a whole in terms of pupil achievements without reference either to the different strengths and weaknesses individual pupils demonstrate to achieve a given global level of performance or to the broader social context. It is further argued that it is as much culture, as any particular pedagogic procedure, that holds the key to pupils' success or failure.

STEP project

Primary Teachers and Policy Change: A Comparative Study. ESRC R000234673

Broadfoot, P., Osborn, M., Pollard, A., Planel, C.

1. 10. 93 - 1. 10. 94

The goals of this research project were to identify the effect of recent policy changes in French education. These were designed to make primary school teachers more responsive to the different learning needs of their pupils. Not only was such an inquiry important in its own right, it also paralleled a study of English primary school teachers who had been similarly challenged to change their professional practice but in quite opposite ways. Furthermore the existence of pre-reform base-line data concerning teachers' priorities and practices for both countries meant that it was possible for the project to explore important questions concerning how policy is implemented. By illuminating both common features of policy implementation in two very different countries and important sources of variation it was anticipated that the project would be able to provide policy-makers with guidance as to how the realization of policy directives in practice can most effectively be achieved.

Using a combination of questionnaires, interviews and observation it was found that French teachers were indeed beginning to change. In 1994 French teachers were more likely to widen their academic objectives for their pupils to include such areas as motivating them to learn, developing their potential and making them more autonomous in their learning. They were also more likely to be collaborating actively with their colleagues, though there was little change in their relationship with the headteacher despite recent policies aimed at making the headteacher a more powerful figure in determining school priorities and practice. Like their English counterparts, French teachers identified assessment as the area that had changed most as a result of the reforms. Many teachers also reported that they were thinking more about classroom organization and about their knowledge of and relationships with individual children. But whilst almost a quarter of French teachers felt that their approach to teaching had changed substantially, almost a third felt that they had not changed at all.

Observations in twelve different classrooms reflected this picture of both continuity and change. Whilst the blackboard and the formal 'leçon' continued to predominate, teachers worked extensively with individuals within this framework to provide the support necessary for them to achieve the still essentially undifferentiated learning goals of the 'leçon'. The formal classroom of the past with its rows of desks facing the front and its walls dominated by teacher displays, was giving way to seating arrangements based on small groups and wall displays of pupils' work. Even the traditional slates were now made of vinyl. Pupils in the classrooms studied in 1994 had more freedom of movement, choice of activity and resources available to them than when the 'BRISTAIX' study was conducted in 1985. There was more emphasis on choice, on the use of games and particularly on reading for enjoyment. Some teachers sought to involve children's own interests and experience and to encourage children to work together. However the overwhelming emphasis on French and maths work had not changed nor the dominating authority of the teacher which were the defining characteristics of the classrooms studied in 1985 before the reforms.

These findings may be both compared and interpreted by reference to the work of the PACE project on the impact of recent policy reforms on English primary teachers. As in the present study, PACE teachers had changed elements of their practice, as well as some of their priorities, as a result of external directives. But whilst English teachers were giving a new prominence to basic skills and the provision of clear objectives, the analysis of the PACE project (Pollard et al 1994) suggests that teachers' practice is informed by values, understanding and power and that external directives in themselves are not sufficiently powerful to change the educational values which provide the core rationale for teachers' actions. However, they may at the margin, change teachers' understanding concerning how such values should be pursued in practice. Rather, the key to effective policy change is to find

ways of changing teachers' actual priorities, the way they think about their role and how it should be performed. This analysis appears to be equally valid for French teachers. The interview data revealed that the changes in practice that we observed were as much the result of teachers' own convictions concerning the changing needs of their pupils, as they were the result of policy diktats. The very substantial differences that remain between the core ideologies and practices of English and French primary teachers, together with the considerable variations that exist between individual teachers in the two countries make this point clear. Whether the system in question is apparently highly responsive and centralized or one with a strong tradition of local autonomy, the key to effective policy-implementation is not to impose new practices on teachers. Rather, it is to explore ways in which policy-makers can work with and through teachers to improve the quality of education.

The importance of such insights provides the answer to another of the STEP project's initial questions which concerned the methodological potential of comparative studies of teachers. The results of the project demonstrate that such studies have a unique potential to illuminate constant features of educational provision by the manipulation of the diverse contexts provided by historical and international comparisons.

Relevant publications and conference papers

1, National Cultural Values and Their Role in Learning: A comparative Ethnographic Study of State Primary Schooling in England and France. (sole author) 1997.

In *Comparative Education*, Vol 33, No 3, Nov 1997

This article was based on two papers. The first, **Children's Experience of primary school: A Comparative Study in England and France** was presented at the *British Educational Research Association Conference* in 1994. It was the first published dissemination of this study's findings into the relationship between culture and learning. The second, called **Children's Experience of Primary Schooling in England and France** was presented at a SCAA/OFSTED conference in London in 1995. In the article an attempt is made to identify and define English and French cultural and educational values in primary school. The article explores how pupils' cultural values result from their socio-cultural backgrounds and that these values encompass such concepts as authority, ways of thinking, control over learning, and definitions of educational goals and how these are to be achieved. It is argued in the paper that cultural values affect pupil motivation and in turn pupil learning.

2. Children's Experience of the Learning Process and the Role of the Teacher: A Comparative Study of English and French Primary School Classrooms. (sole author) 1996
In *EERA Bulletin*, Vol 2, No 1, March 1996

This article was based on a paper called **Pupil Experience of learning and of the Role of the Teacher: A Comparative Study of English and French primary Schools**. It was given at the *European Conference on Educational Research*, at Bath University, 1995. It uses data gathered during this study's progressive focusing (March-April 1995). The article explores English and French pupils' perceptions of learning and the role of the teacher. English and French pupils' contrasting representations (constructs) of learning and the pupils' different definitions of a 'lesson' are presented. The pupils' representations of the teacher's role in their learning are also described. The article continues to present the argument that pedagogy in itself is not a sufficient explanation of educational achievement. Cultural concepts held by social actors are also important factors in an explanation of pupil learning..

3. Assessing National Assessments: Underlying Cultural Values Revealed by Comparing English and French National Tests. (First author) with Broadfoot, P., Osborn, M., Sharpe, K., Ward, B.) 2000

This article was originally disseminated as a paper entitled **National Assessments and National Systems: A Comparative Study of the 1995 English and French National Tests for 11 Year Olds** at the *European Conference on Educational Research, Sevilla, 1996*. The article follows the same theme as in publications numbers one and two, that is, the influence of culture on learning. In this case it is the underlying cultural values of national assessment systems which are the specific focus of the article. It looks at the national assessments that were used in England (Key Stage Two) and in France (Evaluation à l'Entrée en Sixième) at the end of primary schooling in 1995. The impetus for this paper came from the pupil achievement area of the QUEST project (see Appendix ?). The selection of question items from the two national tests had led to a comparison of: the aims and uses of each national test, the relationship between national tests and national curricula, the structure, class administration and assessment schemes of each test, and the relationship between national tests and the respective learning theories of each country. The paper, and the subsequent article, reveal the extent to which national assessments are embedded in national educational systems. The process of comparison brings to the surface the educational values which are implicit in each country. Thus it is argued that cultural values can be identified in national assessments. The

paper is significant to this study as it reveals an important educational area of 'input', in which learning is affected by culture.

4. A Comparative Analysis of English and French Pupils' Attitudes and Performance in Mathematics and Language (First named author) with Osborn, M., Broadfoot, P., and Ward, B.) 1998. Report to *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority*

QCA had funded a six month project to carry out both further qualitative analysis of the pupil achievement data from the ESRC funded QUEST project (see Appendix?), and to analyse the relationship between pedagogy, pupil perceptions and pupil achievements in English and French primary schools, also using the QUEST data. The findings were presented in this report. Breaking new ground in comparative assessment the report shows that the qualitative assessment of English and French pupils' written responses to selected English and French national assessments (Key Stage 2 and 'Evaluation à l'Entrée en Sixième') items could show not only how pupil responses differed but it could also suggest why they differed. The strategies used by pupils in the two countries followed a national pattern. To a certain extent pupils' strategies reflected national educational objectives. English pupil achievements were strongest in language and maths areas which required independent thinking and experimentation, French pupil achievement were strongest in areas where standard methods were needed. The report represented an important development in the present study's exploration of the relationship between culture and pupil 'output' in learning

Combined findings from the QUEST project and the QCA report can be found in **Improving the Quality of Pupil Learning: A Comparative Study of Primary School Pupils in England and France** Broadfoot, P., Osborn, M., Planel, C., Sharpe, K., 2000. Published by Cassell, London

5. 'Il était une fois' and 'One fine day in Wallopville': The Impact of the Learning Culture on Children's Approaches to Story Writing in England and France (Sole author) 1997. Paper presented at the *European Conference on Educational Research*, Frankfurt, 1997; and *British Educational Research Association Conference*, York, 1997.

This paper was based on the qualitative analysis carried out for the QCA report in the language assessment area of story writing. English and French pupils were found to approach narrative writing in different ways. These qualitative differences were related to cultural values in the educational systems of the two countries. For example content was more important in the English context and form was more important in the French context. The story titles cited in the title of the paper were used to illustrate the characteristic of structure in the approach of French pupils to story writing and the characteristic of individual thinking in English pupils' story writing. The paper is central to this study's argument that pupil achievement and learning are affected by culture.

6. Qualitative Analysis in Comparative International Testing (First author) with Broadfoot, P., Osborn, M., Sharpe, K., Ward, B.) 1998. This paper was presented at the *Economic and Social Research Council Seminar Series*, 1998, Seminar 3, 'Learning from Comparing', Bristol. A similar paper entitled **'The Cogulator Said $11 \div 5 = 22$ ': The Importance of Qualitative Evaluation in Comparative Assessment** (first author) with Broadfoot, P., Osborn, M., Sharpe, K., Ward, B.) 1998, was also presented at the *Comparative Education Society in Europe*, Groningen, The Netherlands, 1998. The papers were subsequently published in an article entitled **Comparative Research on Pupil Achievement: in search of validity, reliability and utility** Osborn, M. and Planel, C., 1999, in Alexander, R., Broadfoot, P., Phillips, D., 1999, 'Learning from Comparing', published by Symposium Books. These papers and article use the same data presented in the above numbers four and five, which showed the relationship between culture and learning, to explore the

significance of qualitative assessment as an evaluative tool. As such, these papers and the chapter are less relevant to the present study's thesis.

Appendix 3 Description of the four primary schools in the ethnographic study

Schools

English schools

Cotswolds school



Cotswolds school was situated on the outskirts of a small town in Gloucestershire. The school's catchment area consisted of a mixture of local authority and private housing. The school intake of 120 pupils, represented "the full range of socio-economic backgrounds", to quote the OFSTED report of 1995. The school attracted significant numbers of pupils from outside the immediate area. There were five classes in the school and a special needs Language Centre attended by pupils from different localities in Gloucestershire.

The school was rebuilt and the grounds landscaped in 1992. The result was an imaginative use of the south facing steep site with a glassed in balcony running the length of the school. Classrooms were arranged in a line parallel with the balcony. Although small, each classroom also had the use of a balcony area and a section of the internal corridor which ran the length of the school on the opposite side of the classroom from the balcony. Each class had therefore the use of three areas, only one of which was not open plan. The school also had a hall which was well equipped for gymnastics and drama productions and a well stocked and attractive library. Outside, the site included a 'senses' garden, woodland area, badger watching hide, pond and an extensive field. Part of the school's success in attracting pupils from outside the catchment area was the use it made of its school grounds. Quoting the Ofsted report,

"The school has a strong environmental focus which is reflected in the current development of a pond and nature trail in the school grounds. Outdoor facilities are further augmented by an amphitheatre and attractive gardens" (the gardens were maintained by voluntary parental help and a pupil environmental club run by the Year Five/Six teacher).

Cotswolds school had the reputation of a 'green' school in the area.



Country dancing at Cotswolds school

Parents were also attracted by the school's artistic, caring and individualistic ethos. Of the two English schools it was the Cotswolds that most clearly exemplified English characteristics. The school ethos was very much due to the headteacher. Assemblies provided clear messages about the importance of child individuality and creative thought. This individualism was part of the school ethos as the following example from one of the headteacher's assembly shows:

The head shows the school a painting by Miro. The reaction of many of the pupils is to call out, "*It's upside down*". This is anticipated, the message behind the assembly is creativity and originality. The headteacher says, "*You can do things the way you want*" and "*the artist wanted the picture to be that way*".

Here is an example of the values placed on caring for each other that came from another assembly led by the headteacher:

The headteacher reads out the Book of Excellence (a feature of Friday assemblies where the headteacher reads out a child's name and explains what he/she has done to merit being in the Book). She presents a girl with a certificate, everyone applauds. A Y5 boy has been selected on the grounds of having done additional research on his own initiative for his non fiction book at home. Another boy has been chosen for having been 'kind and fair'. He has managed to settle a dispute between two children in his class. The headteacher complements him and adds, "*I think that's a super reason for being in the Book of Excellence*". She finishes off by wishing them a good half-term and tells them they will all be receiving a handout with suggestions for what they could do at half term, for example, the school is running a design a Christmas card competition. She tells them that these activities are, "*much better than just sitting watching television*".

The approach to learning in the school, as conveyed by the headteacher, was reminiscent of the Plowden approach. Children were encouraged to think for themselves and to learn through finding out. It was tempered by an appreciation of the changes in society of the 1990s. Although a very 'open' school in the sense of parental and community involvement I found, as a researcher, that it was the school which was the most restrictive. For example, it was the only school where, having gained access, and having presented the staff concerned, with copies of the pupil questionnaires, I was required to discuss specific areas with the staff and make alterations. I was not allowed to use the term "boredom" as in the question - "Do you ever feel bored at school?" as the headteacher explained that the school had a positive ethos and felt that any adult using the word "boredom" might have the effect of condoning its negativism. It was a banned word. I was also

requested to avoid questions which might encourage pupils to evaluate their teachers as it was thought that teachers in general had a very low status and any encouragement of criticism would erode their position further. The emphasis once more was on being positive. The Year 2/Year 3 teacher, Mrs Bilton, was also not happy with a question which asked the pupils who they thought was best at various subjects as again they did not want to encourage such comparisons. There was awareness that the school's positive approach to learning needed protection from outside influences.

Parent and school relations were particularly active in this school. The headteacher and teachers worked hard to involve parents as much as possible: informing them of the term's programme of study for each class (see Appendices S1 and S2); suggesting how parents could help their children's learning (see Appendix S2 points 1- 4); informing parents of the many diverse activities in school; running evening workshops on current teaching methods¹ (see Appendix S4).

The headteacher was keen to emphasise too the fact that the school was a team. During an Annual General Meeting she explained that the children were aware that they belonged to a distinct school, she thought this was particularly visible during the Shared Reading sessions. There was an overtly visible school policy on: handwriting, teacher/parent relationships and the emphasis on the "care" and individuality of children. The teachers seemed to share the headteacher's aims in creating a particular type of ethos.

St Paul's School



St Paul's school had served an urban parish of Stroud for 200 years. The current building dated from 1970. The school underwent extensions in 1984 and 1996. There were 270 pupils and

¹ One such workshop (21st June 1994) on "Helping Your Child to Read", involved three teachers presenting sketches of how to and how not to approach reading at home. These caused the parents much amusement. The message was reinforced afterwards. Parents were encouraged to think about their child's feelings, to follow their child's interests, to ensure that reading time was a time for loving and that the emphasis should be on 'fun'.

the school was oversubscribed. The housing in the area consisted of pre-war and modern private estates, low cost development organised by a housing association, as well as a few traditional cottages. Although pupils came from a diversity of socio-economic background there was less diversity than at Cotswolds and the average socio-economic background was slightly lower. According to the Ofsted 1997 report:

"The census data available from 1991 indicates that there are fewer than average children from high social class households or from homes where a significant number of parents have higher educational backgrounds." The school site consisted of a small field and two playgrounds. Classrooms were larger at St Paul's than at the Cotswolds but they also accommodated larger classes - up to 36 children. A corridor area was often used as an extra classroom for group work.

The headteacher, like his counterpart at the Cotswolds School had been there for a considerable length of time (twenty years). The school ethos was very different from the Cotswolds. The Stroud area had retained selective secondary education. A girls' and a boys' grammar school existed in conjunction with several "comprehensive" schools. Unlike the Cotswolds School which belonged to the 'Pyramid' (an educational association linking primary, comprehensive and tertiary education) St Paul's actively encouraged pupils to enter for the selective schools. This helps to explain its oversubscription.

St Paul's displayed many of the traditional educational values that are derived from English public schools. The school had a keen interest in sports and competition in sport. Pupils were coached to a high standard in different sports and achieved good results in inter school competitions. There was a system of houses and house points in operation to motivate pupils. Setting in Maths and English had recently been introduced in Years 5 and 6 and was thought to be of great benefit to all pupils by the staff.

St Paul's was a voluntary aided Church of England primary school. Its mission statement included: "*the importance of a positive Christian ethos in all that is taught*" (Ofsted 1997). The presentation of collective religious worship was a clear illustration of the school's ethos of traditionalism. Assemblies were led by the headteacher or deputy. They were of the very formal and overtly religious type with very limited pupil participation. The Gloucester Diocese Inspection Report on Denominational Education comments,

"There has been a pattern of class-led acts of worship although none has taken place recently and there is no structured rota for classes to present worship. There are occasional opportunities to play the recorder or guitar."

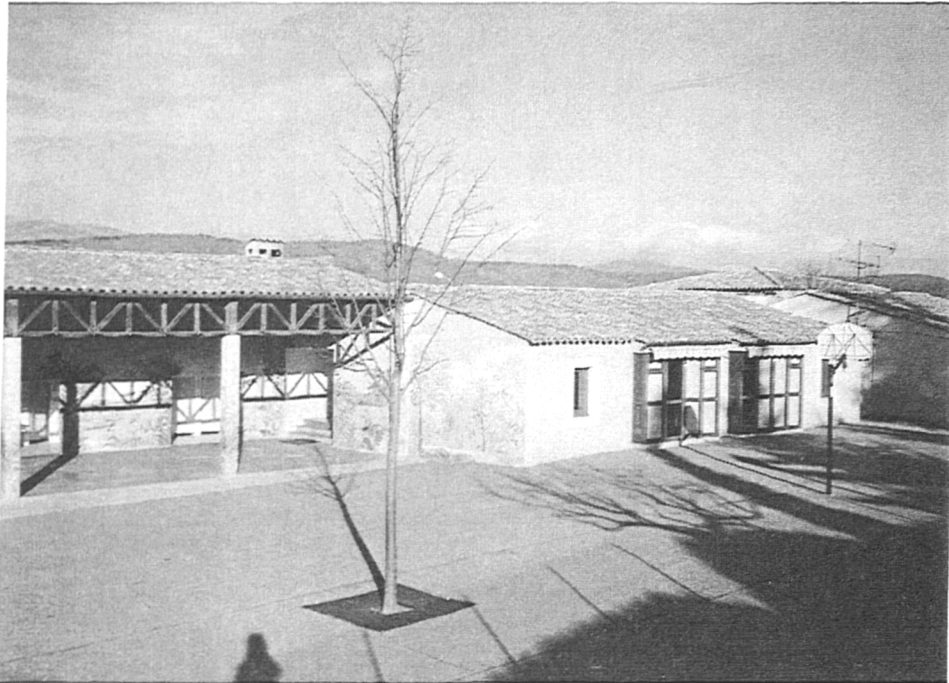
The Ofsted report's description of the school's spiritual provision was, "*Pupils develop their spiritual awareness through quiet reflection and reverent prayer in assemblies*"².

St Paul's in many ways represented the more traditional face of English primary education. The individualistic approach was still there but it was tempered by an emphasis on conformity. The authority system was overt with discipline a clear priority. Pupils were still expected to develop their thinking through practical work but there was also a formal approach to learning and classroom work. Ofsted raised the issue that investigative work in maths and science needed further development. There was a strong appeal to a work ethic with less emphasis on intrinsic interest as a motivational factor.

² There was a clear difference between the Ofsted evaluation and the pupil evaluation of assemblies. Ofsted's 'reverent prayer' did not reflect pupil reality. Pupils commented on how boring they found the assemblies.

French schools

St George

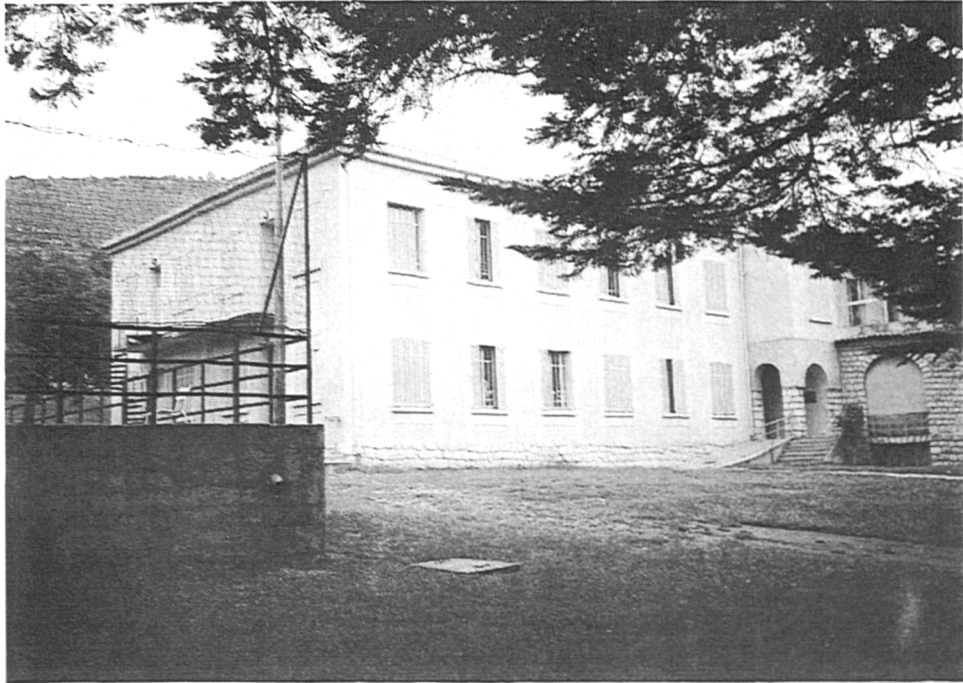


St George school was paired with the English Cotswolds school in terms of socio-economic pupil intake and its slightly less traditional approach to education. The school served the village of St George, a typical “village perché” in the hills of the hinterland in the Alpes Maritimes. The village had become a dormitory town for the nearby town of Grasse. The population of the village was increasing as families migrated from the north of France. The school population had risen from some twenty pupils in the 1960s to the 1994 intake of 180 pupils. Pupils came from local village families with strong local roots and some kinship relations, upwardly mobile incoming families and professional families. There were no pupils from outside the area.

The school buildings had been continuously enlarged. A new school, constructed in 1990 had had to be doubled in size in 1993 (it was further enlarged in 1997). Inside, the school was bright, modern and very clean. Classrooms were well lit and modern, the furniture new. All rooms had large windows. The school had a hall, or “salle polyvalente” which was used by individual classes for arts activities and videos (but never for whole school gatherings). A small room had been made over to house an emerging library. Outside, the playground area was small with virtually non-existent play equipment. Sport took place in the municipal sports area a short walk from the school.

Headteacher turnover was high. The headteacher was not a strong leader (she later resigned her post and returned to teaching in a nearby village school). School staff were divided in their loyalties to the headteacher. Weak leadership confirmed the traditional French isolation classes and teachers. There was little co-operation between teachers and few extra-curricular activities such as sports, arts and school trips.

St Martin



St Martin, like its French pair St George, had until fairly recently been a very small village school serving a tightly knit and isolated village community. However, as with St George, its location close to Grasse, had created an important increase in the population of the village. The school intake numbered 230 pupils. The school population had outgrown its site. A new school was under construction at a different site (since 1997 the village has had two schools). The socio-economic intake of St Martin was, like its English pair St Paul's, lower down the scale and more homogenous than the French St George and the English Cotswolds. Situated further back into the hills of the Alpes Maritimes the village offered cheaper land and property prices than the village of St George.

The school was located in what had originally been built as a "Colonie de Vacances", when it had out grown its old village school location. As a former 'Colonie de Vacances' the grounds and sports activities were of a high standard. They were much appreciated by teachers, pupils and parents alike. Inside too, the rooms were large, with high ceilings and large windows. A well stocked library and computer centre had recently been opened.



The headteacher, Madame Chagnon, herself married to a headteacher, provided the school with strong leadership. Her functions as headteacher entitled her to 2 days off her CM2 class teacher role. Whatever her personal opinions of the 1989 reforms and of the local 'Inspecteur', she was engaged in implementing the reforms into the school. The pupils were beginning to benefit from teachers working together, offering music, arts and language options to mixed classes on certain afternoons. Nearly all classes also spent one day a week in the Spring term at a local ski resort.

In terms of ethos St Martin offered a more traditional approach to education than the French St George; hence also its pairing with the English St Paul's. The authority structure was very clear and the discipline very strict. In the two classes observed the teaching emphasised rational thinking and methods of analysis. The work ethic was also very strong and seemed to match parental values. Parents were very satisfied with the school.

Teachers

English teachers

Cotswolds Year 2/Year 3 teacher, Mrs Bilton

Mrs Bilton was in her early forties. She was married to a primary headteacher and had herself come into the teaching profession as a mature student. Admired by parents, other teachers and pupils alike, she was recognised as one of the strongest teachers at the school. Her teaching style was very varied employing a mixture of whole class teaching, group instruction, individual instruction and individual monitoring, as the tasks demanded. She was adept at instructing parents and using them to lead groups, sometimes having as many as three parents in the class.

Mrs Bilton stood out for the emphasis she placed on pupil control and choice. The school day was structured by pupil planning (see Appendix T1). Although pupils appeared to be in control of their learning activities, in effect they only had control over the ordering of tasks. The level of the activity, the structure and pace of the task, and assessment were closely monitored by Mrs Bilton. Other teachers in the school tried later to emulate her system but without the same success.

Mrs Bilton managed to individualise learning at the same time as maintain a strong class collective. The latter was brought about by:

- The whole class explanations that preceded and concluded the work for each half of the day.
- Each child having a common goal of finishing the tasks she/he had been set during a day with a public review of progress at the end of the day.
- A whole class goal of finishing all tasks before the end of the week in which case the reward was that the T would “dance on the table”.
- A consensus about *effort*³
- The use of ritual responses with the class⁴
- The pupils’ use of ‘group’ words to address their teacher⁵
- Wall displays of teacher notices /slogans, such as in the technology area: ‘Make plans before you start’ and ‘Look before you leap’ (with similarities to “repères” in the French classrooms). These were also put across verbally during class or group explanations.

Mrs Bilton’s whole class explanations also included many “higher order” questions and statements (Galton and Simon, 1990). The quality of Mrs Bilton’s teaching was later recognised at county level. She was seconded for a year in 1997 to develop design technology teaching materials.

Cotswolds Year 5/Year 6 teacher, Mrs Gibbs

Mrs Gibbs was also in her early forties. Her previous teaching post had been at a special school. Her approach to teaching was influenced by this experience and her success as a teacher was mixed.

Her strong points were:

³ On one occasion there was a public class discussion about Vanessa, normally a ‘slow coach’ who exceptionally, had worked hard. The T asked the pupils if there had been another slow coach that morning. The responses were directed at one boy in particular. She pursued this point and asked them, “How can I make you do it?...That’s the part that’s up to you. You have to leave the chatter outside the classroom door”.

⁴ In the above class discussion about ‘slow coaches’ she explained how it was up to each child to work hard. She had hardly uttered the words - “It’s up...” before the class chorused with her - “It’s up to you”.

⁵ In the ensuing discussion on *effort* various pupils were identified as ‘hardworking’, “Tom Little, you’re a good worker”. Tom replied with a ‘group’ name for their teacher, “Trust you to know that Mrs Scientist”.

- her relationship with her pupils. Each child was approached as an individual, with great sensitivity⁶. Her pupils adored her and were often motivated by their relationship⁷ with her.
- Pupils were also motivated by positive interest and rewards. One afternoon plan on the board read, 'French, Topic Work, Look at school pond if you have worked hard'.
- Pupils were given a considerable degree of choice⁸. Pupils were also given some autonomy. For example the class prepared an assembly based on animal fables. Although the theme was chosen by the teacher, the class selected the three fables. Pupils organised the groups and the roles within the groups. Pupils composed the music and chose which instruments.
- An emphasis on the importance of caring for others. For example, in a rare moment of the class coming together as a class Mrs Gibbs berated a boy for his lack of concern for others,

"You knocked him over and did nothing. That's what I'm cross about. Did you go over to Peter? Did you ask if he was hurt? You know if someone takes care of you and looks after you, you feel better. You've upset Peter so much he's run off home, You laughed when you'd hurt someone. That's the most cruel thing you could do."

- Mrs Gibbs's relationship with her pupils continued out of school. On certain Saturdays pupils were invited to her house to see her horses. Furthermore after leaving her teaching post at the school she continued to visit the school regularly and run the 'Environment club'.

Mrs Gibbs's weak point was class teaching and classroom management. It was difficult to observe instances of class teaching in her class as they rarely occurred. Her approach to teaching seemed to be to point pupils towards a range of possible tasks and then help individuals. Class management was poor. Pupils were often off task, wandering about the three working areas, sitting unobserved off task on the balcony, whilst she was engrossed with a single pupil. Pupils were commonly observed to pass an afternoon un-noticed without having started any work. The lack of teacher authority sometimes resulted in pupil discourse that was lacking in respect. For example, Mrs Gibbs asked a boy for the meaning of a comprehension. Someone replied, *"It means hard work"*. He then added, *"Count me out then"*.

I was later informed by a school governor that Mrs Gibbs was the 'weak link' in the teacher chain at Cotswolds. Although it is not clear whether pressure was applied or Mrs Gibbs took her own decisions, she later reduced her hours to part time, moved down to a Year 4 class and finally left the school in 1997.

St Paul's Year 1 teacher, Mrs Bates

Mrs Bates was an enthusiastic, young, newly qualified teacher. She explained that all she had ever wanted to do in life was teach. For her teaching was, *"my life, not my career"*. She was enjoying her first year both professionally and personally (she had recently married). One of her stated objectives as a teacher was, *"I want them to be happy to come to school"*. For a relatively inexperienced teacher, she already had a clear personal style in her approach to teaching and to children:

- Family values featured strongly in her teaching. For example, she referred to the class as 'a family' (after taking the register she concluded to the class, *"Our happy family is all here"*).
- Christian values were also emphasised. For example, during an introductory morning's session of discussion and news a boy recounted a neighbour's death. Mrs Bates showed great concern and replied, *"He's gone to love with God and Jesus, you'll have to wait a long time before you can see him again and play with him."*

⁶ When a boy asked Mrs Gibbs about the difference in level between Group One and Group Two spellings, she explained that Group Two were for those that felt they could do them. She asked him, "Do you feel you would like to try to them?"

⁷ A parent of a boy was heard to say of her son, "He would do anything for her".

⁸ Pupils were writing poetry anthologies. They researched and chose the poems that appealed to them. They could also choose which of the three classroom areas to work in.

- Children were treated as individuals. Each child was personally addressed and greeted with a 'Good morning' during the register session. Children had to respond with "Good morning Mrs Bates" (some pupils responded with "*Good morning best teacher in the whole wide world*"). The returning of exercise books was accompanied by a quick word with each child. Mrs Bates relied heavily on published maths, English and reading schemes. The Ofsted report commented on the school as a whole, "*Activities are over-dependent on the use of published or school produced worksheets*". The class was covertly divided into three achievement groups with two particularly weak extra children. Published materials allowed Mrs Bates to teach basic skills through differentiation. Pupils worked at their own pace through the material. Progress was individually monitored and problems were individually attended to. Children were often individually praised.

As well as prioritising individuality Mrs Bates was also skilful at class teaching, though class teaching was generally reserved for topic work or creative writing, areas where different achievement levels posed less of a problem. Mrs Bates's class management was effective. She used several strategies:

- Ritual phrases were employed. For example to get the class's attention and stop work she employed variations on the phrase, "*Right class 3, can you put your pencils down and show me two empty hands.*" Discipline during 'Sitting on the carpet sessions' was often maintained with such phrases as, "*When you're all sitting on your bottoms we'll put our work heads on*", or, "*Right Class Three, park your bottoms now*".

With possibly one exception the children were devoted to Mrs Bates. Cuddles with individual children were not an infrequent occurrence.

St Paul's Year 5/Year 6 teacher, Mrs Brown

Mrs Brown was an experienced part time teacher in her early forties. She worked closely with two other part time teachers to cover the teaching of two parallel Year 5/Year 6 classes. As two of the teachers taught for 2½ days a week and she taught for 3½ days, this provided two mornings a week when the two classes were divided into three groups. The objective was to create maths sets (St Paul's was a feeder school to the local grammar schools). Mrs Brown took the top maths set. At other times, for example creative writing, the two classes, comprising some 60 pupils were (with the assistance of the other class teacher) taught together by Mrs Brown as one class.

Mrs Brown's teaching followed a traditional and fairly strict approach. A religious education lesson was observed on the theme of Ascension Day, where pupils listened to the teacher's explanation, listened to her reading from a children's version of the Bible and then had to write up what they heard. Mrs Brown tended to teach and direct from her desk or the board. Reading aloud was taught as a skill. During silent reading a pupil was selected to stand up and read a paragraph of his book to the class. There was no contextualisation, the name of the book was not mentioned, nor was the content alluded to. An English lesson was also observed using Nelson Grammar Books Three (Denis and Helen Balance) 1979, where pupils had to find examples of nouns, adjectives, prepositions, verbs and adverbs from a passage. Discipline was strict, for example, a boy who had tidied away his writing equipment and exercise book in the 'tidy box' in the centre of each group of tables before being asked to do so, was obliged to take them out again in front of the whole class. When his action was completed the class was then instructed to put away their things. Mrs Brown exerted control over pupil posture ("*Sit up straight John*") and dress ("*Adam, can you tuck your shirt in please*").

Mrs Brown's whole class teaching skills were good. Pupils were encouraged to think, through her use of searching questions. She was observed eliciting individual pupils to contribute publicly to her teaching objectives in an English and maths lesson, in much the same way as a French teacher might have done. The pace was often fast and the level demanded high (pupils were

observed working on a reading comprehension aimed at Year 8 pupils). Moreover, like a French teacher, Mrs Brown confided that, *"Because of the pressure of the amount of work we have to get through I haven't got time to go back and help individual children."*

However, Mrs Brown also expressed ideas about teaching which were more progressive and characteristically English: she thought differentiation was important because, *"all children have different needs."* She also thought it was important for children to learn from each other and hence permitted talking while pupils were working.

Pupils were not over fond of Mrs Bates, some were quite frightened of her.

French teachers

St Martin CP teacher, Madame Allard

Madame Allard was an experienced teacher in her late thirties. Her priorities were to teach the CP programme to her pupils. She voiced concern about the physical and emotional welfare of one or two of her pupils who she suspected were not receiving proper care from their families. Madame Allard's forte was her class teaching. Occasionally she divided the class into three according to achievement level and gave three class lessons in the same room. She always differentiated work for two pupils, a girl and a boy who were making slow progress and would have to repeat CP the following year. In her class teaching, pupil learning was broken down into small steps. Ideas were often presented in a narrative or game form with rules that had to be followed. The teaching of new concepts was often introduced by the phrase, *"On va faire un jeu..."* She took into consideration the children's interests and level. For example the possible combination of numbers to make 8 was taught using 'la maison de huit'. A picture of a house was drawn on the board with an 8 written in the roof. Pupils had to fill in different rooms (4+4, 6+2, etc.). Pupils were not allowed to repeat the same contents of a room. An important element of all class lessons was the individual pupil going to the board and working through a problem with the teacher in front of the class. Class lessons often followed the pattern of a taught concept using the blackboard, followed by individual practice with a worksheet. Pupils were sometimes given the illusion of choice. When Madame Allard was confident that the class was engrossed in her lesson she would enquire, *"On continue pour ceux qui veulent?"* Predictable the answer was a chorus of *"Ouiiiiiii"*, from the pupils. Pupils were also given the illusion that it was their choice whether they worked or not.

Madame Allard never talked down to her pupils. Discourse was of a simplified adult form rather than the childlike discourse employed by the English teacher Mrs Bates. The work chosen by Madame Allard often took into account the mood of the class. Poetry and poetry recitation was sometimes introduced to provide a lighter activity as the day wore on. Poems which would appeal to children were selected which required different types of voices, for example a deep ogre's voice. Pupils volunteered to recite the poems. A typical finish to the day might involve colouring in the illustration to the poem with music to listen to. Madame Allard made it clear that work came first and play came second. *"Tu avais envie de colorier, mais il faut travailler avant; tu dois faire travailler la tête"*, she told a child. The strength of the class as a collective and of not disturbing the working atmosphere was continually impressed upon pupils, as in the instruction, *"On ne parle pas, on ne dérange pas ceux qui n'ont pas fini"*.

Although strict and keeping strong control over the class, Madame Allard was gentle with individual pupils and maintained close physical contact as she moved around checking their work. She had high expectations of what they were capable of achieving (*"Tu es bien capable de*

retrouver ces deux histoires", she said to a girl who was having difficulties), and of how they should behave⁹.

Madame Allard did not encourage children to work together¹⁰. Work and non work activities were clearly distinguished. There was a certain amount of pupils having to wait for slower ones to finish an activity, but there was always something else they could do. For example, pupils who had finished an exercise were allowed to choose a book to look at from a small selection at the back of the class. They sat on benches at the back to do this, but it had to be done in silence, "*Vous ne faites pas de bruit les enfants. Il y en a des enfants qui n'ont pas terminé*". Madame Allard varied work and non work activities. One day after afternoon break a girl was asked to demonstrate to the rest of the class how she plaited her friend's hair. There was no concealment of Michael and Vanessa's weak level. Madame Allard would say quite publicly to one of them, "*Tu fais autre chose, c'est trop difficile pour toi*". The class was heard to finish off their teacher's sentence of, "*D'abord la dictée puis je donne du travail*" with "*à Michael et Vanessa*".

Madame Allard was valued as an excellent teacher at St Martin and was liked by both her current and her ex-pupils.

St Martin CM2 teacher, Madame Chagnon

Madame Chagnon was in her mid forties. She was the headteacher at St Martin. She was allowed two days a week off teaching the CM2 class to carry out her role as headteacher. In practice she continued her headteacher role while she taught. Her classes were often interrupted by the telephone in the classroom and it was not unusual for her to have to leave the classroom to carry out her duties elsewhere. As headteacher and class teacher she was sometimes sent miscreant pupils by other teachers. Madame Chagnon's husband was also a headteacher at a primary school. Although Monsieur Chagnon did not get on well with the 'inspecteur' Madame Chagnon seemed to have a good working relationship with him. She appeared to be trying to put the 1989 reforms into practice in the school even if she did always approve of them. For example she was trying to use the recommended system of assessment, she had introduced project work on specific afternoons and the school as a whole was regularly re-organised for 'décloisonnement' activities¹¹.

Madame Chagnon's teaching style was very traditional. She 'instructed' the class as a class and emphasised the transmission of abstract and theoretical concepts. For example:

Madame Chagnon dictates, "*Dans une phrase, le mot ou groupe de mots qui répond à la question (telephone rings, children manage small whisperings whilst she deals with it) qui, (en bleu), quoi (en rouge) a pour fonction (où tu en es Nicholas? mais non, on continue en bleu!) le complément d'objet direct du verbe.*"

Madame Chagnon's relationship with her pupils was domineering and distant, particularly with low achieving pupils. Pupils who were perceived to be under achieving, lacking knowledge or understanding, making errors, or working slowly, were ridiculed in front of the class. For example in the following public statements to individual pupils:

- Lacking knowledge, "*Tu sais pas ce que c'est qu'un spélélogue?!*"
- Lacking understanding, "*Le C.O.D. c'est quoi?*" Child incorrectly gives a C.O.I. definition. "*Ah oui?*", says teacher sarcastically, and turning to the class, "*Mais qu'est ce qu'elle me raconte?*"
- Making an error, "*Tu crois que c'est comme ça que j'ai présenté le tableau?*", looking at a boy's work. She rips out the page from his exercise book.

⁹ "*Plus de ça, je ne veux plus voir ça. C'était pour le mois de septembre pas pour le mois de janvier*", she said to another girl who was on the verge of tears. She returned to check the girl's work later, "*C'était bien la peine de pleurer, puisque c'est tout juste. Cherche le deuxième maintenant.*"

¹⁰ A girl was reprimanded for helping her neighbour, "*Elle n'a pas besoin de toi.*"

¹¹ Pupils from different classes chose optional afternoon activities such as sculpture and play reading.

- Slow pace, *"Vous vous en êtes au quatrième exercice, lui il en est à la quatrième phrase du premier exercice!"*.

Assessment was overt and public in Madame Chagnon's class. When an exercise had been marked pupils were required to put up their hands to indicate the number of mistakes made.

Madame Chagnon's strong points were the clarity of her explanations and her structured teaching style. Her lessons were intellectually stimulating. She had high expectations of her pupils, expecting them to understand difficult concepts and then apply them in practice. For example:

Having taught the concept of 'proportionnalité' in a maths lesson, Madame Chagnon asks the class to think up mathematical situations of proportionality and write them down, *"C'est pour savoir si vous étiez capable d'imaginer une situation."* Children volunteer to read out their work. Madame Chagnon laughs at some of the replies which are funny and good.

Madame Chagnon frequently used a rapid question and answering approach that has been likened to catechistic teaching (Sharpe 1992) to drill children into the use of process to determine syntactical spellings. For example,

T - *"Qu'est ce qu'on fait?"*

C - *"On trouve les verbes et on les souligne en gris."*

T - *"Et puis?"*

C - *"On trouve le temps de la phrase."*

T - *"Et après?"*

C - *"On cherche le sujet."*

T - *"Et puis qu'est ce qu'on fait?"*

C - *"On vérifie que c'est juste"*.

Madame Chagnon tried to motivate pupils with public assessment. Pupils knew how to improve their marks. Reference to the first year of 'collège' was another means of motivating pupils. For example, *"Comment vous allez faire en sixième l'année prochaine?"*.

Despite Madame Chagnon's severity she was appreciated by most of her pupils. They thought that she worked hard for them, that she was a good teacher and that everything she did was for their benefit.

St George CP teacher, Madame Soler

Madame Soler was in her early thirties, married with her own young child. She was small and physically very active; moving with great rapidity around the class to help individual pupils who remained seated. Compared to the other French teachers her teaching approach was quite individualistic, both in the private (and not public) individual help she gave to pupils and in her use of differentiation¹². Madame Soler gave more positive praise to her class than the other teachers did. She also allowed more co-operation between children. Like the St Martin teacher work was often introduced as a game. For example a maths lesson,

"Alors nous avons dans cette page de jeux - soit un carré, soit un triangle et deux couleurs - bleu et rose. On va s'amuser à faire des transformations, on va transformer notre bloque dans une machine."

Her pupils responded enthusiastically to this approach and were also keen to participate at the blackboard. Madame Soler thought that practical activities were important. She was also keen that her pupils should make some discoveries for themselves. However this was not always thought through as when on one occasion the class were taken 'pond dipping', pupils seemed to

¹² Madame Soler structured tasks to allow for pupils working at different speeds.

have little idea of what to do. Madame Soler had deliberately not prepared her pupils as she had wanted them to find out for themselves, but this did not occur¹³.



Madame Soler's class pond dipping

Madame Soler's relationship with her pupils was quite warm and friendly. Discipline was strong when necessary but not domineering. For example when asking a child to talk less she commented gently, "*Mais tu peux pas te taire toi?*". Pupils who did not respond to oral reprimands however, were smacked. Madame Soler allowed her class more choice (for example, "*Ceux qui veulent continuer à dessiner, allez-y, ou si vous voulez prendre un jeu calme. Je vous laisse choisir*") and freedom. Pupils were allowed to talk to each other provided that they whispered quietly ("*Parlez -moins fort!*", she asked the class).

Despite Madame Soler's dissimilarities with some of her French colleagues her fundamental teaching approach was still within the framework of a French teacher. As with the St Martin teachers her teaching was aimed at the whole class, all pupils were exposed to the same concepts and had to eventually complete the same work. Pupils were required to work with their teacher at the board in front of the whole class.

St George CM1 teacher, Monsieur Pinson

Monsieur Pinson was in his thirties and married to a teacher at another primary school. He and his wife had a young son. Both parents worked part time. When not teaching Monsieur Pinson worked at his other career, that of a jazz musician. Monsieur Pinson was feared by most pupils in the school for his severity and originality (one pupil changed school for one year in order to avoid his class). He had a reputation for using corporal punishment. However each year his own pupils, once they had got to know him, thought him the best teacher in the school. Although

¹³ Interestingly, the only child that did 'find out for herself' was a girl who had been at school in England. Her different approach was remarked on by the teacher and the 'animateurs'.

very French in his approach to teaching, using whole class teaching and sometimes exposing individual pupils to public ridicule, he could also teach in novel ways, employing drama, humour and generally entertaining the class. He organised such activities as making recordings for a school radio programme, and starting off a video club to educate children away from television programmes like 'Hélène et les garçons'.

Monsieur Pinson tended to treat his pupils as young adults. He expected them to listen to his discourses about, for example, adult obligations which they would encounter later on. He spoke for an hour about 'la conscience professionnelle' in the world of work, but which started at school with the teacher pupil contract. He used humour and peer pressure to discipline individual pupils. For example, he spotted a pupil drawing flowers instead of working:

"C'est formidable ce que tu fais là - J'ai toute la journée à perdre. Je peux m'amuser - Nous avons un contrat qui dit qu'à cette heure ci, nous pouvons pas courir après les papillons." The rest of the class laughs.

Monsieur Pinson was open to new ideas and was interested in educating his pupils as well as instructing them.

CODES FOR OBSERVATION, INTERVIEWS AND WRITTEN WORK

A CHILD TO SCHOOL

1. Childrens' enjoyment of school (includes view of past classes)
- 2 Purpose of schooling
- 3 Perception of boredom
- 4 Perception of educational path - targets, competition?

B CHILD TO WORK

- 1 Defintion of work
- 2 Concept of free time
- 3 Pupil choice (+ choice of child to work or not) *
- 4 Creativity individual or teacher inspired?
- 5 Individualism or group ethos
- 6 Pupil likes and dislikes
- 7+8Teacher or pupil definition of success? - Catechistic teaching
- 9 What motivates them?
- 12 Contextualisation of work in 2 national contexts *
- 13 Empiricism
- 14 Autonomy (+ again onus of work on child)
- 15 Value put on work and effort *
- 16 Overt discussion of childrens' achievement *
- 17 High expectations ?
- 18 Learning strategies, eg. 'reperes'.
- 19 Reasoning

C CHILD TO CHILD

- 5 Achievement linked to effort or ability
- 7 Cooperation between children
- 8 Basis of friendship groups
- 9 Competition * + B16* for motivation

D CHILD TO TEACHER

- 1 How children relate to Teacher
- 2 What does teacher do when children don't work well? * +B16=public humiliation
- 3 How does teacher control children?
- 4 Childrens view of teacher (appreciation?) *
- 5 Physical contact?
- 6 Teacher uses instructions,suggestions, discussion with class/individuals?
- 7 Which children get the most attention?
- 8 Who does child in trouble turn to?
- 9 Punishing, rewarding? Which children get chosen for responsible jobs?
- 10 Physical position of teacher in class

E PARENTAL ATTITUDE

* means new categories that arose during field work at St Vallier

Children come in or sit down on floor in reading area
2 children come up & speak to T. Meanwhile C has a little chat.

C. chatted 'a good morning' to everyone. Instead of taking the register
He says 'good morning' to each child & they have to say 'good morning' too
B5 "Happy family" all here" says T. "Happy school" says C

A1 T - "a full class is a happy class"

Boy tells about a man who is dead. T. very concerned & asks
B5, D7 "He's gone to live with good & Jesus, isn't he to wait a
time before you can see him again & play with him."

CONDIGNITION FOR OTHERS
T. calls up a girl who has some sad news to talk about -
her baby's brother is ill & has gone to hospital. T. sympathetically
couch
(ie. they're making an issue of being kind, considerate)
as a class

B5 T asks C. to talk about interesting things at the week. A boy
tells about a gun made to order - "I'm going to write about
in my news"

B5 Girl saw a dinosaur at Glasgow museum - T. "it was it was
very interesting"

B3, B6 "Right, hands down everyone" "When you're all sitting on
your bottoms we'll put her neck back on"
Calls out individual children gives them their exercise book
write in their news, has a word to say to each child

B6, B3 "who's got their Miltoner's book in their news?" - 5 of
of children their mother's exercise book, & text book, in fact
had not to do

B3 C. choose what to read to read - except those that are left
not to read by so & so. Then get on with reading - T.
go individual C. to change their reading books

le 3 février

Children go in ahead of teacher - little bit of chatting.

"Prenez vos cahiers d'exercice" "C'est y est?" "Vous écoutez" T: dit cela
 - un jeune élève "vous suivez une ligne"
 un grand ami
 le gros chat
 un gros nez
 non vous devez
 un hibou jaloux
 ce fier écuyer
 un lion amoureux

B16 "Comment ça s'appelle?" Oh ^{certainement} ~~c'est~~ pas! (C. had said 'phrase')
 On est en G.N. made up of det - adv - noun, in reply to
 "Ils sont en quel genre?" C. answer - mes org ^{several other objections}
 T: "vous allez les mettre en mes plus et fem. ~~plus~~ org et fem. plus"

T selects a child to ask going through it - orally
 un jeune élève "qu'est-ce que vous remarquez?" C. plus de modifications
 une jeune élève (C. could possibly have finished)
 des jeunes élève C. - en met un s
 des jeunes élève T: première conjugaison? C. remarque et répète il
 "certains vous s'écrivent de la même façon m/f et
 pour le pluriel on ajoute un s"

C. replies T repeats that det - Adj + Nom affected.

9 (Chérie, sub in from C.P. as has never given her notes a note to
 sign. (Le sits down at C. table lead bent, H.T. says not a word.
 Deafening silence) I had been on hand. T. talking her off about this note he had sent
 Chérie écrit quelle "chère" ^{je ne cherche} T. tu écoutes pas ce que je te dis
 "non le féminin de 'le' c'est pas 'une'."

Appendix 8 English interview schedule

A1. CHILD TO SCHOOL

1. What's your school like?

2. What do you like most about it?

3. What do you like least about it?

A2.

1. Why do you come to school?

2. What do you think school is for?

A3.

1. How often do you feel bored at school?

2. What sort of things make you feel bored?

B2.

1. What do you do when you've finished your work?

2. Can you choose what to do next?
What sort of things might you do?

B3.

1. How many things can you choose to do in class?

2. Do you like being able to choose what to do?
or Would you like to be able to choose?
Why?

B4.

1. When you're writing a story, or doing a painting or drawing, what sort of things that you do make your teacher pleased?

B5.

1. Can you think of any times when you've done a different painting or story from what your teacher suggested? Can you remember how your teacher felt about this?

2. Can you think of any times that you liked what you'd done but the teacher wasn't pleased with it?

B6.

1. What do you like to do most at school?

2. What do you like to do least?

B7.

1. I saw you doing some work on ----- this morning. How do you think you got on?

2. What do you think you're best at at school?

3. What do you think you're not good at?

B8.

1. How do you know you're good at ----- ?

2. What makes you pleased/not pleased about a piece of work?

3. If the teacher hasn't seen the work what makes you pleased with it?

4. Can you think of any times when you thought your work was better/not as good as your teacher thought?

B9.

1. What happens if you do some really good work?

What happens if your teacher is not pleased with your work?

2. How do you feel when the teacher is pleased with you?

3. How do you feel when the teacher is not pleased with you?

4. Do you think that everyone tries their best at school?

5. Do you want to do well at school?

6. Why do you want to do well?

C4a.

1. Which children in your class do you think are best at Maths, reading/English and Sport?

C4b.

1. Can you tell me how difficult you found it to answer that question?

C5.

1. Why do you think some children do better than others?

C6.

1. Can you remember ever being told off by your teacher about your work in front of everyone?

C7.

1. What did it feel like?

C7. cont.

2. How do you feel if your teacher tells you in front of everyone that she is pleased with your work?

3. What do you think it feels like for someone when everybody knows the teacher isn't pleased with them?

D1. CHILD TO TEACHER

1. What do you like best about your teacher?
 2. What kinds of things annoy you about teachers?
 3. What sort of teacher would you like? Can you describe her to me?
-

D2.

1. Do you ever get your work wrong?
2. What does your teacher do?

D3.

1. What happens if someone behaves badly?

2. What sort of things does your teacher say to them?

3. What do you have to do to make your teacher pleased with you?

E

i. Have your parents ever found out that the T. wasn't pleased with you
what did they say?

2. What do your parents think about what you all do at school?

A4. What happens after this year? and after that?

12

5. Thinking back over the years you've been here, which year did you like the best?
why?

44

A2.

1. Pourquoi vas-tu à l'école

2. A ton avis à quoi sert l'école?

A3.

1.

2. Quelles sont les choses qui t'ennuient à l'école?

B4.

1. Quand tu inventes une histoire ou que tu fais une peinture ou un dessin quelles sont les choses qui font plaisir à ta maitresse?

B5.

1. Est-ce que tu te rappelles d'avoir fait un dessin ou d'avoir inventé une histoire différente de celle que ta maitresse voulait?

Est-ce que tu te rappelles de ce que ta maitresse a dit?

2. Est-ce que tu te rappelles d'avoir fait quelque chose qui te plaisait à toi mais qui ne plaisait pas à ta maitresse?

B6.

1. Quelles sont les choses que tu aimes faire le plus à l'école?

2. Quelles sont les choses que tu aimes faire le moins?

B7.

1. Je t'ai vu faire ----- ce matin. Comment ca a été?

2. A l'école que fais-tu le mieux?

3. A l'école qu'est-ce que tu fais le moins bien?
(A quoi tu ne réussis pas?)

B8.

1. Comment sais-tu que tu es bon en -----?

2. Quand tu es content de ton travail qu'est-ce qui fait que tu es content?

(pourquoi es-tu content?)

3. Si la maitresse n'a pas vu ton travail qu'est ce qui fait que tu en es content?

4. Est-ce qu'il t'est déjà arrivé de montrer un travail à la maitresse que tu pensais était bien/mal fait et qu'elle te dise le contraire?

C1

LES ENFANTS ENTRE EUX

1. Quels sont tes meilleurs amis à l'école?

2. Quels sont ceux que tu aimes le moins?

C2.

1. Est-ce que tu peux me dire pourquoi tu aimes ----- et pourquoi tu n'aimes pas ----- ?

C3.

1. Depuis combien de temps ----- et ----- vous êtes copains?

2. Est-ce que parfois il vous arrive de vous facher entre vous?

3. A cause de quoi vous vous fachez en général?

C4a.

1. Dans ta classe à ton avis qui est le meilleur en Maths, Français et Sport?

C4b.

1. Comment ça a été pour répondre à cette question?

C5.

1. As-tu avis pourquoi il y en a qui réussisse mieux à l'école que d'autres?

C6.

1. Est-ce que tu t'es déjà fais disputer par la maitresse pour ton travail devant toute la classe?

C7.

1. Comment ça a été?

D1.

1. Qu'est-ce que tu aimes le mieux dans/chez ta maitresse?

2. Est-ce ce que tu trouves les maitresses embêtantes parfois?
Pourquoi?

3. Quelle serait la maitresse de tes rêves? Tu peux me la décrire?

]

D2.

1. Est-ce que parfois tu fais mal ton travail?

2. Que fait la maitresse?

A

CHILD TO SCHOOL

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Aim</u>
The school	What's your school like? - What do you like most about it? What do you like least about it?	1. Are there any significant differences between English and French pupils' attitudes towards their schools?
Purpose of school	Why do you come to school? What do you think school is for?	2. Are there any significant differences between English and French pupils' perception of the purpose of schooling?
Boredom factor	Do you ever feel you don't know what to do in class? How often do you feel bored ^{you don't know} at school? What sort of things make you feel bored?	3a. Is there a difference in French and English pupils' perceptions of boredom? 3b. Why? 3c. What is it connected to?
4. View of school career	Can you tell me about it? what happens after this year, and after that in secondary	
5. Preferences for schooling	Thinking back over the years you've been here, what year did you like the best, and why?	4. Do you like the way you are doing in your English? (to be more complete) 5. What factors make them prefer one year over the other.

B

3.2

CHILD TO WORK

PERCEPTIONS OF WORK

Question

Aim

different kinds of work?

How much of the time in the classroom is spent working?

1a. Does the word "work" mean the same to French and English pupils?

What sort of other things do you do?

1b. Are the perceptions of English pupils affected by the concept of learning through play and discovery?

Do you think painting is work? What about using the computer? What about measuring things outside? Is that work?

Think of some other things that you do at school that you might call work?

If you're not working when you are at school what are you doing?

relationships to do with control aspect of 'free time'.

What happens when you've finished your work?

2a. Is there a distinction to be made between work and 'free time' in both national contexts? 2b. Does the existence or non existence of 'freetime' affect the pupil's notion of having some control?

Can you choose what to do next? What sort of things might you do?

relationships for teacher control

How many things can you choose to do in class?

3. Does the perceived amount of control that the child has over the content, the time spent or the timing of the activity affect his definition of 'work'?

Do you like being able to choose what to do? Or, would you like to be able to choose? - Why?

relationships perception of activity conformity

When you're writing a story or doing a painting or drawing, what sort of things does your teacher think are good?

4. Is there any correlation between 'conformity' and French education; and 'creativity' and English education?

Can you think of any times when you've done a different

5. Are English or French pupils aware of a trend

B

painting or story from what your teacher suggested?
Can you think of any times you liked what you'd done but your teacher didn't?

towards creativity or conformity?

Individualism

5.

ATTITUDES TO WORK

Subject likes and dislikes.

What do you like to do most at school?

6a. Is there a correlation between pupils' likes and dislikes and the national context? 6a. Is it linked to the differences between the national contexts? Why?

What do you like to do least? & why?

Perceptions of 'success'

I saw you doing some work on ----- this morning.
How do you think you got on?
What do you think you're best at at school?
What do you think you're not good at?

7. Do French and English pupils have the same concept of success?

How do you know you're good at -----?

8. Is there a difference between the degree of self-evaluation and teacher evaluation in England and France?

What makes you pleased or not pleased about a piece of work? If the teacher hasn't seen the work what makes you pleased with it? Can you think of any times when you thought your work was better or not as good as your teacher thought?

Motivation

What happens if you do some really good work?
What happens if the teacher is not pleased with your work?

10. What is the degree of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in France and to what extent is it linked to the national context?

How do you feel when the teacher is pleased with you?
How do you feel when the

B

teacher is not pleased with
you?

Do you think that everyone
tries their best at school?
Do you want to do well at
school? Why do you want to
do well?

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Aim</u>
Friendship groups	<p><i>Do you have a</i> Who are your best friends? Who do you like least? <i>Do you like to have a</i> <i>high friend</i> <i>Do you change around a lot?</i> Can you tell me why?</p>	<p>1. Is there a difference between English and French pupils definitions of the the basis for friendship?</p> <p>2. Is it related to achievement at school?</p>
Stability in friendship groups.	<p>How long have you and ---- been friends? Do you ever get cross with each other? Why?</p>	<p>3. Does the more structured learning situation of the French context give rise to more stable friendship groups over time?</p>
Achievement and competition	<p><i>not to aim B.</i> Which children in your class do you think are best at Maths, reading/English and Sport? Can you tell me how difficult you found it to answer that question?</p>	<p>4a. Is there a difference in pupil perception of achievement in the two contexts?</p> <p>4b. Is the more overtly competitive attitude in France reflected in the pupils' perceptions?</p>
Effort and ability in achievement	<p>Why do you think some children do better than others?</p>	<p>5. Do pupils in France see that achievement at school linked to effort? Do English pupils' perceptions relate the cultural context of inability?</p>
Pressure of competition	<p>Can you remember ever being told off by your teacher about your work in front of everyone?</p> <p>What did it feel like? How do you feel if your teacher tells you in front of everyone that she is pleased with your work? What do you think it feels like for someone when everybody knows the teacher isn't pleased with them?</p>	<p>6. Is achievement made more overt in France?</p> <p>7. Are French pupils more effected by competition?</p>

more positive

if you see a teacher how would you be?

D

CHILD TO TEACHER

Question

Aim

ue

ceptions about
thers

What do you like best about
your teacher?
~~What kind of things annoy
you about teachers?~~
~~What sort of teacher would
you like?~~

1. Do pupils in the two
contexts have different
perceptions of teachers?

ther types

Do you ever get your work
wrong? What does your
teacher do?

2. Do pupil descriptions match
researchers' observations?
What insights do pupil answers
give about their perceptions
of teachers?

ther control

What happens if you behave
badly?
What does she say?
What do you have to do to
make your teacher pleased with
you?

3. Do French and English pup
perceptions of teacher
authority differ?

E

PARENTAL ATTITUDES AS PERCEIVED BY CHILDREN

tal pressure

Have your parents ever found
out that the teacher wasn't pleased
with your work?
What did they say

1. Are English parents
less supportive of
school than French
parents?

What do your parents think
about what you do at school

B1. CHILD TO WORK

1. How much of the time in your classroom is spent working?

2. What sort of things do you do?

talk
when Mrs B is here we talk
day dream
work
go to sleep
draw
play
have meals or talk again
- jobs - have explain not work

3. Do you think painting is work?

What about using the computer?

What about measuring things outside? is that work?

it depends
sometimes we do bits
- bits - bits
'cos you're got to get a
bit in the right place.
no. detailed is more for
bits is not you're got
get them in the right place

that - we've got to do bits we're told
we can't do our own drawing.

ii
Difficulty

CONTROL

copying from pix from
more like work 'cos you
had to do it - copy

4. Think of some other things that you do at school that you might call work.

p.e. - you're got to use the T. rep
device, can't make up your own

5. What sort of things do you do at school which don't seem to you to be work?

football > they're more fun
we do more what we want
we've got to work out our own way what
best.

any
when we
have work

music - 'cos you're just being fun
no we're being busy with T. rep

assemblies - I like them
when we get to be I don't you've got to choose
to do you can be in it.

B1.

L'ENFANT ET LE TRAVAIL

1. Combien de temps passez-vous à travailler dans ta classe?

beaucoup x 2
moyen x 2

plus de retiens avec le dessin
travaux de trvail avec la m.

le m. dessin, ardoise
aucune importance

beaucoup x 4

2. Quel genre de choses fais-tu à l'école?

la gram
l'écriture
l'anglais
le calcul
vocabulaire

général
géométrie
science
histoire
peinture
exposé
expression écrite

3. Est-ce que tu penses que peindre c'est du travail?
et se servir de l'ordinateur?
et mesurer quelque chose dehors?

le sport - ce n'est pas grand
rien

le ski - ça n'est pas du travail
rien

l'écriture - ça n'est pas du travail
rien

on dit que c'est
pas de le faire - le travail

4. Est-ce que tu peux me dire quelles sont les choses que tu fais à l'école que tu appelleras du travail?

rien pas on le fait pas. - CHOIX (?)

un tout petit peu
il faut s'appliquer
par en haut même tête, pas de la
tête de lecture

il faut être attentif.

une sortie quand ça arrive on le fait
le ski - pas important à l'école
pour un peu on l'ordinateur il y a pas
de lecture
le maître nous aide pas.

On est un peu blasé - le travail est obligé,
si on le veut pas, on apprend pas

le conseil me dire s'il est en fin
on du travail? (i. c'est à dire)

5. Quelles sont les choses que tu fais à l'école qui ne te semblent pas être du travail?

jeu de sécheresses
l'ordinateur

basket
activités - musique
balle

(c'est une détente
(une très agréable lecture?))

jeu de lecture - amusant (un peu de
(c'est pas rigide) NO "NOTES" = WORK? travail)

le travail est des fois amusant, on n'a pas

Lesson analysis - Cotswolds Y2/Y3Teaching style

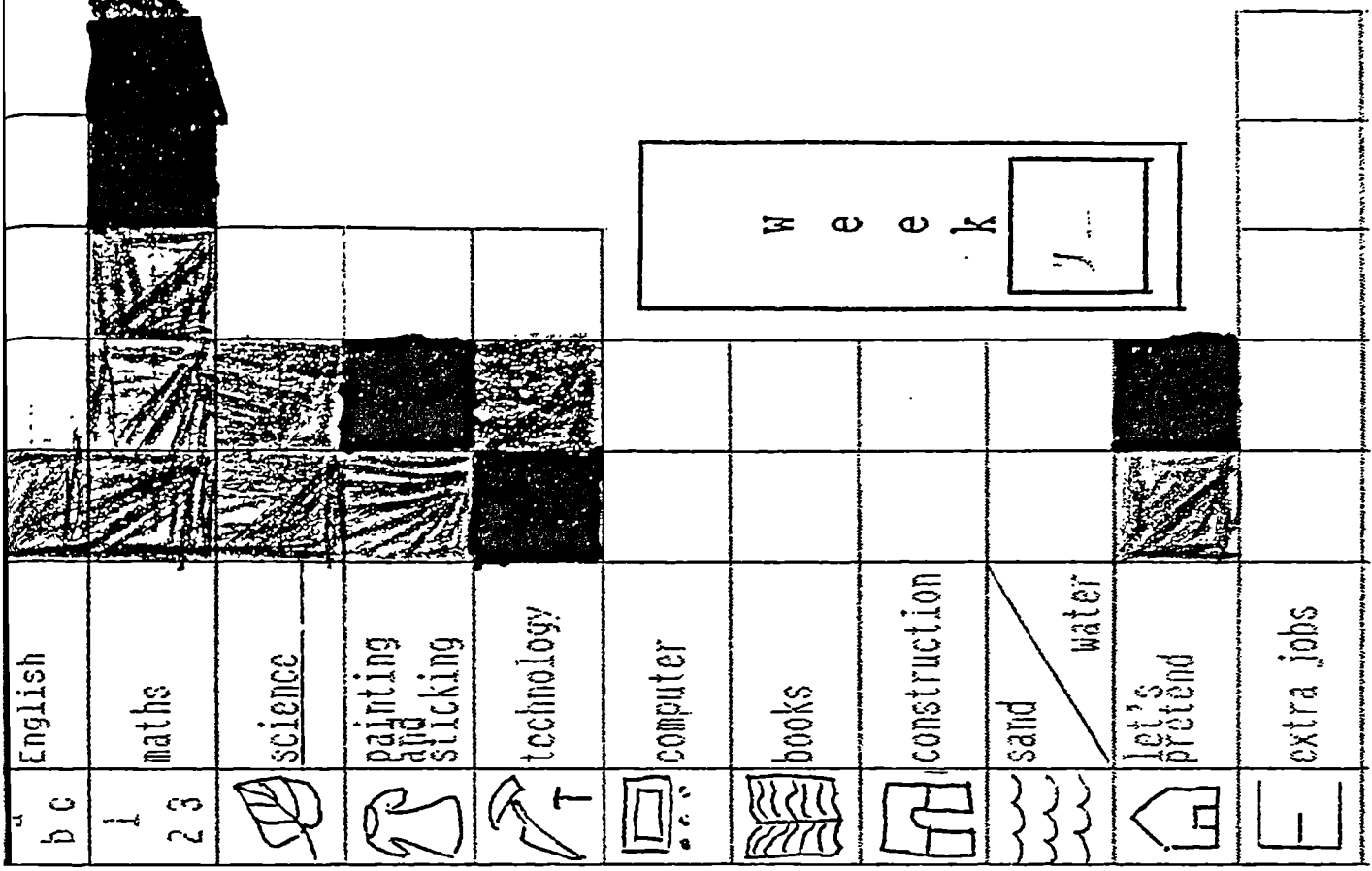
Mrs Burton could be classified as an “infrequent changer” (Galton & Simon Oracle study 1980) as she used a mixture of whole class teaching, group instruction and individual monitoring and there was a pattern in the sequence and organisation of these different styles. Everyday began with a whole class session involving: instruction and explanation - see lines 37-84, 140-171 and 185-269, and sometimes demonstration - see lines 271-285. During this time the pupils were presented with the work tasks for the day, whose order they could select - see explanation on Lines 31-36 and Figure 1 (photocopy of Planning Book). Following this introduction the pupils worked on their individual tasks but were seated in groups according to the *curriculum organisation* of the classroom or the age range to which they belonged - see Lines 95-96. At this time the teacher carried out group instruction or ‘employed’ helpers to do so. There were some examples of group work in the sense of pupils working together on a given topic - see Lines 96-97 but individual work with occasional conferring predominated. During this time also if not occupied as a group instructor she moved around the classroom - see Lines 303-306 monitoring individuals.

Teacher Explanation

Although there is no quantitative data to support this the teacher seemed to use a high degree of “higher order” questions and statements (Galton & Simon 1980 where they made up only 5.3% of all observations) - see Lines 37- 56, 105- 127, 201-220, 275-280.


She asked open ended and closed questions and accepted different answers according to the needs of the question and where she wanted to lead the pupils. When asking closed questions she was occasionally categorically negative to a ch’s reply, as her reply to a girl’s answer of a cube needing 4 sides in the dialogue on lines 203-217 shows. At other times she was more flexible - see Lines 277-279 where she partly accepted the boy’s reply because it was partly correct; also Lines 40-42 she does not reject a pupil’s incorrect answer but challenges the pupil to “find out” for himself - “Let’s count them”; Lines 151-154; Lines 43-59 show how this flexibility permitted her to lead the pupils through their own definitions, and by discussion with her, using language as a “cognitive climbing frame” (Bennett & Dunne 1992 P. 6 (learning both social - Bruner and is scaffolded by someone with greater understanding - Vygotsky)) arrive at the difference between a circle and an oval. Her targeting of questions as in the passage from Lines 105-124, particularly lines 109, 111, 115-116 and acceptance of individual explanations allowed the pupils to move forwards rapidly in their understanding.

Figure 1



W e e k

4

M	
Tu	
W	
Th	
F	
Smileys	

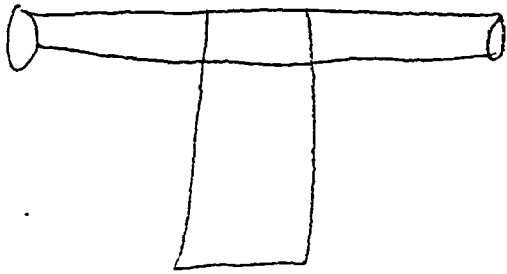
My best week so far

1/2

Week

Figure 1

1) Draw a picture of your ramp.



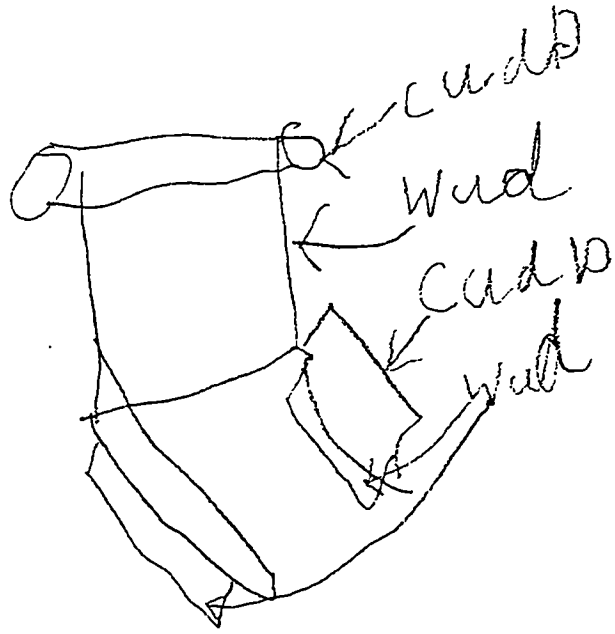
2) Did your ramp work? yes

3) What did you like about the way it worked? we like it because goes slowly

4) What didn't you like about the way it worked? pgs it has got a bit sticking out

5) How could you make your ramp better? cut off the bit that is sticking out

Lucite



The main focus of her teaching seemed to be towards cognitive understanding, as the above examples show, rather than just the content of the subject under study. This was also evident in the way in which she involved them in thinking whenever she could - see Lines 275-280 concepts of number and gravity during a craft demonstration; also she challenged them to make the connection between the Science lesson on "Pushing and Pulling" and the story of the "Enormous Turnip" Lines 132-134, and similarly challenged them to connect geographical place names with their letter writing to pen friends - Lines 266-274. This emphasis on "thinking" and reasoning and the open ended nature of much problem solving is made overtly clear to the pupils as the following examples show -

(Having previously made ramps in pairs and compared different ramps to see which factors increased the distance a toy car could travel - see Figure 2 - the pupils were asked to design and incorporate a structure that would cause a car to change direction - see Figure 3-)

T - "You've got to think about that....everybody's will be different".

"First you've got to draw a plan.....you've got to think ahead before you do something....There could be 25 different ways of doing it"

Ch- "Could we ask you how to do it?"

T - "No, you've got to ask your head"

Lines 173-75.

T (during an instruction and planning session another day) - "If I told you the answers to everything you wouldn't know how to think. My job is to teach you to think for yourselves. You need to Learn to think. That's what you come to school for.....You've all got lovely brains".

She also helped the children to make sense of what they were doing at school by giving them rational explanations for the tasks she set them -

She explained why it was necessary to write several drafts of a letter - Lines 186-190 "That's why you come to school so you can learn the correct way".

The headteacher had a similar approach of explaining things to the pupils and not merely telling them - during assembly she asked the pupils to remember to keep the outside doors closed - "Please keep the doors shut, otherwise the boiler has to work

extra hard which costs money, which I can't then spend on books and equipment for you".

Class as a collective unit

One of the characteristics of Mrs Burton's class was the sense of its group solidarity. This was partly achieved by the sessions spent as a whole class at the beginning and end of each half day during which the class as a whole participated in a learning sequence eg. Lines 36-54. Each child had a common goal of finishing the tasks he has been set during a day and progress was made public at the end of the day. Furthermore there was a whole class goal of finishing all tasks before the end of the week in which case the reward was that the T would "dance on the table".

Although individuals worked to their own levels the T encouraged a consensus about *effort*. On one occasion there was a public discussion about Vanessa of a 'slow coacher' who had worked hard. The T asked the pupils if there had been another slow coacher that morning. The responses were directed at one boy in particular. She pursued this point and asked them - "How can I make you do it?...That's the part that's up to you. You have to leave the chatter outside the classroom door".

Mrs Burton used ritual responses with the class which showed this solidarity too. Following on from the discussion about 'slow coachers' she explained how it was up to each child to work hard. She had hardly uttered the words - "It's up..." before the class chorused with her - "It's up to you".

Some of the pupils used 'group' words to address their T too - in the ensuing discussion on *effort* various pupils were identified as 'hardworking' -

T - "Tom Little, you're a good worker"

Tom - "Trust you to know that Mrs Scientist"

Finally Mrs Burton had pinned up notices /slogans whose words she would sometimes use to emphasise her approach to learning. For example in the Technology area there were several such notices reading - "Make plans before you start" and "Look before you leap" (repères) and their message was emphasised as in the Technology task explanation for designing ramps with curves.

Pupil individualism

The system of planning in operation see Lines 32-36 allowed the pupils a certain amount of individuality in their control over the content and particularly the timing of their tasks.

In the open ended tasks assigned in the subject areas of Technology or Art pupils were encouraged to produce their own ideas, this was often emphasised -

(T to Y2s drawing a pattern to be sewed at a later date around their names) - What I want is your pattern...not one copied from mine. Remember it's your design made out of your own head."

Another occasion was the Technology ramp exercise where the pupils were told that "everybody's (solution) will be different."

Also in a Science task Line 169 - "I'm not going to give you any ideas I want you to come up with your own ideas"

This individualism was part of the school ethos as the following example from one of the headteacher's assembly shows - The head had showed the school a painting by Miro. The reaction of many of the pupils was to call out - "It's upside down". This was anticipated as the message behind the assembly was "You can do things the way you want" and in this case "the artist wanted the picture to be that way".

Teacher control/pupil control

The teacher was quite clearly in control but due to the planning system the pupils seemed to feel that they were also in control to a certain extent. They were not afraid to make suggestions - for example at the end of a day -

Boy - "Mrs Burton, we'd better go"

T - "Yes we better had".

She maintained control:

directly - "Don't you look at me like that.....all cross and grumpy"

Calling individual named out sharply.

(Pupils enter classroom noisily after break) "Who's that coming in like that?"

I'm not having children coming into my classroom like that.. (Addressing a boy)Take your reading books out of drawer and come and sit by me".

Sending pupils out.

Using sarcasm - "It's amazing...in 48 hours you can't find 10 minutes (to do some homework)"

Using humour -(Pupils chatting) "Who's having a mothers' meeting?"

- Line 149, reference to 'bottom'
- "Vanessa? Are you listening, because I've got the feeling that you think you're on the beach?"

Assessment

There was a considerable amount of public assessment particularly positive assessment. Pupils were publicly praised - Line 22 or corrected - Line 25 during Monday morning's planning sessions when the T checked pupils' handwriting practice from the weekend. Individual pupils were rewarded during T explanations - Line 173-174, 193. The T sometimes encouraged the class to give positive feedback to a pupil. There was a very active reward system of stickers in operation. Negative comments were often uttered gently and sometimes softened by terms of endearment or by humour - "9 add 6 makes 16! I'll put you in the dustbin!"

Pupils were more severely spoken to when it was *effort* that was missing

Positive feedback was deliberately used to encourage self esteem.

Clarity of task

Despite each planning session taking about 40 minutes the tasks were clear to the pupils. They seemed to have little problems in understanding what to do and how to do it

Learning sequence

There was a sequence in learning connected with content across subjects - as in Lines 258-264 the establishment of a connection between Geography and English and Lines 125-127 Science and English. It was difficult to discern a learning sequence in Maths and English of the T encouraging the pupils to build upon what they already knew. During the T's explanations there was a sequence but again based more perhaps on content and not a progression from simple to complex.

Monday 11th October 1993 9.00-9.45 WHOLE CLASS PLANNING SESSION and
9.45-10.05 INDIVIDUAL/GROUP work

5

Children come into classroom and put their plastic folders containing reading books and handwriting books in their drawer. The drawers are all together in one piece of furniture. At the same time they take their planning books and the handwriting books and help themselves to a pencil before sitting down on the floor beside the T's chair and the blackboard. The space is very confined. The T has problems getting herself into her chair and some of the boys sitting furthest away are almost behind a bookshelf. They chat quietly while everyone gets settled.

10

T draws the children's attention to the date. She uses the opportunity of the previous Friday's date of 8th October for the children to add $8 + 4$ to work out that day's date. There are several suggestions before the correct date is reached. She takes in dinner money and money for school photographs.

15

INDIVIDUAL MARKING IN A PUBLIC CONTEXT

T checks the handwriting they have done in their books over the weekend. A boy admits he had forgotten to take his home. T blames herself for not having checked at the door that he had had it - "How did you get past me without it? I must be losing my touch. With some difficulty she either reaches forward or steps in between the children, giving a quick look at their work and often giving a comment:

20

"Try and get those letters sitting on the line".

"Good girl, that's beautiful".

"That's very hard work".

"Don't use a pen".

25

"You'd better rub that whole line out, sweetheart, that's gobble-de-gook".

"Look at that lovely writing, you can say goodbye to that elephant writing you used to do".

"That's not very neat love".

"You've got to do that again at dinner time, all right?"

Negative comments are softened by terms of endearment.

30

She hands each child a sticker for the work done which they stick in Week four of their planning books

35

T introduces the work for the day in terms of jobs to be done. Children have to listen and then make their plan for that day. The Y3s each have to choose 4 jobs and the Y2s three jobs with one of them being a playing one. At the end of the T's explanation the children will colour in half a square of the activity they have chosen (in the colour of the day - Monday green, Tuesday blue, Wednesday red, Thursday purple, Friday yellow). When the activity is completed the rest of the square is coloured in - See Figure 1

TEACHER EXPLANATION ON MATHS

T introduces topic and says they will be looking at shapes. She asks for the opposite of a round shape.

She rejects the response “flat” and approves when a child suggests “straight”.

40 She asks the children what is special about a hexagon and receives the answer That t it has five sides.

“Has it?” she questions. “Let’s count them”. She holds out a hexagon for all to see and the count the sides together.

T asks - “What’s special about an oval?” and she hold out an oval shape cut out in paper.

A boy replies - “It’s a long shape”

45 A girl answers - “It’s like an egg”.

T rephrases her question - “Listen to the question carefully. What is it that makes it like a circle? But what’s the difference with a circle?”

A girl replies - “One’s a bit longer”

A boy this time - “One’s squeezed in”.

50 The children are keen to supply answers. Their replies, even if not always accurate, are not rejected out of hand but rather with a - “that’s not very important”.

T supplies the answer she was looking for - “You’re nearly there. A circle is the same all the way round. Look what happens if you fold a circle in half” . She folds the circle in half in different ways.

T holds out different 2 dimensional shapes and the children say their names together as a class.

55 T holds out two different triangles and asks the children why they are both triangles. A boy replies that they both have three sides. She rewards him with a - “Good boy”.

T explains that the Y2s and Y3s have different worksheets to do on shapes. That’s their Maths job but they can also choose to do another Maths job of working with the Maths text book.

TEACHER EXPLANATION OF ENGLISH

60 T explains that the following is only for Y2s as the Y3s will be writing a play for Friday’s assembly with her.

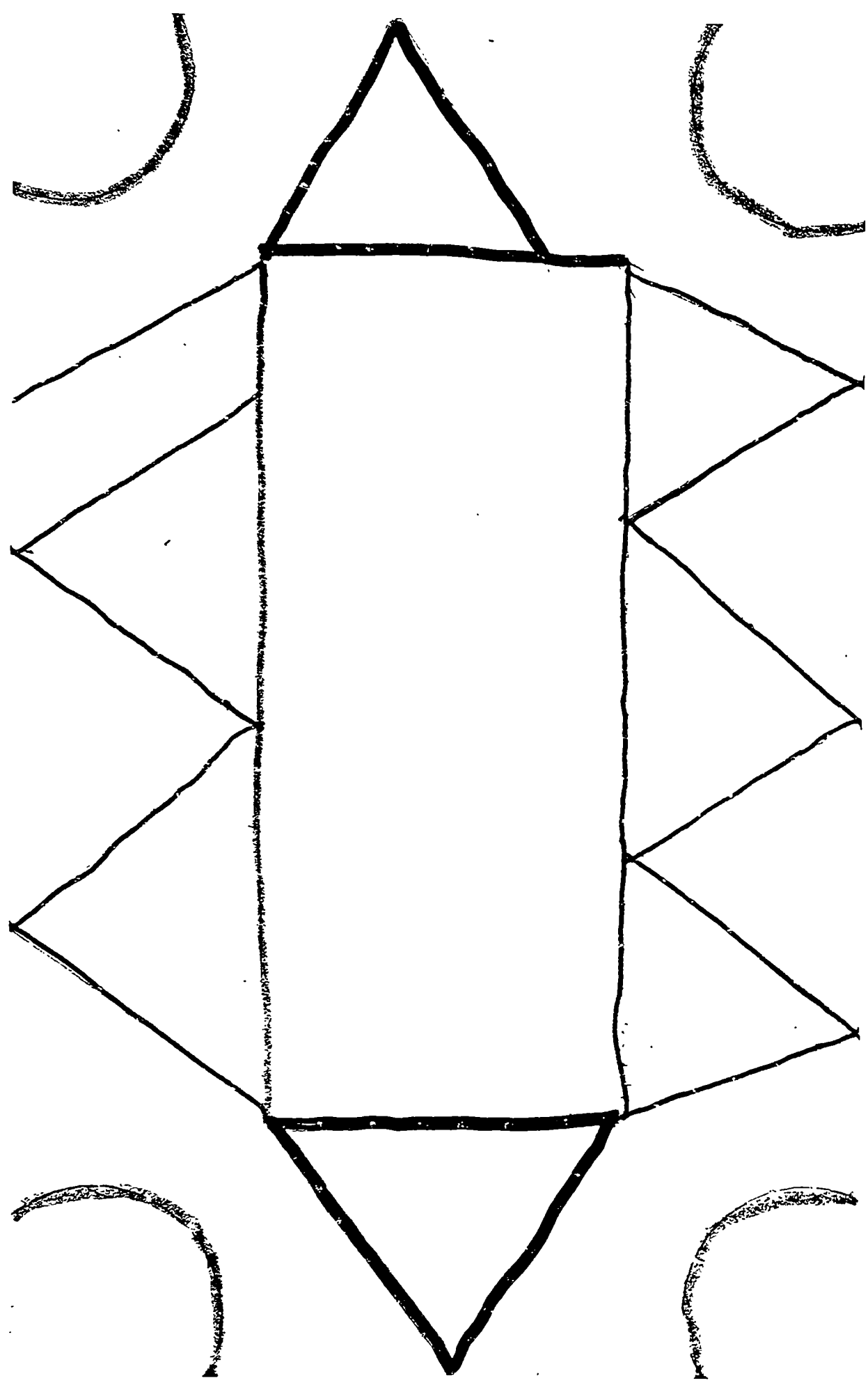
The Y2s are to look at the difference between ‘st’ and ‘sp’ words, and ‘ch’ and ‘th’ words. She asks all the children to practise saying ‘th’ as some have problems and make it a ‘f’ sound. When they have all practised saying the sounds together she asks them for examples of words that begin with those clusters.

65 The children are keen to answer. They put up their hands energetically either making pleading sounds to be chosen or calling out “I know!”.

She explains that they will be working in pairs for this activity and will be helped by one of the mother’s who is there for the morning. One child will read the other child a word, which he has to try and spell, then the other child has to write it correctly alongside. She tells them that they can talk about it together.

TEACHER EXPLANATION ON DESIGN

70 The Y2 had previously sewn their names on a piece of fabric. The next step the T explains is to draw a pattern around the name which can then be sewn late. She makes suggestions about patterns but adds -



‘What I want is your pattern, not one copied from mine. Remember it’s your design made out of your own head’ - See Figure 4.

75 One boy makes a suggestion for a pattern.

T responds - “That’s what I mean about your making up much better things than me”.

TEACHER SUMMARISES PLANNING JOBS AVAILABLE

80 “Listen to what the choices are. You all have to plan English and Maths. The Maths is the shapes work or you can do your Maths as well. For the “painting and Sticking’ job the Y2s can do their names and the Y3s can continue with what they were doing last week. You can also plan in Science and I’ll explain what that will be later. If you haven’t played on the computer recently you can plan in that too..

85 You can start your planning jobs now. When you’ve done that show me your Planning books and then off you go”.

9.45-10.05 INDIVIDUAL/GROUP WORK

Children mill about equipping themselves with a green crayon and talking aloud about what they are going to do. The planning squares are half filled in on the floor, on their knees, or on a table, etc. T checks most if not all their books. There is an air of excited activity with such conversation as -
90 A boy - “Where’s Mrs H (parent helper) because I want to do ‘br’ words? I can think of a dinosaur that begins with ‘br’. Will you be my partner Christopher? I can already think of two dinosaurs that begin with ‘br’?”

Christopher - “No. I’m doing my Maths book first”.

95 Children start work but only have about 20 minutes before they have to line up for assembly.

Some children work in the Maths area either at the worksheets or their Maths book, four do English with the helper in the English area, one boy is playing with wooden blocks (the children have to set the alarm clock which limits them to 15 minutes of play activity), some children work in painting and sticking area. Ch work individually, sometimes as with Maths aloud, sometimes they confer, sometimes they chat. T
100 works with the Y3s on an assembly they will be presenting at the end of the week to the school.

18th October

1.30-2.30 Science

Ch make squeaks of excitement on hearing that they must stop their silent reading as it is time for science. (It's not clear it's because they know they are first going to watch a video or because it is "Science").

105 Ch go to Buffer Room to watch programme on "Pushing and Pulling". After the programme T makes the ch sit in an oval - this requires an explanation and some moving about. T places a large cardboard box in the middle. She chooses a volunteer to push it when it is empty, then with one child in it then with two children in it. Another child carries out the same experiment. T establishes from the ch that it is gets more difficult to push with each additional ch. She asks them why they think this is. A boy replies - "The
110 box is sticking more to the floor". (The ch are enjoying it very much and are very keen to suggest reasons and present themselves as volunteers.

T suggests they try and see if pulling makes a difference. She ties a rope around the box and they repeat the experiment. Ch come up with a variety of hypotheses -

"It's harder with the rope".

115 "If you're further from the box you can get a better pull".

T suggests they try to pull the box first with David in it on the floor and then on a plastic sheet. She asks them why they think it is easier on a plastic sheet. A boy replies - "Because the plastic is smooth". T explains 'friction' and reminds them of the programme they saw. She checks if they know why they always ask David to stay in the box and don't choose a different boy. She gets the answer she wants of
120 him being the same weight. She asks what else they could use to make the box move more easily. A boy suggests wheels. She says she happens to have some and to the ch's delight produces a trolley. The experiment is repeated and a boy concludes - "Wheels help it move because they rotate". T points out that 'friction' is involved - "Look at the area of the wheels that are touching the floor".

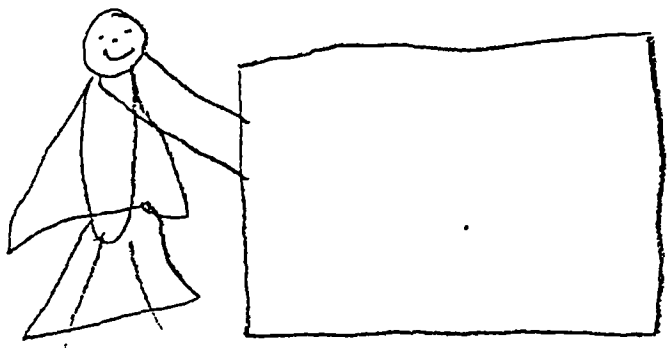
T takes ch back to the classroom. They sit down on the floor in front of her.

125 T - "Nobody has said why they think I chose the story of the "Enormous Turnip"?" (She had asked them to think of a reason as the day progressed. The ch chorus "Oh" as they remember the story line (people pulling up an enormous turnip). She disciplines two boys - "You two, we'll have to move you, you're not concentrating" and proceeds to explain a science handout on pulling and pushing See Figure 5.

130

Figure 5

yourself moving the empty box.



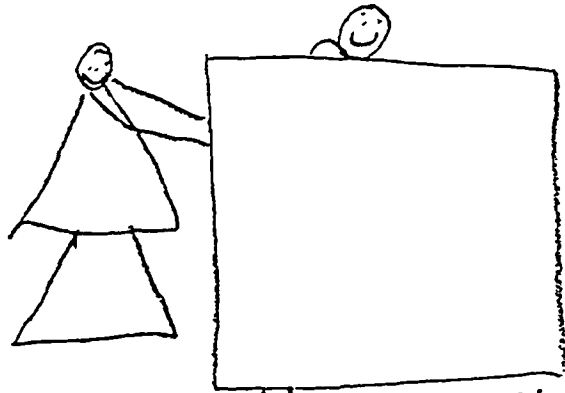
light

easy

empty

is easy to move the empty box
use it is light.

yourself trying to move the box with your
inside



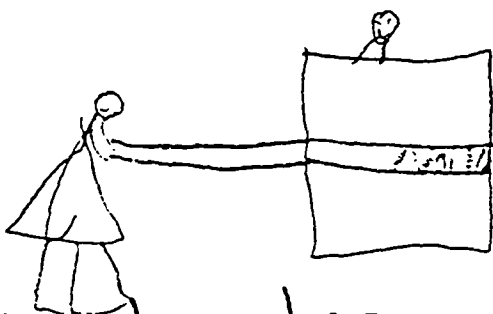
heavy

full

hard

is hard to move the full box
use it is heavy.

yourself making it easier to move the
box



I can move the box because I had rope
use your rope with rope away from the box

135 T takes the ch, sitting on floor around her, through Monday routine procedure of *INDIVIDUAL MARKING IN PUBLIC CONTEXT*.
and asks children to show any pictures they might have done during halfterm (homework). T comments - "I think they're lovely. Let's give them all a clap". There is no praise for individual children's work. Ch who had not completed their 'Look, cover, write' work are asked to do it that evening. They are not reprimanded for having neglected to do it.

140

TEACHER EXPLANATION ON LETTER WRITING

T explains the link between their class and a class in a Bristol school (between colleagues) and that the ch will be corresponding and later in the term they will have a class exchange for the day.

T introduces the concept of a pen-friend - "What's a pen-friend?"

145 Ch answers "Someone you dream about?"

T - "Well yes, you might, but what else...?" She doesn't reject the ch's answer but tries to take it further. She asks the ch to write their letters first in their rough books - "because it's difficult to be neat and think at the same time". giving them a practical reason for her request.

150 She tells them about the content of the letter - "Describe in your letter what you like.... whether you've got brown hair....whether you sit on your bottom (to a child that was wriggling about on the floor)....the other children laugh and the culprit takes up the required position. T involves a low achieving boy to think about what he doesn't like. He replies "I hate writing". She counters with "That's not true, you're a good writer". T interrupts to control a boy who is playing with his Planning Book - "Put it under your bottom!" She says this loudly in a clipped fashion.

155

TEACHER EXPLANATION ON ART

160 As part of the link between the two classes the ch will be sending each other their self portraits as well as a letter. T explains and gets ch to think about the proportions of the face. She points out that the eyes are half way down the face not near the top and talks about noses, mouths and colours of hair. The ch are encouraged to look at each other and compare what they see to what they usually draw. She tells them that yellow hair and pink skin do not exist and that they will need to mix their colours to obtain their hair colour and their skin colour. She tells them which colours to mix to obtain what they need. A girl introduces a new topic and starts to talk about rabbits. She is quietly but firmly corrected - "This is not rabbit talking time". Another girl who has stopped concentrating is reprimanded - "Elizabeth, if you don't listen you don't learn". A girl puts forward the suggestion that they will need to use a small paint

165

brush to paint the eye lashes. T rewards her with "A very good thinking girl" and emphasises this aspect of work (réfléchir) with "Don't let me see anybody not thinking".

170 She concludes with a summary of the jobs to be done: English - letter to a pen friend: Science - sorting a collection of balls into different sets (done in pairs with a helper) and emphasises individual creativity -
175 "I'm not going to give you any ideas, I want you to come up with your own ideas": Painting /Sticking - self portrait; Maths - worksheet (figure 6) which she explains; Sewing - continuing with decoration around their name cards. The Y2s are to plan 3 working jobs and one playing, the Y4s 4 working jobs.

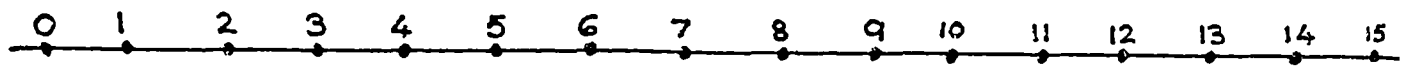
(During the ensuing working sessions the ch had great problems and spent much time in mixing the
175 colours in Art. They were also lacking in confidence in trying to comply with their Ts requests -

"Is this the right colour?"

"Where do I put the eyes?")

Difference

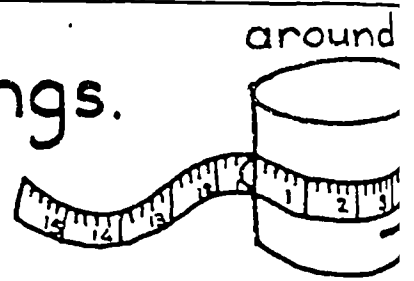
Use rods or cubes if you need help



7 ← 6 → 13	7 ← 4 → 3 ✓	7 ← 0 → ✓
7 ← 2 → 5 ✓	7 ← 3 → 10 ✓	2 ← 5 →
7 ← 1 → 8 ✓	6 ← 1 → 7 ✓	14 ← 7 →
7 ← 7 → 14 ✓	12 ← 5 → 7 ✓	1 ← 0 →

Measuring around things.

Use a tape measure.



1. I measured around a tin. It was 35 cm
2. I measured around a pig. It was
3. I measured around a cot. It was
4. I measured around a cynd. It was 8
5. I measured around a sucol. It was 10 1/2
6. I measured around a ping. It was 23

80 8 55 Ch still coming in , taking their Planning Books from their drawers and sitting down. Some milling around a table to choose a green pencil, which is the colour for that day's jobs
The 9.00 bell rings, T sits on her comfy chair, one clap of the hands is sufficient to quieten the ch.
T takes register and there is a quick discussion about fireworks night. A boy is complemented for having won a judo trophy - "Well done, that's something to be proud of".

85

TEACHER EXPLANATION ON ENGLISH

T tells them that is the second draft of their letter, She explains how adults too have to write several versions before the final one She also explains why it is necessary to write neatly and spell correctly -
"I'm quite good at reading your very good ones but some people can't read them. That's why we
190 have a correct way of spelling so that everyone can read it...That's why you come to school so you can learn the correct way. In the process you need to have a go at spelling for yourselves." (She complements the children for having worked hard on their first drafts - "You've used your brains" and speaks severely to a boy who is chatting). She tells the Y2s - "I've put a ring around a word that is wrongly spelt and I've written out the word on a strip of paper It's done in order. Sometimes I've
195 written in your book for example if you've forgotten a capital letter. In case the strips of paper get lost I've put your initials on the back. For the Y3s....I want you to read your letters and try to find out where you think you've gone wrong. If you're not sure look it up in a dictionary and if you can't find it bring me you word books. Remember all of to set your writing neatly on the line....descenders going under the line, ascenders above Remember it's got to be written as neatly and tidily as possible so your pen friends read
200 it. That's the whole purpose of writing things down".

TEACHER EXPLANATION ON MATHS

T explains the different Maths jobs

The Y2s are to make 3d shapes using "Polydron". She tells them they must make a cube.

205

T - "What kind of shapes will you need?"

Boy - "Squares"

T - "How many squares will you need?"

Girl - "4"

T - "No"

210

Another girl - "6"

Next, she tells them to make a triangular prism and asks - "How many oblong forms will you need" She also asks -

T - "What else will you need?"

Ch - "2"
215 T - "2 what?"
Ch - "2 sides"
T - "What sort of sides should they be?"
Ch - "2 triangles".

220 Finally they are asked to make a triangular bottomed prism. T asks them how many triangles they will need to do that and checks they know how many triangles would be required to make a square bottomed pyramid. She holds the shapes out for each shape that she talks about.

The Y2s are given a worksheet (Figure 7) on subtraction and measuring. T explains that they will have to find the difference between two numbers. She shows them the first one on the sheet and asks them -
225 "How much more is 13 than 7?" For the measuring question they are told to find (and keep so that they can be checked by her) six objects and measure around them. They have to fill in -

I measured around ----- and it was ----- cms.

T informs the ch that if they do not want to do the sheet that day they should put it away afterwards in their folders.

230 The Y3s have several Maths jobs too - There is a hands on job of sorting a tray full of wooden shapes into sets and a worksheet of addition and subtraction sums both vertically and horizontally. (T pauses in her explanation to quieten a boy - "John, you're not listening and your stopping Vanessa from listening too, aren't you?" There is a helper who will be at the Maths table.)

TEACHER EXPLANATION ON GEOGRAPHY OF BRITISH ISLES

235 T - "There's a job to do with a map, so what subject is it to do with?"

Boy - "Geography"

T - "Don't shout it out. What's it a map of? (She holds up a map of the British Isles).
Everybody look or you won't be able to know. (She taps a girl on the hand who is playing with her worksheet - "That should be right under your bottom or else you won't learn") I'm sure you've heard of
240 Northern Ireland. Can you tell me what you know about it?

Different children but one boy in particular make contributions about 'fighting'. T tells the ch how some of the people want to belong to the UK and some want to belong to the rest of Ireland. She tells them how to difficult it is to find a solution that will please everyone. She explains how they have to do the worksheet (Figure 8) and where they should write the answers - "I want you to write the answer to this
245 question here. Which country's name begins with 'S'?" A girl answers "Scotland" and a boy reads out the initials of the other countries "N.I. E. W." for which he is congratulated - "That's very cleverly spotted".

A boy continuing the previous point suggests a solution to the problems in N. Ireland - that the people who want to belong to the UK, move their, and those who want to belong to Ireland move to the South.

FIND THE DIFFERENCE

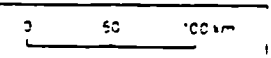
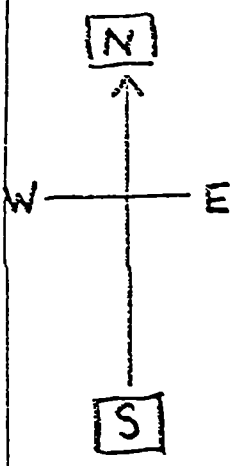
Page 7

Put out a red card and a blue card
Write down the numbers and find the
difference between them.

number	larger number	difference	smaller number	larger number	difference
	12	4 ✓	8	9	6 ✓
	9	7 ✓	2	8	6 ✓
	8	3 ✓	6	9	3 ✓
	9	2 ✓	2	12	10 ✓

Name: Lucio

colour :-
 England ... red
 Wales ... blue
 Scotland ... yellow
 Northern
 Ireland ... green
 Ireland ... brown



↳ United Kingdom is

made up of 4 countries.

England

Scotland

Wales

Northern

Ireland



250 The T complements him on this idea but tells him that the people of N. Ireland really want to stay where they are. She continues explaining the worksheet telling them the next question asks them to colour the countries in different colours. She interrupts to a girl who is not listening - "If you don't look, you won't know. I'm getting quite cross Vanessa". She addresses the class - "I shall know who hasn't been listening because they'll get something wrong". She concludes the explanation of the worksheet and tells
255 them it is aimed at the Y2s. AS with the Maths sheet if they don't want to do it that day they must put it away in their folders.

The Y3s are given a different sheet which the T explains is partly revision and partly extension. When they have coloured in the different countries they are asked to fill-in the sentences underneath according to their relative geographical position (N.S.E.W.). They are then required to write in the missing towns
260 (the initial only is given). She asks them why they think she has marked the letter B not far from S for Stroud.

Boy - "Is it because B is a town too?"

T - "Yes, but why particularly B?"

Another boy - "Because it's near?"

265 T - "Yes it's quite near"

Several ch then realise that it stands for Bristol where their pen friends live.

T summarises the jobs (including a Painting and Sticking one she will explain later) that they can choose from for the day and explains that Geography can go in the box for Science in their Planning Books - "I don't need to see your books as it's quite straightforward. Pop you sheets away and come straight away to
270 the Painting and Sticking area. (Ch write in their books, put sheets away in folders and move to corridor area) Come on you must all come now, even if you haven't put your things away".

TEACHER CRAFT DEMONSTRATION

T tells them how before there were photographs paintings were the only way of knowing what people
275 looked like. She talks to them about picture frames and describes different types. She then shows them how they will be making a frame for their self portraits As she demonstrates the process she keeps them thinking - "You place the painting on the piece of paper and mark the corners - how many corners are there?" and -

T - "What's the force making the glue come out?"

280 Boy - "Is it the weight of the glue?"

T - "Yees" (hesitantly)

Another boy "It's gravity"

She urges them to make up their own patterns for the strings shapes which she will spray later with gold paint "Don't copy other people's patterns or mine. You can do them in any pattern you like". She

85 encourages them - "I expect your pen friends will put them up on the wall. I don't want to send them at all".

T asks who had planned this job for the day and selects four ch with their hands up to work there.

9.40- 10.00 *INDIVIDUAL/GROUP WORK*

90 Ch settle down to work. Most are in the Maths area although they're working on different tasks and levels; 2 in the Geography/Science area; none of them have elected to do their letter writing; three Y2s are playing out on the balcony.

A girl has lost her work and reports this to the T - "You'll just have to find it...I can't go round looking for you".

95 T has settle some ch who have not set to work but they are the exception.

ASSEMBLY & BREAK

11.00-11.50 *INDIVIDUAL/GROUP WORK*

100 Ch enter from break and without being told return to their work. Some commotion with David who had been issuing birthday party invitations, some boys upset that they had not been invited. T speaks fairly to David and warns him she will ask his mother exactly what is going on.

Ch very proud to finish their jobs and inform each other - "I'm on my second job"/ "I've already done one job".

305 A group are now working on their letters in the English area with a helper. T moves from working with some Y3s on the practical Maths to check other groups. She is approached by a girl who has finished her Geography and she complements her work - "You're very good at Geography...you could have done a Y3 sheet. You're even a Y4 ." When she checks the English group she encourages them loudly enough for everyone to hear - "All the children writing their letters are doing extremely well. I'm very pleased."

310

T LEADS CLASS IN OVERVIEW

Ch sit around the T as at the beginning of the morning. She holds up a letter written by Jane. She tells them it is excellent and points out how easy it is to read. She reiterates the importance of spelling and good writing for communication. T checks her reading list and when ch ask to stay in after lunch she checks if she hasn't heard them recently. Even a poor reading boy puts his hand up to stay in and read. T has a novel way of dismissing ch for lunch. Each day, following a rota a ch sits on a special seat 'the kinderbox' and chooses the criteria by which ch can leave -e.g. "anyone wearing pink". It sometimes takes a long time.

Analysis of St Martin CP Lessons

Learning as a 'game'

Teacher uses concept of "a game", eg. line 14 - "On va faire un jeu que vous ne connaissez pas"; line - 59 "Voilà le jeu"; lines 178-179 - "Avec ça on va faire un jeu". Also line 320 - "On va faire un jeu ensemble".

The game has 'traps' - lines 205 "Attention aux pièges" and line 216 "C'est bien personne n'est tombée dans le piège".

Like a game there are rules and some things are not allowed - line 54 "On a pas le droit de faire ça je viens de le dire", and lines 66-67 "Il a le droit de se tromper".

The 'game' concept both motivates the children and implies the underlying rules and structures of games and learning.

Humour Teacher builds humour into her teaching - line 116 when a girl puts up "Vincent mange grandpère" T asks if Vincent is an ogre, without spelling it out children react to difference in meaning when a noun functions as a subject instead of an object.

Teacher introduces a lesson by referring to its inherent humour - line 273 "C'est une histoire très amusante". The childrens' expectations are not disappointed - line 274; they are keen for their parents to share the humour too - lines 303-304 "Et puis après on rigolera".

Use of narrative

Teacher uses narrative in teaching a mathematical concept - (Bruner's theory that narrative is a way of making experiences meaningful) she sets the scene with a mathematical duck - "C'est l'histoire du canard magique" (lines 14 - 16) who is very greedy and needs to know how to work out which out of two numbers is the greatest so that he can eat that amount first. She frequently reinvokes the story - line 30 - the duck cannot cope with more than ten objects at a time as it makes him tired; line 45 - the duck is undecided, his mouth hangs open as he doesn't know which beak to use; lines 52-53 - the duck is no longer greedy as he is only faced with the choice of one of each object.

Work and effort

T makes it clear that it is important that ch think - line 42 "Tu es occupé à lever le doigt mais pas à réfléchir".

It is not disguised that it is difficult - lines 58-59 "La fiche est eun peu compliquée, on va travailler à l'ardoise. Je veux que vous comprenez bien d'abord" but it is implied that effort and work will get them there. T uses word 'work' as well as 'game' - line 58. T stresses 'work' element - lines 149-150 "Tu dois faire travailler la tête"

Emphasis on 'thinking' and letting children take time - lines 127 "Tournez-toi et réfléchis à trouver une phrase plus longue"; lines 127-128 "J'en étais sûre, tu n'as pas assez réfléchi". Teacher puts emphasis on the children 'thinking' - line 215 "Attention c'est tout ce que je vais vous dire".

Structured learning (related to Bruner?).

Maths lesson - 11th Jan 10.30 - 11.30

The process of learning follows a clear order from concrete to symbolic and simple to complex (A), teacher control to child control (B); public learning and practice to private learning and practice (C): The T leads the children through a process of learning, she takes them onto a new stage of learning (Vygotsky) (all of them?, later T reveals that she expects 2 or 3 of the children to have forgotten by the next day), she increases the complexity and level.

A. The lesson proceeds from real objects (magnetic counters) to actual numbers in Extension 2 line 74-.

The lesson moves from the children dealing with objects and the T verbalising this to numbers - lines 19 - 27, to the children having to express the mathematical concept in words and numbers - lines 33-34 "Vous devez me donner la phrase '6 est plus gros que 5'", lines 37-38 and lines 55-56, developing the linguistic and symbolic domain of learning.

B. The lesson progresses from the start where the teacher dominates and child choice is limited to choosing a combination of counters under 10 in number to the end where children have more choice, they can "inventer" and are less supervised by the teacher. Even at the start it is important to see that that pupils do have some choice.

C. Learning and practice are first public events - *Teacher Exposition* lines 12 - 56; this becomes more private in Extension 1 - lines 57-72 as the teacher communicates individually with the children; and more private still in Extension 2 - lines 73-84

Lessons developing reading and writing

Lesson of 11th Jan, 9.00 - 10.00

A. There is a development from simple to complex. Children start by making simple Noun - Verb - Object sentences; T encourages the complication of a preposition that a child adds; leading to the longest sentences they can make. Teacher guiding pupils.

B. and C. Progress from T led to more child control and individual private work - first half of lesson is *Teacher exposition* with pupils, second half T divides class into three for *Practice - pupils individually at own or teacher's pace* - top 2 groups work on own, T concentrates on bottom group.

Whole class approach with differentiation for Vanessa and two advanced pupils.

Lesson of 18th January, 10.30 - 11.30

A. Within the first section it moves from the simple stage of copying a missing word -line 186 to the more complex process of deleting a definite article - lines 205-206 as also in lines 214-215.

B and C. The lesson begins with a first section of *Practice pupils individually at teacher's's pace* which is very structured, there is no room for children's inventiveness or discovery, only one word is the correct one. The second section is another *Practice - pupils working individually at T's pace* but it is done more privately and with less control from the Teacher, though she tries to ensure that the ch move onto the next question when she says so - lines 236 and 242 and 246 It is equally structured and lacking in child choice.

Lesson 31st January 8.30 - 10.00

The lesson consists of two parts - *Teacher exposition* and *Handwriting Practice - individuals at own pace* which reinforces the reading as it uses the same words. A third part of *Practice - pupils individually at own pace* is to re read the story for homework.

The structure of the first section is also divided into two - working from a worksheet and working from the same story on the board, with a slight break of children doing some colouring. Apart from the colouring in there is no pupil choice or room for manoeuvre. The first section consists of much repetition - lines 292, 296; learning takes place at teacher's or rate of slower children, faster children have to wait.

A. There is a slight increase in complexity in the first section as the teacher introduces phonic work in looking at the name of crocodile - lines 300-301, and gives them the learning strategy of looking at a whole word and 'photographing it' - line - 298.

The teacher makes children aware that they are moving onto a new stage in the development of their learning to read - she no longer has to help them by writing the 'story' on the board first and go through it with them - line 267 "Vous êtes grands, je n'ai rien écrit au tableau".

Teacher refers back to previous learning of the word "dérangez" - line 289 the children can recite the given sentence in which the word occurred. (Bruner - the importance of being able to store knowledge and retrieve it).

Lesson of 31st January, 1.30 - 3.00

The lesson progresses from *Teacher led exposition* to *Practice - pupils work at own speed*. A third section is an *Extension - Practice - pupils work at own speed* for homework - four passages to read based on the same structures and words of previous lessons.

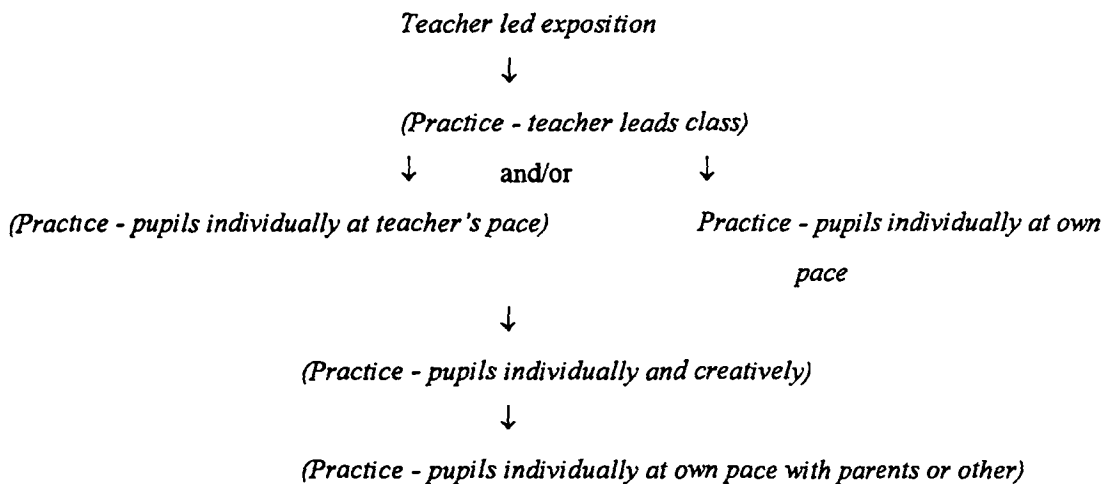
A. The *Teacher exposition* follows on directly from the phonics of the previous lesson. It is a development in complexity from that lesson. The children are having to identify and reproduce the difference between 'or' and 'ro' syllables. The section is divided into two: the teacher positions herself at

the front and makes sure the children remember the words and can reproduce the two sounds. She then sits with them for the second section. The children choose to go the board and choose the word they want to work with (element of discovery for themselves and participating in discovery of others eg. Michael tries something which is seen to be incorrect).

B. In *Practice - individuals at own pace* pupils have no choice in the sense of experimentation but there is less T control of pace.

C. The lesson develops from public class work of *Teacher led exposition* to individual and private work of *Practice- pupils individually at own pace*.

The underlying structure of the written up lessons is:



Learning

There is an element of learning by discovery (Piaget) although it is concerned more with the manipulation of symbols than real objects. For example the children meet the concept of “is the same as” lines 44-49 - one child is experimenting with the mathematical symbols the rest of the class participate vicariously in his discoveries. The boy tries using the two opposite signs of more than and less than together but is guided by the T towards the = sign.

This public ‘discovering’ is also seen in lines 123-124 where the children are “discovering” by watching others getting different sentences right, or wrong, or right but nonsensical, as well as being able to try out their own ideas.

The teacher makes it clear that there is “something” to be understood (a concept - “une notion”) - line 34; “Quand vous aurez bien compris ...?” and lines 58-59 “Je veux que vous comprenez bien d’abord”.

Pupils participation is very high - line 49 - everyone has a chance to work on the board, the children are keen to do so.

The learning process involves the social group of the class - lines 190-191 "On y va?" and children's chorused reply of "Oui". By using "on" the teacher includes herself in the group too - line 19 "on va mettre des gommettes.." Sometimes she separates herself from them - line 118 "Vous avez bien rigolé, maintenant je vous demande des phrases sérieuses".

Teacher as 'helper' who explains

The teacher's role in the learning process is made clear - line 58-59 "La fiche est un peu compliquée, on va travailler à l'ardoise. Je veux que vous comprenez bien d'abord" - by asking them to work on their slates she will be able to help them and she wants them to succeed. The teacher overtly brings up her role as 'explainer' - line 71-72 and makes a connection between the standard of her explanation and the children's success at understanding "C'est peut-être que j'ai bien expliqué".

Lesson write up - St Martin CP class

21 children in class

- Levels:
1. 3 children below the CP level
 - 2 & 3. 2 groups of ch, slower ones seated to the T's left
 4. 1 girl to be transferred up to CE1

5

11th Jan

8.30 - 10.00 Reading and composing sentences on subject - verb - object pattern

10 10.00 - 10.30 Break

10.30 - 11.30 Maths

TEACHER LED EXPOSITION

15 T - "On va faire un jeu que vous ne connaissez pas. C'est l'histoire du canard magique.....c'est un très gros gourmand. Il a un bec magique. Le "canard mathématique" (T repeats name). Il s'appelle comme ça parce qu'il est obligé de savoir compter pour pouvoir prendre le plus" (T goes next door to quieten down children whose teacher is not present - there's a communicating door)

T holds up Maths signs (magnets on back) - = , < , > .

20 T - "On va s'amuser à donner du travail au canard mathématique. On va mettre des gommettes à droite et à gauche"

T puts up 3 magnetic counters on special board, leaves a space, and puts up four counters -

0 0	0 0
0	0 0

T asks - "Quel bec il faut donner, le bec < , le bec = , le bec > ?"

25 T tells them - "Le bec < parce que 4 c'est plus grand que 3"

ie.	0 0	0 0
	0	< 0 0

T explains that ch can go to the board put up some counter stickers and then choose the correct beak.

Ch very keen to do this.

30 T - "N'en mettez pas plus que dix parce que plus que dix ça fatigue le canard"

(T to Vanessa, who the T wanted to stay in Maternelle for another year but whose parents insisted she go into CP, "Si c'est trop dur tu sors les jeux que je t'ai donné hier")

35 T elicits a verbal description from the children of the mathematical concept they are expressing on the board - "Vous devez me donner la phrase - '6 c'est plus gros que 5'. Quand vous aurez bien compris on le fera sur la fiche".

T to individual ch - "Ce qui est important c'est que tu regardes et que tu fasses bien ta fiche après"

One ch at the board put up an incorrect sign. T tells her to think it out - "Le bec est ouvert de quel côté?" and asks to say it in words - "5 est plus gros que 2". T - "Je ne suis pas sure que tu as bien compris, continue de bien regarder"

40 (T shuts door to corridor because of the noise of a vacuum cleaner)

Another ch makes an error they correct together in front of the class and she reprimands him - "Tu es occupé à lever le doigt mais pas à réfléchir"

T - "Très bien!" to a child who correctly places the stickers and gives the verbal description.

One ch goes up and puts up 4 stickers on one side and 4 stickers on the other side. He adds the signs < and > . T is amused and indulgent - "Le canard est bouche bée il ne peut pas se décider, il a le bec en égal!" She asks for a volunteer to put up the correct sign. A child goes to the board and puts up the equals sign. T is pleased with the extension to the equals sign - "C'est bien d'avoir mis 4 et 4 ça m'a bien plu".

45

Ch impatient to be chosen T assures them "Ceux qui ne sont pas venus vont venir".

50 Another ch puts up equal numbers, this time -

0 0

T introduces humour again referring to the smallness of the number - "Oh, il est vraiment malade, il n'est plus gourmand!". Ch laugh. The same ch puts up two signs - > <

T - "On a pas le droit de faire ça, je viens de le dire" Il n'a pas de bec comme ça" She reexplains why not and the ch puts up the correct sign. With the T's help some/most of the class put this into words - "1 égal 1"

55

EXTENSION -1 PRACTICE - TEACHER LEADS CLASS

T explains change of activity - "La fiche est un peu compliquée, on va travailler à l'ardoise. Je veux que vous comprenez bien d'abord". "Vous sortez vos ardoisesAlors voilà le jeu ..." T writes up -

60

0 0 0

0 ?

0 0 0 0

Ch have to draw one of the "beaks" on their slates and hold them up.

65 (Vanessa who was trying gives up and asks the T what she should do. T directs her to another game)

T reprimands a boy who is making fun of his neighbour - "Même si il se trompe il a le droit de se tromper"

T continues with this activity, checking they are not making any errors

T pleased with children - "Vous êtes des champions, les autres années il y en a eu plein qui se sont trompés"

70

Children pleased with teacher - one ch says - "Toi aussi tu es championne" T concedes - "C'est peut-être parce que j'ai bien expliqué"

EXTENSION - 2 - a. PRACTICE - PUPILS INDIVIDUALLY AT OWN PACE

75 T extends activity - "Puisque vous êtes tellement champions on va faire une expérience. Vous écrivez comme moi (Children copy on slates T's writing on board) -

2	1
5	3
8	8

et vous allez mettre le signe qui convient". T goes round checking those that are correct.

80 - b. *PRACTICE - PUPILS INDIVIDUALLY AND CREATIVELY*

Children can make up their own. "Vous effacez et vous en inventez d'autres".

Children show T what they have produced. T - "Parfait", "Très bien".

T asks two children to take it further and try numbers up to 100.

Children told to leave their work on tables and line up for lunch.

85

PRACTICE - PUPILS INDIVIDUALLY AT OWN PACE on a worksheet

Carried out during my absence.

90 8.30 - 10.00 French /Reading lesson

8.30 - 9.00 Class lesson involving children writing on their slates "V" (Vrai) or "F" (Faux) in response to sentences T writes on board which relate to a story (of a few sentences) they had studied another day.

95

9.00 - 10.00 Children "write" stories as a whole class

TEACHER LED EXPOSITION

T puts up word cards with magnetic clips on them onto a special board -

100

----- mange -----

Children put up their hands to be chosen to "write a story" using the one given word, selecting the word cards from a pile and sticking it/them on the board. They have to read out the sentence they have written before sitting down and everyone has to remember each sentence that is made up and not repeat it -

105

eg. Vincent mange un gateau

T - "Rappelez vous de ce qu'elle a écrit, je ne veux plus le voir"

Children go to board one by one and follow above pattern until one ch adds a preposition -

Vincent mange au restaurant

110

T remarks with pleasure on the difference - "Très bien, c'est une bonne idée"

A girl tries -

Vincent mange grandpère

T calls her a "canaille", she knew what she was writing, and in the same spirit asks - "Vincent, c'est un ogre?"

115

Children enjoying themselves and class responds with much merriment to two more suggestions -

Un gateau mange grandpère

Grandpère mange la carte

T puts a halt to this - "Vous avez bien rigolé, maintenant je vous demande des phrases sérieuses"

T notices Vanessa is paying attention and encourages her - "Vanessa a envie de faire une phrase".

120

The children are keen to be chosen, T checks that Vanessa is still watching as she chooses another ch. Mathias goes up and takes a long time to put up the stickers. T to children who are becoming restless - "Laissez le réfléchir, vous savez que Mathias prend son temps". He puts up -

Grand père mange avec Vincent

T again pleased with this development - "C'est bien ça"

125 (Antoine not paying attention chats to friend behind him - "Tourne toi et réfléchis à trouver une phrase plus longue".) T. addresses the whole class - "Qui va avoir une idée à faire ça?" Antoine is sure he can do it but ends up composing the same three word pattern T jumps on him - "J'en étais sûr, tu n'as pas assez réfléchi"

Another ch goes up and writes -

130 Vincent mange avec grandpère au restaurant

Ch calls out that she can make an even longer one - "Il y en a encore une", T feigns amazement "Ce n'est pas possible, c'était la plus longue"

Different children come out and some achieve longer sentences.

T notices Vanessa has abandoned her attempts to follow and is doing some colouring. T asks her kindly to put it away and try to follow the lesson or else she will not be able to do the worksheet.

135 *PRACTICE - PUPILS INDIVIDUALLY AT OWN OR TEACHER'S PACE*

T gives out worksheets - group 1 does worksheet (Figure 1.
group 2 does worksheet (Figure 2)
groups 3 and 4 do worksheet (Figure 3)

140 T concentrates on helping children in groups 3 and 4. She writes up some of the answers on the board eg. number 2 of worksheet c. -

Vincent regarde la carte des desserts

She urges them - "Aidez vous de ce qu'il y a au tableau". Children have difficulty reading it out. Some children are conferring.

145 T checks individual children - "Tu appelles ça du coloriage? Oh que c'est laid!" to a ch who is making a mess of colouring in the drawings of his worksheet.

"Tu sais que Mathieu aime être tranquille. Laisse le faire sa vie. Il n'a pas besoin de Michael pour lui aider".

"Tu avais envie de colorier, mais il faut travailler avant. Tu dois

150 faire travailler la tête"

Two children from group 3 who have finished are sorting out the exercise books on a table. Vanessa can't resist leaving her work and going to help them.

T goes round to children who have finished checking their work is correct. Once their worksheet marked they select their exercise book from the table and glue in the worksheets. When this is done

155 children without asking go to reading corner, select a book and look at it on the benches in the corner.

T continues checking work and maintaining quiet - "On ne parle pas, on ne dérange pas ceux qui n'ont pas fini". "Antoine ça va être l'heure de sortir, il y en a qui n'ont pas fini et tu les déranges"

T checks group 1 ie Mathilde

T checks Vanessa's work - "C'est bien, tu y arrives. Il y en a qui manque, mais c'est beaucoup

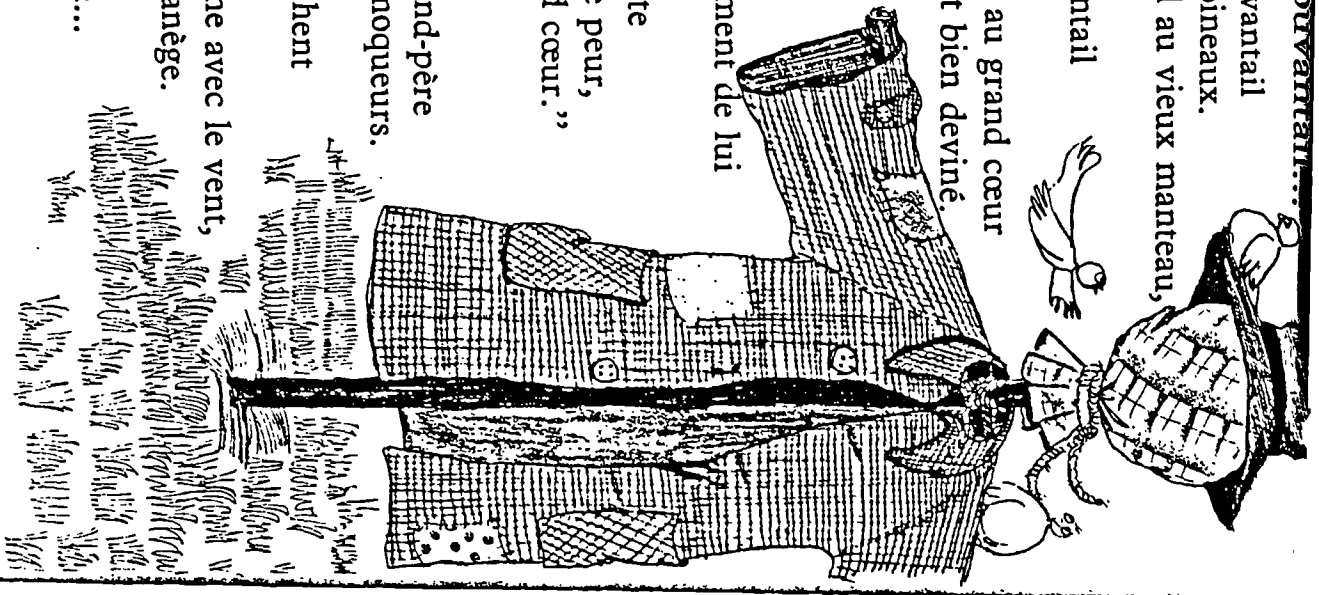
160 mieux"

Children stack exercise books back on shelf.

le travail d'un épouvantail...

1 le travail d'un épouvantail est d'effrayer les moineaux. mais cet épouvantail au vieux manteau, au chapeau bosselé, n'est pas un épouvantail comme les autres : c'est un épouvantail au grand cœur et les moineaux l'ont bien deviné

2 chaque matin, ils viennent voler au-dessus de sa tête et se moquent gentiment de lui en pépant :
 "tu es bête, tu es bête de vouloir nous faire peur, épouvantail au grand cœur."
 3 l'épouvantail sourit comme un vieux grand-père à ses petits enfants moqueurs.
 4 les moineaux se perchent sur ses bras tendus et l'épouvantail tourne avec le vent, tourne comme un manège. et chaque matin c'est la fête au jardin... pauvre jardinier ! il n'y peut rien...



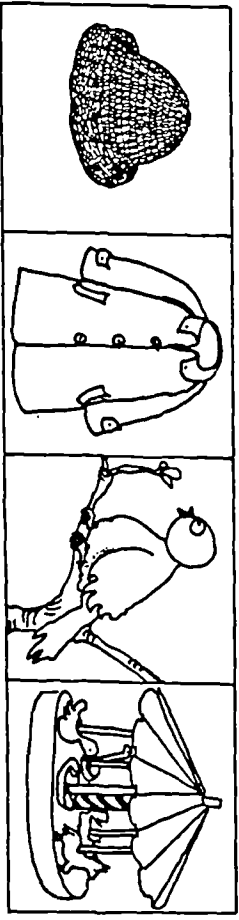
la ronde des mots

l'épouvantail a un vieux manteau. les moineaux l'aiment beaucoup. l'épouvantail est triste. Il effraie les moineaux.

Je remplace le tiret (-) par tar ou tra :
 une — tine | de la mou—de
 je — vaille | il at—pe une balle
 je suis en re—d | elle en— dans la classe

Il est ils sont
 il — bon élève | ils — en retard
 ils — blessés | il — sportif
 il — peureux | ils — amis

Je recopie et je complète les phrases :



mon bonnet un manteau un oiseau le mariage

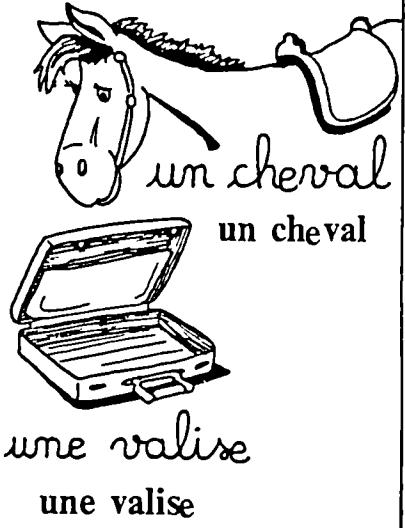
en prison dans une cage : c'est
 Il fait froid : vite
 Il tourne, tourne, tourne : c'est
 Je n'ai plus froid à la tête avec

la ronde des mots

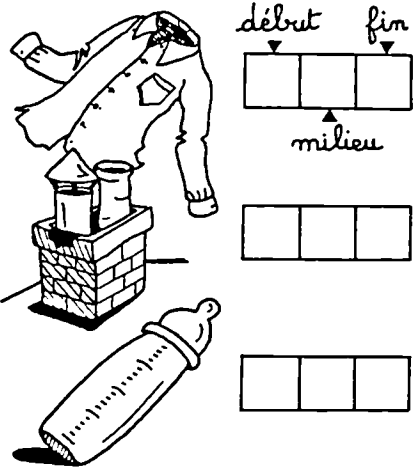
8. le son [ə] → e - e

JE DECOUVRE ET J'APPRENDS

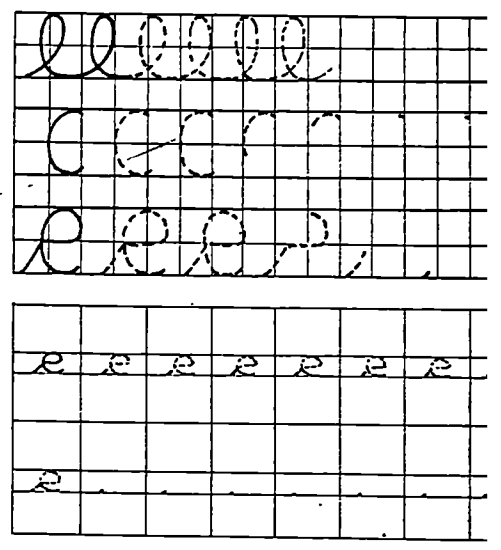
a) Observe.



b) Indique par si tu [ə] au début, au milieu ou à la fin du mot.

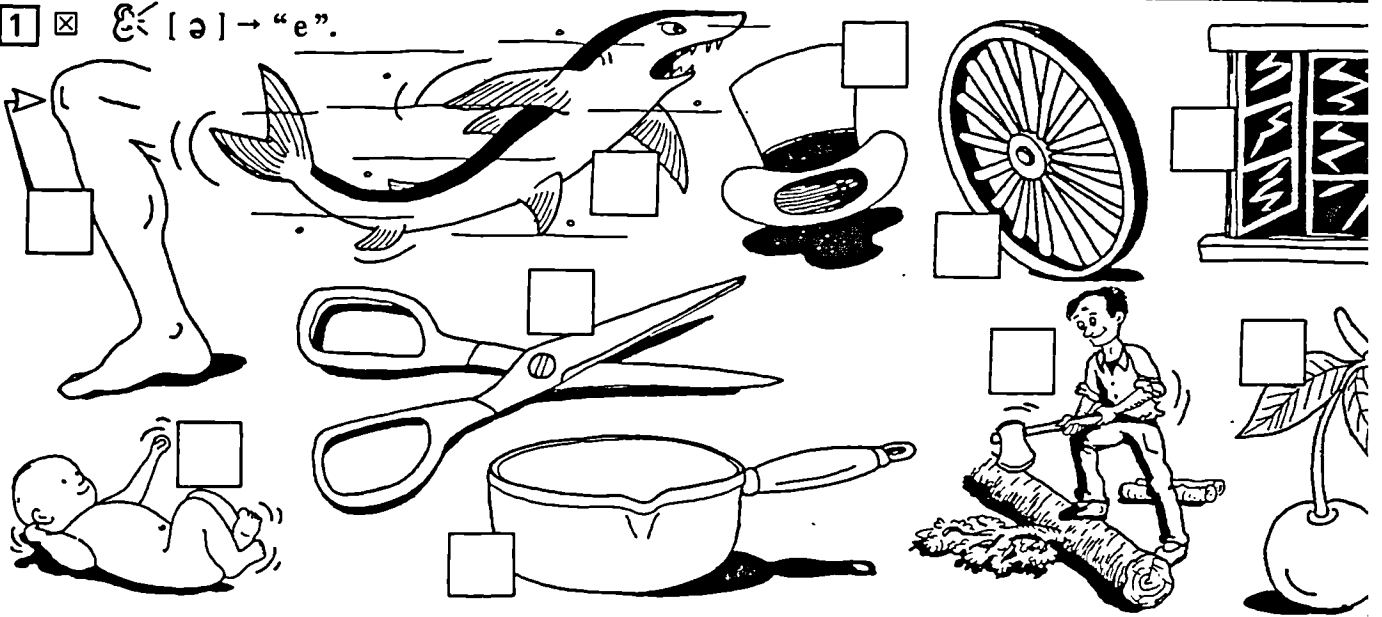


c) Repasse et continue.

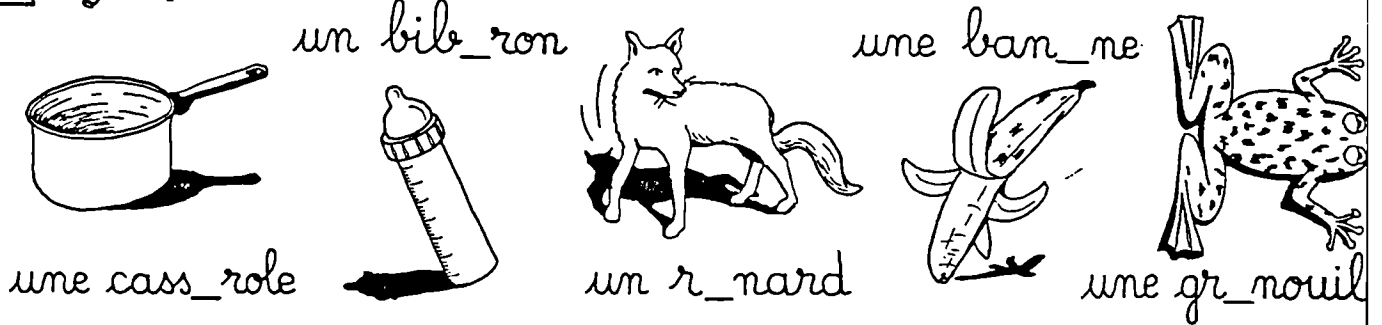


J'APPLIQUE

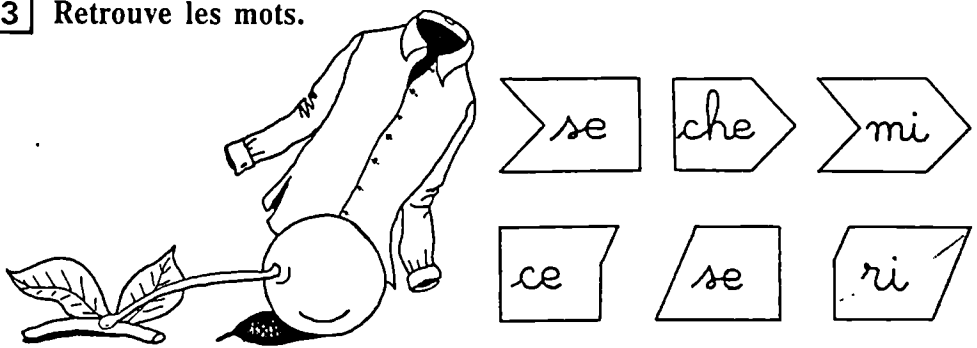
1 [ə] → "e".



2 e quand il le faut.



3 Retrouve les mots.



Avec des mots

1. J'entoure le mot de l'étiquette.

mange

dessert

regarde

range

dresser

regard

manger

dessert

renarde

mange

désert

garder

marge

desserré

regarde

lange

dessert

dégrade

2. Je sépare les mots.

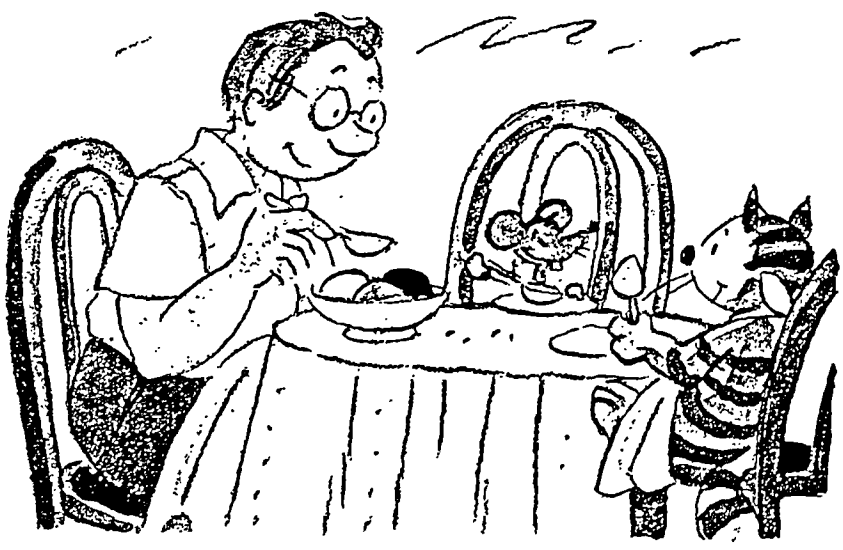
Vincent regardelacartedesdesserts.

3. J'écris ce qui correspond au dessin.

Vincent
une glace
le restaurant



4. J'entoure ce qui va avec le dessin.



l'école

la glace

la forêt

le salon

l'ours

la souris

le restaurant

la voiture

le grand-père

les lunettes

le chat

le sport

Three children in book corner are chatting. One goes to T “Maîtresse, je pourrais prendre une feuille et dessiner?” T replies - “Tu parlais tellement que tu ne m’a pas entendu dire qu’on sort dans deux minutes”.

T addresses class - “Heureusement que tout le monde a terminé parce que avec le bruit que vous faites X et X je ne sais pas comment les autres pourraient se concentrer”

“Ceux qui n’ont pas collé, collé, les autres, habillez vous (coats hanging up on pegs along one wall) et rangez vous” ie. line up before going out to play.

170

Disrupted first half of morning due to deep snow, teachers and pupils arriving late.

10.30 - 11.30 Children practising reading and writing as a whole class.

PRACTICE - PUPILS INDIVIDUALLY AT TEACHER'S PACE

175 Children come in with soaking clothes from playing in the wet snow. They change into dry trousers and socks and hang up wet clothers to dry where they can.

Teacher explains they are goig to do some "lecture" using their slates. Children respond enthusiastically - "Ouais!"

180 Teacher indicates magnetic word cards and explains that they will be used to play a game - "Avec ça on va faire un jeu".

At this point she asks them to take out their slates - "Maintenant vous prenez l'ardoise et j'attends"
Teacher selects children who put up their hands in response to her questions asking someone to read each of three words, and then writes up the sentence:

L'éléphant a ——— ans.

185 She also puts up a list of seven groups of words:

lent - trois - l'éléphant - bougies - le gateau - énorme - les animaux

The children are asked to choose the missing word from the list and write the whole sentence on their slates.

(One boy threatened with having to stand in the corner if he does not keep quiet).

190 Children show their slates to teacher at the front. Teacher makes no comment about their success or otherwise, she continues - "Vous effacez." She checks she has the class with her - "On y va?" The children chorus - "Oui".

(A girl whose felt tip pen has run out is not participating. Teacher - "Tu ne sais pas que si ton feutre marche pas tu prends du papier?" Teacher continues that she hadn't worked well yesterday either and if this were to continue the girl parents would have to come and see her. This is said nicely but firmly. She finishes by asking her to fetch some paper.)

195

Teacher puts up next sentence -

L'éléphant est un animal ———

200 (Teacher chides a boy - "François essaie de réfléchir, ne regarde pas devant ni derrière, essaie de trouver les mots".

To another boy - "Tu es tellement lent à écrire que même quand on a fini on n'arrive pas à le voir")

Teacher congratulates those that were correct when they have held up their slates- "Ceux qui avaient raison c'et bien".

Teacher puts up another sentence -

205 Maman fait un ——— au chocolat

She warns the children to be careful - "Attention au piège", the trap is that the magnetic word includes the definite article "le" which the children don't need as they already have the indefinite article "un".

Some children are caught out. Teacher congratulates those that avoided it - "Ceux qui n'ont pas mis 'le' c'est très bien".

(Teacher has to deal with a disruptive boy - "Tout ce qu'on te dit, tu dis 'non'. Les Maternelles sont toujours à la neige, tu peux y aller si tu veux" - the Maternelle children have a much longer break. Teacher addresses the rest of the class - "On continue pour ceux qui veulent?" The children chorus back - "Ouiiiii".)

Teacher writes up another sentence -

Dans la forêt il y a des —

She gives them a warning referring to another trap - "Attention, c'est tout ce que j'ai à vous dire"

She is pleased with the result - "C'est bien, personne n'est tombée dans le piège. Qu'est-ce qu'il ne fallait pas mettre?" "Les" answer the children laughing at what the sentence would have looked like..

Teacher brings this part of the lesson to an end - "Effacez et rangez les ardoises".

PRACTICE - TEACHER LEADS CLASS

(Teacher spots Vanessa helping herself to paper to do a drawing - "Tu n'as pas envie de travailler avec nous?" She asks her to take part too.

Teacher gives out worksheets (Figure 4) and explains that as the children are "énervés" they will go through the explanation together. She asks them to put the date on the sheet.

Mathilde is given a separate sheet which T apologises for as it is to do with a desert which is not very suitable for a snowy day.

(She has to calm the children down - "Si je n'ai pas le calme pour travailler je crois que vous vous moquez de moi".

She also has to deal with an interruption from a boy - "Vous croyez que c'est normal que Mathieu me pose une question comme ça?" Some of the children had not heard the question and were keen to find out - "Qu'est-ce qu'il a dit?". Teacher replies "Une bêtise, on ne va pas la répéter".)

Teacher chooses a child to read out the 'story' no.1.

She asks Claire to repeat it, which she can't as the teacher points out, she wasn't listening.

Teacher asks another child to read it, and this time when asked Claire can repeat it.

Teacher checks everyone is following and they all repeat it together.

Teacher asks who can explain no. 2. and sets them off - "Allez y, attention aux pièges". As an afterthought she asks if they would like the models ie. "oui" and "non" on the board. She puts these up in response to their chorus of - "Oui".

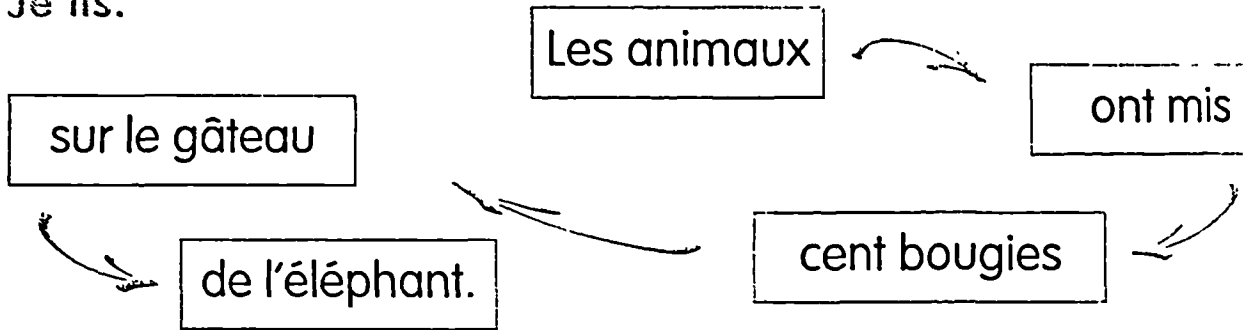
(She warns the children that the headteacher is in the office today ie. if they don't behave that's where they will go).

Teacher moves around checking. She advises Claire to re read the first and third sentences.

Je découvre



1. Je lis.



2. Je réponds par oui ou non.

- L'éléphant a trois ans? _____
- Les animaux ont fait un gâteau pour l'éléphant? _____
- Ils ont mis des bougies sur le gâteau? _____

3. J'écris.

les animaux

l a

l'éléphant

l'é



un gâteau

un g

la bougie

la b

4. Je dessine et je colorie trois animaux de la page 52.

Teacher indicates that the children who are ready can continue and do no. 3 -"Les enfants qui sont
245 surs d'avoir bien terminer peuvent aller à no. 3".

(She moves around chivvyng them - "On ne peut pas s'amuser avec Mathieu et faire attention à son travail". "Dépêche toi un peu Claire, s'il te plaît".)

Teacher tries to move them onto no. 4 - "Tout le monde essaie de lire no. 4" - to themselves.

Class waits quietly for those who are still writing. Teacher urges them on - "Dépechez-vous il y en a
250 qui attende". "On attend que tout le monde ait finit son écriture". "Les limaçons ont encore une toute
petite minute", etc.

Teacher writes no. 4 on the board and asks the first next child to finish to read it out. As she has
difficulty with a word the teacher asks Mathilde to help -"Celui là est difficile, on demande à
Mathilde"

255
While children draw animals, some copying from pictures on the walls, teacher goes through
Mathilde's work with her. Mathilde then prepares the exercise books in which the children will stick
their worksheets. Teacher continues checking children's work and asks them to write the name of the
animal by each drawing. As the children finish they take out an unfinished Maths worksheet, as
260 instructed, and continue with that. When all have finished the drawings everything is put away and
the class listen to individual children reciting the poem they have been learning.

8.30 - 10.00

265 A few minutes of informal talk as children and T enter classroom and take off coats, a girl shows a sore finger, a boy shows his ski badge to the teacher who then shows the class

TEACHER LED EXPOSITION

Children told to get out their writing equipment from their satchels (behind their chairs).
Teachers points out their progress in reading and that they are getting onto a new stage - "Ce matin
270 nous avons une nouvelle histoire. Vous êtes grands, je n'ai rien écrit au tableau" She hands out worksheets (Figure 5) which they are to read to themselves while she attends to Mathilde.
Children in fact watch and listen in appreciative silence as the T goes through the work Mathilde had done at home.

275 T interrupts her work with Mathilde to check children - "Dès que j'aurais fini avec Mathilde on en parlera ensemble. C'est une histoire très amusante." She names several girls and boys who are capable of reading it on their own.

Some children giggle as they read the story to themselves.

T turns to children and asks them about the content of the story:
280 "Qu'est ce que vous avez observé?" Ch - "Y a un crocodile qui dort encore à midi pile"
T - "Et où est-il?" CH - "Sur un rocher"
T - "Sur un roc"
T - "Où est le Nil?"

285 T leads children in a discussion about Egypt, children contribute what they know (gleaned from Tin Tin book)

T asks who can work out the crocodile's name. A girl manages and gets a pat on the head and a "très bien" from the T.

T checks children understand the language contents eg. "midi pile" by asking questions and then if necessary explaining the meanings herself.

290 T moves on to the reading of the sign. She stops a ch who can read it from reading it out and asks another child to try the first words. They finish the sentence as a whole class together.

T reminds children that they have already met the word "dérangez" in another story. They remember and recite the sentence where it was found.

A boy asks if he can read out the first sentence. He gets stuck so T selects another boy to help him.

295 Another child volunteers to read the same paragraph. Teacher asks for someone else to repeat it.

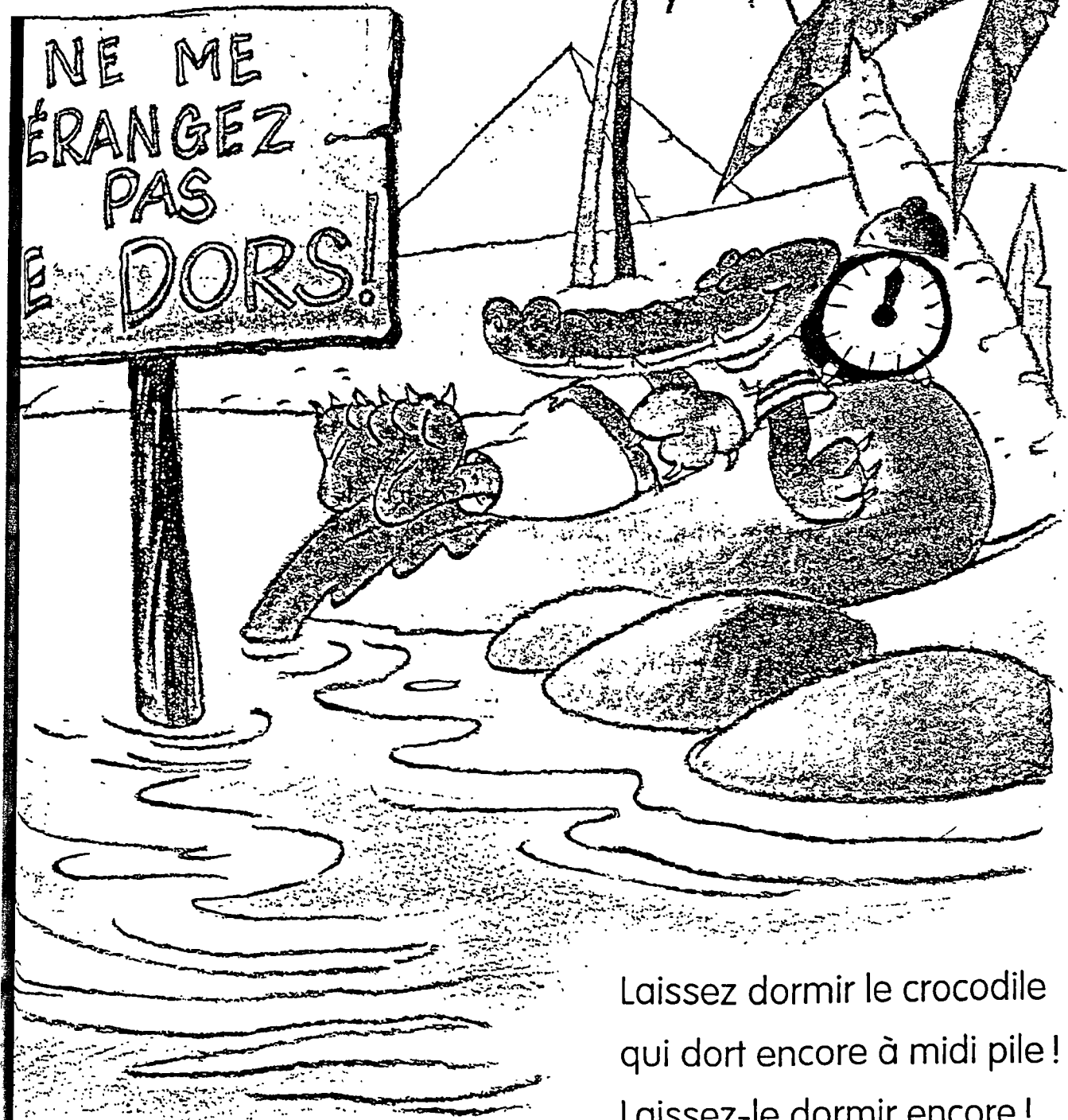
Children put up their hands enthusiastically. The same process is used for the second paragraph.

T writes up the same "story" on the board:

Sur un roc, au bord du Nil, Roco Kroko le crocodile dort encore à midi pile

Je dors

Sur un roc au bord du Nil
Kroko le crocodile
Dort encore à midi pile !



Laissez dormir le crocodile
qui dort encore à midi pile !
Laissez-le dormir encore !

300 She asks the children to read it to themselves, then selects a ch to read it out. The others wait patiently.

(T checks Vanessa - "Tu dors encore?", and Claire - "J'attends que tu sois assise".

T underlines in green the words which need to be 'photographed' eg. 'laissez' - 'bord' - and 'Kroko'. Each ch pronounces the name, T suggesting they look at the word to help them and they emphasise the sounds - "Pour vous aider à le dire, regardez-le". "Je n'articule pas - résultat je n'arrive pas à le dire"

305 A child points out - "Y a plein de 'O'".

(Mathilde is no longer concentrating on her own work but looking at the board)

T suggests children ask their parents to read the name and the story, children look forward to this - "Et puis après on rigolera"

310

EXTENSION- HANDWRITING ACTIVITY. PRACTICE - PUPILS INDIVIDUALLY AT OWN PACE

T then asks ch to colour in the drawing on the photocopy while she writes on the board their handwriting exercise -

315

Le crocodile dort encore à midi pile au bord du Nil.

When she has done this she stops their colouring in, they all do handwriting practice and return to colouring afterwards.

1.30 - 3.00

320 T is working with Mathilde but has to stop to calm children - "Je ne veux pas faire la police et donner son travail à M. Je vais vraiment me mettre en colère."

TEACHER LED EXPOSITION

325 T introduces new activity - "On va faire un jeu ensemble". "Vous regardez ce que je mets sur le tableau" -

Roc - bord - Rocco - crocodile - dort - dormir - encore

T asks 2 children to read out the morning's story which is still on the board.

She explains that they are going to ring in yellow all the 'ro' sounds and ring in blue the 'or' sounds..

330 She checks they know the difference - several children are asked to produce "or' or 'ro' sounds. She also asks them to read out individually the words on the board, which they are very keen to do.

T adds one of the children's names - "Morgan", and adds his elder brother's - "Romain". She says these names interest her - "Il y a quelque chose qui m'intéresse dans ces noms". Children respond with the correct 'ro' and 'or' sounds.

335 T sits down at an empty desk with the children and facing the board. She chooses Michael to go to the board, choose one of the words, read the word, then circle it in the correct colour and pronounce the syllable. He chooses "bord", the T is pleased with him as it is a difficult word. He then incorrectly circles the "bord" letters and also uses the wrong colour. T asks him to think again - "Est-ce que ça correspond à ce que tu as entouré? Efface et réfléchis. Réfléchis aussi à la couleur".

340 T asks Vanessa if she would like to try as she had her hand up. She goes to the board, Antoine is allowed to help her to read her word out loud. She circles the syllable correctly. The T is very pleased with her - "Très bien Vanessa, tu es devenue grande".

One more child goes through the same process.

345 *PRACTICE 1 - PUPILS INDEPENDENTLY AT OWN PACE*

T introduces and explains new activity of a worksheet with 'ro' and 'or' columns (see Appendix 21 for worksheet) - "Je vais vous donner un petit papier. Il y a deux colonnes, une avec 'or' et une avec 'ro', deux familles." "Vous allez faire tout seul". "Vous allez bien vous appliquer pour le faire." "Vous l'écrivez en détaché pour que ça se voit bien".

350 T checks a girl who is wriggling about - "Melanie tu n'es pas assise comme il faut. Concentre toi. Si tu te concentres tu le feras dans deux minutes".

T moves around checking work.

One child doesn't understand where the words are, T admonishes him - "Toi alors, tu es dans la lune".

355 Two girls who have finished and done it correctly (one is Vanessa) are asked to set out the exercise books so the others can stick in their worksheets when finished.

PRACTICE 2 - PUPILS INDEPENDENTLY AT OWN PACE (WITH PARENTS OR OTHER?)

Rest of lesson is spent on children sticking in another worksheet (Figure 6), reading for home work, into their home work books.

■ 1. *Je dors* ■

Figure 6

Il n'y a pas d'école. Vincent dort encore à midi.
Il est encore dans son lit à midi pile !
– On mange, dit maman.
– Ne me dérangez pas, je dors ! dit Vincent.

Les chats ont tout dérangé dans le salon de Miss Sorry. Elle dort encore.
Elle n'a pas vu que les chats ont tout dérangé dans la maison.
À midi, elle va dans son salon et elle regarde. Elle appelle ses chats.
Ils vont se faire attraper !

La mère d'Aurélie a laissé sa voiture près de l'école.
– Elle ne va pas déranger ?
– Non, laissez-la ici !

L'éléphant dort au bord du Nil.
Un crocodile regarde l'éléphant qui dort.
– Il va le manger ?
Non, l'éléphant est trop gros. Il ne va pas le déranger.

31st January 10.30-11.30 Art activity, extension of Reading lesson about crocodiles, to be followed by Science - on crocodiles.

365 The children that have already finished their work from before break are asked to go straight on to drawing - "Vous allez me dessiner des crocodiles... un crocodile, des crocodiles qui se disputent, des crocodiles qui mangent.... comme vous voulez". A girl asks if she can add other things, T replies - "Une famille de crocodile, des arbres, de l'eau, du sable si vous voulez". "Vous avez un modèle sur le mur et je mets une fiche sur le tableau".

370 T tries to motivate the few children who still have work to do - "Ceux qui ont terminé ont droit a une grande feuille de papier." She addresses a boy in particular - "Ça te regarde si tu veux toujours être avec ta fiche devant le nez. Tu ne pourras pas dessiner comme les autres."

The children have their own felt tip pens and start drawing.

T adds emphasising effort - "Sur une grande feuille comme ça on peut faire beaucoup de choses.

375 Réfléchissez bien".

She also motivates them with the idea - "Si ils sont très beaux on pourra les afficher".

She moves around the class occasionally giving further comments - "Si vous écrivez vous essayez d'écrire sans fautes".

One child lacks inspiration, the teacher encourages him - "Je suis sûre que si tu réfléchis tu trouveras".

380

T explains that the following day she will tell them about how crocodiles live. She talks about the river Nile and Egypt as they work. She positions herself by a boy who is still doing the pre break work, it seems to be the only way that he will work. Other children work quietly and with application.

385 Some children are finishing off their drawings. T puts up Claire's and Francois's on the board, the class admires them. The drawings are all very different: teeth or scales sometimes predominate, some children have labelled each part of the drawing so that it almost tells a story, one boy is doing a comic strip. One boy has drawn very small crocodiles on the big sheet of paper. T suggests they are the little ones and the following day he can do a big crocodile.

390 T complements Vanessa who has finished her work and done a drawing in criticising Michael who has not been able to start a drawing - "Vanessa était come toi, maintenant elle s'est mise au travail, elle s'est afit grande.....ça dépend de toi..."

395 The only group work observed was during "déclouissement" of singing and mime with a different teacher. T explained that during the first term the children continue the Maternelle working habits - working in groups, free movement about the classroom and more practical activities. This changes towards the end of that term. She assesses the children and seats them according to achievement.

Appendix 15 Berlak's model of dilemmas

Control set:

1. 'Whole' child v. child as student – (realms)
2. Teacher v. child control – (time)
3. Teacher v. child control – (operations)
4. Teacher v. child control – (standards)

Curriculum set:

5. Personal knowledge v. public knowledge
6. Knowledge as content v. knowledge as process
7. Knowledge as given v. knowledge as problematical
8. Learning is holistic v. learning is molecular
9. Intrinsic v. extrinsic motivation
10. Each child unique v. children have shared characteristics
11. Learning is individual v. learning is social
12. Child as person v. child as client

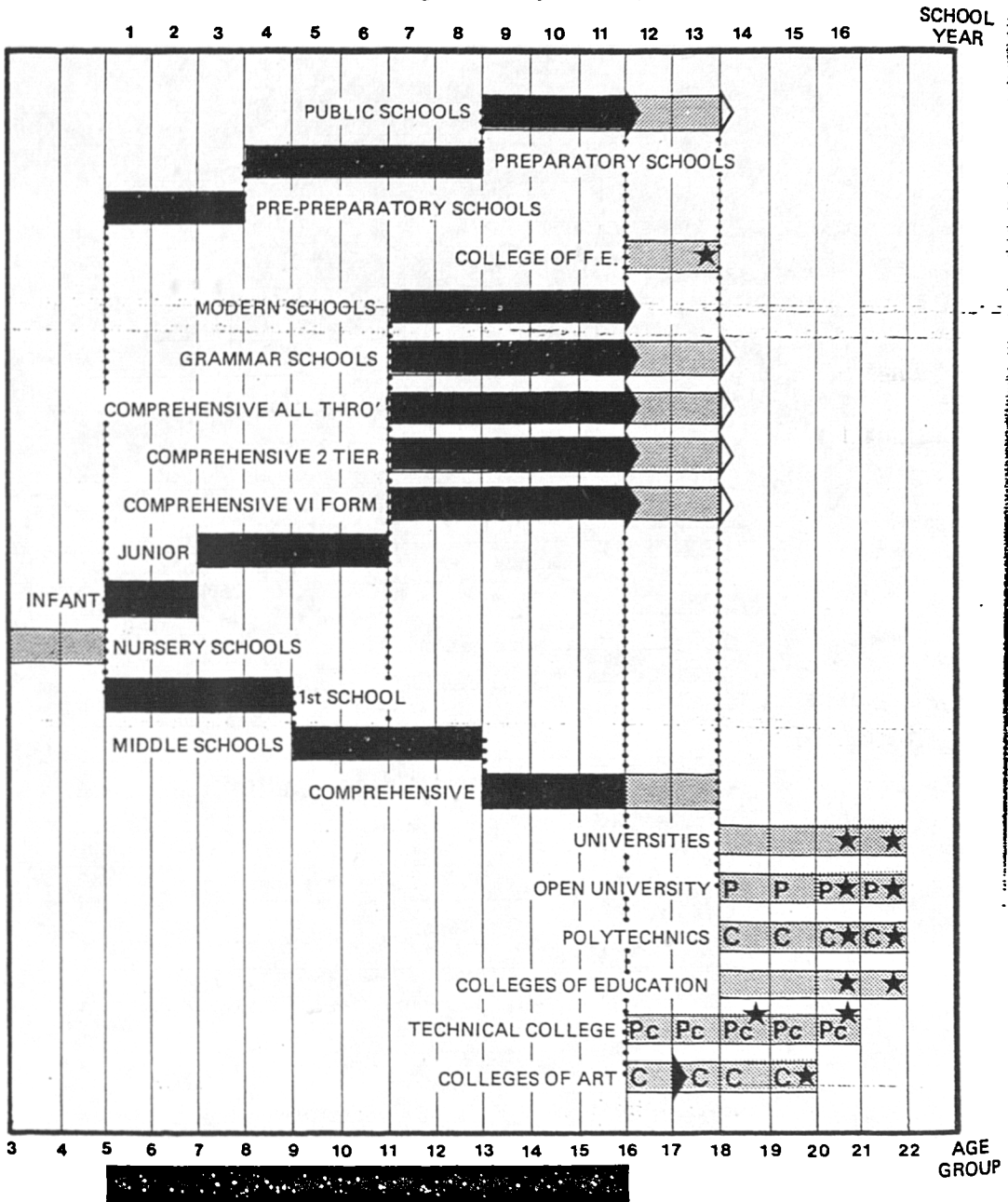
Societal set:

13. Childhood continuous v. childhood unique (childhood)
14. Equal allocation of resources v. differential allocation (allocation)
15. Equal justice under law v. *ad hoc* application of rules (deviance)
16. Common culture v. sub-group consciousness

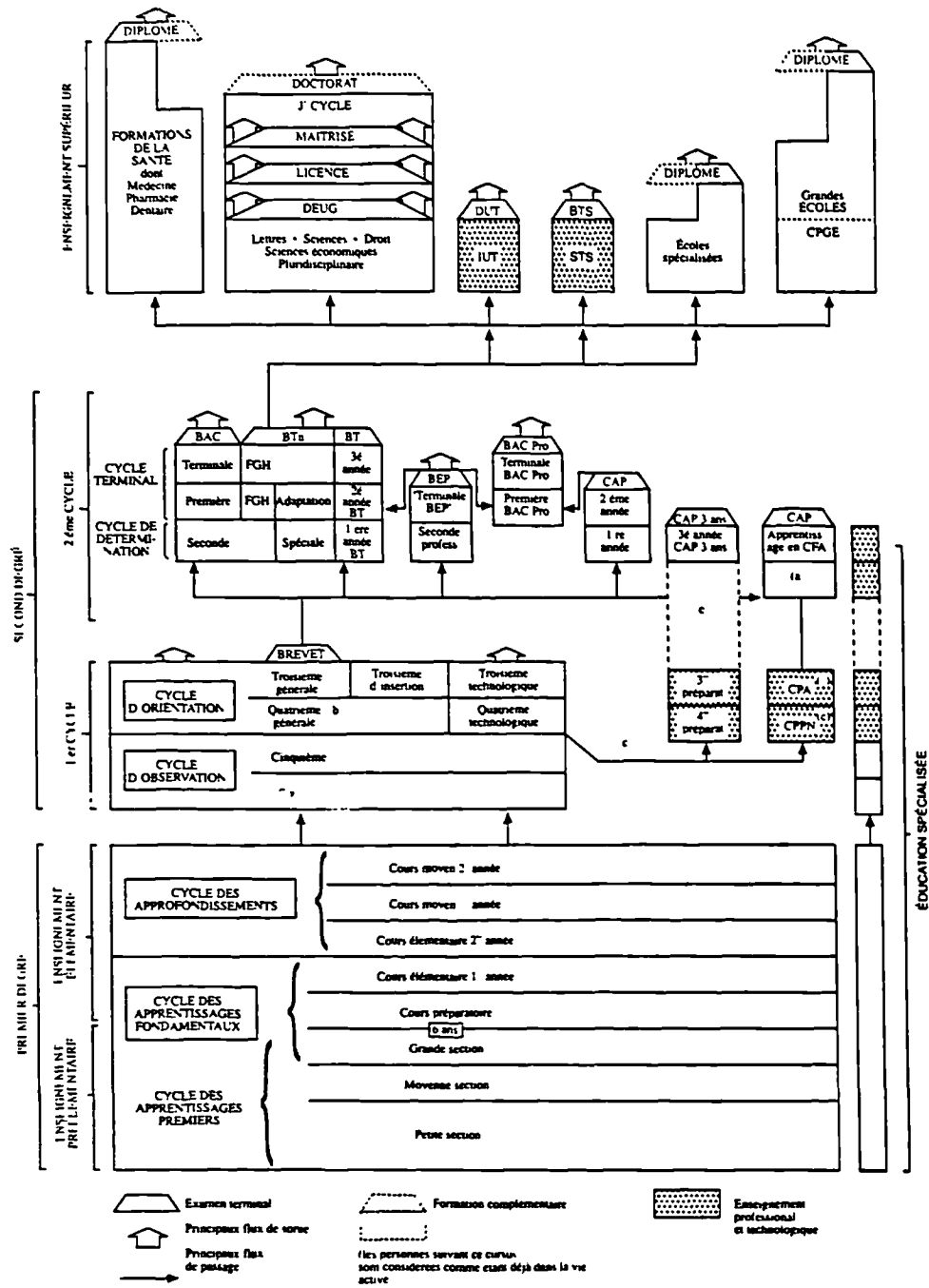
Model of teaching dilemmas (Berlak, 1981)

Appendix 16 Structure of the English school system (source: Elvin 1981)

- ★ = Terminating examination not providing access to a higher stage.
- ▲ = Qualifying examination providing access to specialized education.
- △ = Qualifying examination providing access to higher education.
- P = Part-time classes. C = Providing workshop practice.



Appendix 17 Structure of the French school system (source: Corbett 1996)



- Chaque case représente 1 année d'étude, sauf pour l'enseignement préélémentaire (de 2 à 5 ans) et pour l'enseignement supérieur
- (a) CAP et BEP essentiellement mais aussi autres diplômes (cf chap 5.3)
- (b) Mise en place à la rentrée 1991 d'une quatrième "d'aide et de soutien" (RON 12 25 mars 1991 - circulaire n 91 - 160 du 16 mars 1991)
- (c) En extinction progressive

Appendix 18 Written expression of the French school experience by a seven year old English girl

Written expression of the French school experience, by a seven year old English girl

Explanation of how to set out a page:

Date is written in the fifth square, it is underlined

Transcription of school equipment each child is required to provide:

100 'cahiers' (exercise books) in red, green blue and pink.

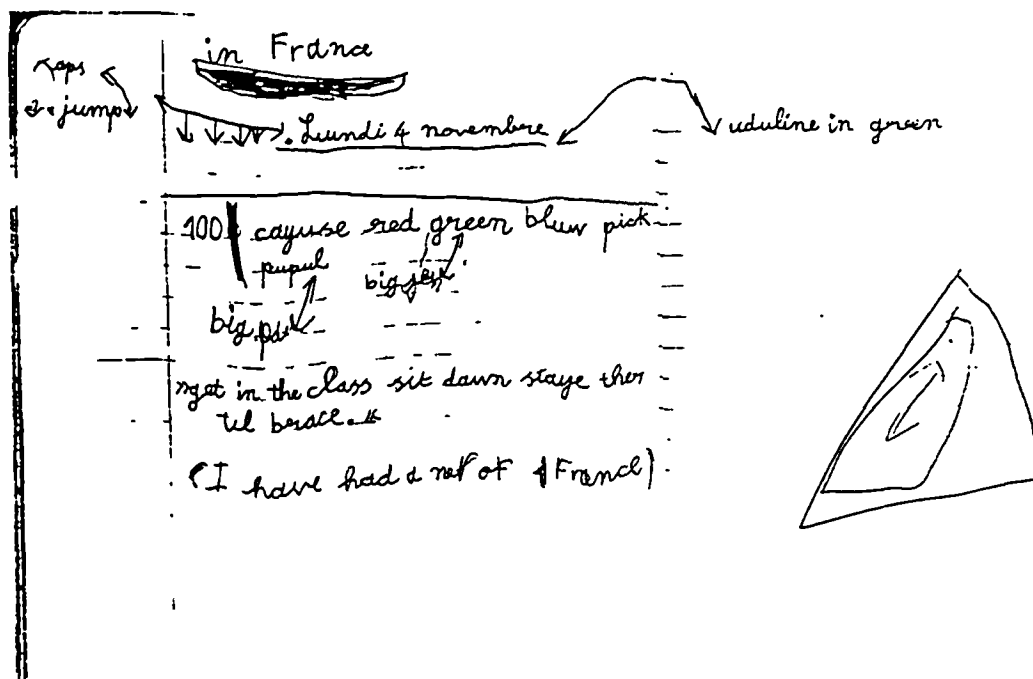
Big purple and green exercise books.

Transcription of what pupil is required to do:

Get in the class, sit down, stay there till break.

Transcription of pupil comment:

I have had enough of France



Lesson write up - St Martin CM2 class

25 children in class: 12 of them of the 'right' age, 9 repeated once, 3 repeated twice and 1 a year ahead.

5 The children are seated around five large tables according to achievement levels.

8.30 - 9.30, 6th January 1994. Memorised dictation

9.00 - 10.15 Direct and indirect objects

10 *TEACHER LED EXPOSITION*

A) Analysis of examples leading to rule formation

T introduces new subject by asking them to take out their green exercise books.

She launches into a quick dictation of sentences:

Julien offre des fleurs à sa maîtresse

15 Sophie téléphone à sa mère

Les promeneurs ramassent des champignons. etc

The children are asked to identify the groups in the sentences.

(T keeps the pace up -"Ça y est Sebastien?" Dépêche-toi!)

20 T selects a child (their hands are up) to identify the groups in the first sentence. Child identifies it as as "Un groupe nominal sujet". T does not accept this answer ,although it is correct, as it does not specifically answer her question of identifying groups according to their "nature" (nouns, adjectives adverbs and verbs). The girl's reply was a definition of the group's "fonction". In each grammar lesson the T was trying to instill this method of analysis - define the "nature" and then the "fonction".

25 The T asks the children to underline the verbs ("nature") and find the questions they should ask of the verb. The questions they should supply are ones to do with analysing the "fonction" of the groups - "C'est.....qui ?" "Quoi..?"and "A qui ..?" She gives them a few minutes to do this, then questions them. One boy does not orally go through this process, though he must have done it in his head, and replies "Il offre des fleurs à sa maîtresse". The T is very indignant at this reply -"Je n'ai pas dit de remplacer par un nom personnel j'ai dit de simplement poser des questions". The two questions are then identified from 30 individual contributions which the T puts together. She then checks how many of them had not found the three questions. A few hands go up. T is indignant with a girl - "Tu n'as pas trouvé ces deux questions?" (referring to the first two) and to another child - "Tu n'as pas trouvé qu'il y a un groupe isolé.... 'à sa maîtresse'?"

35 The T then asks the children to answer these questions and thus name the functions of each group eg "Julien' est le sujet du verbe 'offre'".

The children are asked to contribute ideas about the object. She rebukes a child who correctly identifies the name C.O.D. because he refers to its name in initials - "Le C.O.D. on peut l'écrire mais pas le dire" (he should have said in full "Le complément objet direct". She is expecting the word "essentiel" which none are able to provide. She blames the Christmas holidays for this lack of memory - "Les vacances de Noël ont fait du vide dans la tête" and adds disparagingly - "Vous vous rappelerez jusqu'à demain et puis vous oublierez". She tries to elicit more information about the object. Someone gives the answer (there are several hands up) - that when there are two objects the second is called the "complément d'objet second". Aline adds that she had known this. The T explains with some exasperation that she should have done - "Mais oui Aline, tu refais un CM2, c'est forcément que tu le comprends" T checks that everyone is with her - "On va s'en souvenir?" "Est-ce qu'il y en a parmi vous qui n'ont pas compris?"

B) Rule is noted down

T introduces this section by asking the children to take out their "cahier de leçons" ie a lesson or concept reference book that they are compiling. She checks that they need the Grammar section (there are different sections for Verb conjugations, Maths, etc. She gives them a title and asks them to write down the first example from the board ("Les promeneurs ramassent des champignons"). She dictates:

"Dans une phrase, (She stops to address a boy - "Tu te remues? Il est encore en train d'écrire le titre!") les mots qu'on met en groupe qui répondent à la question (telephone rings, children manage small whispers during the call) *qui* ("en bleu" she tells the children") *quoi* (en rouge) ont pour fonction (she checks a boy's progress - "Où tu en es Nicolas? Mais non en continue en bleue) complément d'objet direct du verbe. (She interrupts with an instruction - "Vous sautez une ligne vous écrivez le deuxième exemple du tableau - "Sophie téléphone à sa mère"). (She asks the childre to write the same sentence as before only this time adding *à qui* and *de quoi* and finishes off ...) ont pour fonction le complément indirect du verbe. (More instructions for children to leave a line and copy the third example "Julien offre des fleurs à sa maîtresse" and then to write..) Lorsque dans une phrase, nous avons les deux compléments d'objet - direct et indirect - le complément d'objet indirect (she stops as she walks around dictating as she has spotted a mistake - "Pourquoi des lettres majuscules je n'ai pas mis de points?") s'appellent le complément d'objet second."

T announces dictation is over - "Voilà!". She checks their work - "S'appellent! Alors.....il ya deux l et deux p"

PRACTICE- PUPILS INDIVIDUALLY AT OWN PACE

T instruction for change of activity - "Vous prenez ensuite votre cahier de français". She gives them a title on the board - "Grammaire, Complément d'objet" and asks them to do an exercise from their text books (Figure 1, page 64 nos 4,8,10,12).

She notes some disturbance - "Qui est-ce qui parle et qui ne travaille pas?" A boy admits to having left his book at home,. T reproaches him - "Alors qu'est-ce que tu veux que je te dise? Bravo? Continuez?"

- A child is stuck and asks her for the meaning of a 'speleologist'. T is slightly incredulous - "Tu ne sais pas ce que c'est qu'un spéléologue?" T asks for someone to explain.
- T leaves room for her office. A few almost imperceptible whispers.
- 75 T returns and checks progress. She points out the difference in the amount of work done - "Lui, il en est à la quatrième phrase du premier exercice vous, vous êtes au quatrième exercice". Some children make small gasps at this.
- A boy leaves the room without saying anything. T slightly bewildered "Où est-il allé?". She looks at his work and finds eight mistakes made from copying the words in the book. When he returns she points this
- 80 out and tells him to start again.
- T leaves room again. She returns and asks - "Ça y est?" The children chorus "Non".
- T helps individual children so quietly that she is inaudible - first a girl then the boy who had previously rushed out.
- PRACTICE - TEACHER LED MARKING AS A CLASS*
- 85 T hands out worksheets on the same topic for homework.
- She asks for an ending to the first sentence of Ex 4, then checks if anyone has put anything different. A child suggests the same word - "une grotte". The T is annoyed with the repetition - "On l'a déjà dit. Pourquoi tu répètes?"
- Each sentence is checked. The children putting up their hands to suggest the answer.
- 90 T queries any semantic deviance even if the sentence is syntactically correct:
- "On franchit une descente"
- T asks "Tu franchis une descente toi?"
- "Demain nous reprendrons notre maison"
- T does not understand the meaning. The boy explains that it was rented out before and that they are getting it back. T thinks this is too complicated - "Boff.....tu aurais pu trouvé quelque chose de plus
- 95 simple".
- "Les moutons se méfient du chien féroce"
- T criticises the semantic element here too as she was expecting the missing word to be "Le loup" - "Tu sais les chiens de berger ne sont pas très féroces".
- 100 She points out the incorrect noun in a boy's reply - "Nicolas a très peur, il manque de *couragement*" - "Ton 'couragement' s'appelle 'le courage' en français en sixième." She asks for the correct answer from another boy - "Sebastien, tu as mis quoi?" but he replies, "Je n'ai pas trouvé".
- T instructs those that have not finished to do so, the others are allowed out for break.
- (Break 10.15 - 10.30)
- 105 T restarts activity - "Allez on y va"

The marking continues with Exercise 10. T physically shows signs of exasperation with the mistakes some of the children are making. She sighs, bangs the table nearest to her - "Mais vous les posez les questions?" "C'est trop fatiguant de les poser?" (referring to the questions *qui, à qui, de quoi*).

110 Nobody manages to answer correctly when the sentence given has the subject in the middle and not at the beginning. T tries different children - "Je t'écoute. Qu'est-ce que tu proposes?" She berates them all - "La moindre petite difficulté.....vous y allez en avant".

T loses patience with a child to whom she asks for the definition of a C.O.D. and from whom she receives the answer - "C.O.I." "Qu'est-ce qu'elle me raconte?", T asks rhetorically and addressing the girl says "Un tout petit effort ...Tu n'écris n'importe quoi. Tu noircis des pages blanches, c'est tout ce que tu fais
115 depuis le début de l'année".

T is again critical of any semantic deviance:

"La semaine dernière j'ai reçu une lettre du facteur"

and asks - "Il t'écrit le facteur?". The other children laugh at this.

The marking is finished. The children have to add up their mistakes and write down the number in the
120 margin. The T asks for a show of hands for how many had more than 2 mistakes, 5 mistakes, etc.

More worksheets for homework are given out and the next activity is announced - "Allez on passe au calcul".

125 T had previously introduced new subject with - "On passe au calcul".

TEACHER LED EXPOSITION

T discusses with pupil contributions the concept behind the mathematical situation of one loaf costing 3F and four loaves costing 12F. She leads into this pointing out that "Le nombre de pains influt sur le prix du pain.....le prix du pain reste fixe". She tells them that this is called "Une situation de

130 proportionnalité".

T asks children for the meaning of "proportion". As they cannot reply she asks them to look up the word in a dictionary and write down what they have found. Children move to back to select a dictionary or take one from their bags by their chairs.

135 Children elect to read out the different defintions they have found. T asks them which is the word which is common to these different definitions. She elicits the word "rapport" from the children and summarizes for them - "Le lien entre deux choses s'appellent le rapport. Tant qu'il y a ce rapport on aura à faire à une situation de proportionnalité....C'est ça que je veux que vous comprenez et vous le verrez dans les exercices qui suivent.....Les rapports des deux où autres parties entre elles".

140 She asks the children to invent for themselves a situation of proportionality. She emphasises that she wants something completely different. They children write down a situation. T goes round checking. She criticizes one child's idea as it is too similar to the original one she gave, she often makes no comment beyond a "Oui" or a "Non". She tells them her aim was to see if they were capable of thinking up similar situations. She asks for volunteers to read out their work. The class laugh at the humour in some of the situations.

145 The T moves on to the next stage reminding them that such a situation can be visually presented in a "tableau de proportionnalité".

As she draws the following diagram on the board she asks them questions.

		X 3	
150	Nombre de pains	Prix en Francs	
	1	3	
	X 4 4	X 4	
	X10 10	X 10	
	?	270	

155

She invokes their memory with each utterance:

"Le tableau de proportionnalité peut être..."

Ch finish off "vertical où horizontal".

"Il faut mettre....."

"Un opérateur".

“Quand on change de colonne on ...”

“Inverse l’opérateur”.

60

“Quelles remarques peut-on faire sur les opérateurs?” Children answer that they multiply or divide.

T elicits from children using the diagram on the board how they would work out the price of 15 loaves. She accepts the answer of adding up the price that one loaf, four loaves and 10 loaves give (which are already given on the diagram). She rejects the answer of a boy who suggests adding up the price of 10

65

loaves to the price of five loaves.as he was not using the facts on the board but worked it out in his head.

T hands out worksheets with exercises on the same subject for homework.

11.30 - 1.30 Lunch

T asks as she enters the room - “Alors vous avez collé votre feuille?”

She instructs them to take out their “cahier de leçons” and dictates -

170

“Une situation de proportionnalité se résoud en utilisant un tableau appelé “un tableau de proportionnalité” (she stops to ask why a boy is not writing - “Ah parce qu’il na pas le cahier de leçons!”) Dans ce tableau on n’utilise que les opérateurs multiplicateurs et diviseurs. (She tells them to write the last words in red) (She starts again from the beginning in response to a question from a boy who cannot keep up.)

175

Ce tableau (She asks the children - “Comment ça s’écrit ‘ce’, et pourquoi?” She repeats a child’s contribution - “Oui, ‘c-e’, parce que c’est devant un nom”) peut se poser horizontalement où verticalement”.

The children are then told to copy the diagram from the board. The teacher hands out another worksheet.

One girl asks if they should write in red. The T registers surprise “Quoi?”. The girl specifies if the answers should be written in red. “Quelles réponses?” asks the Teacher and tells her to do it in the normal way. This interchange was closely observed by the rest of the class.

180

PRACTICE - INDIVIDUALS AT OWN PACE

The teacher asks different children to read out the three problems on the worksheet before they are told to work them out, each time with a diagram, in their exercise books.

185

The T moves around checking the work and spots a boy answering the home work sheet by mistake. She strongly criticizes another boy’s work -”Tu crois que c’est comme ça que j’ai présenté le tableau, hein?” and tears out the page from his exercise book.

She mocks a girl who is not on task - “Prends ton temps ma grande, on n’est pas pressé.”

The children work in complete silence.

190

T spots another error and criticizes a girl for not having read the problem properly - “Lis l’énoncé avant d’écrire des âneries”.

PRACTICE - TEACHER LED MARKING AS A CLASS

Individual children are chosen to draw each diagram on the board. The first problem consists of working out the the numbers of candlesticks needed to decorate a Christmas tree when there is a given number on

195 each pine cone. One boy sets up the first diagram incorrectly. The teacher gets him to go through it orally, which he does successfully. She asks him if this is what he had written - "Tu l'as mis dans ton tableau?", He admits that he hadn't. Another child is selected to fill in the spaces of the diagram, she has problems remembering the terminology of "opérateur" when questioned orally. She is also asked to express the solution to the problem verbally - "Fais-moi une phrase correcte". The teacher asks her to repeat and finish off - "Pour confectionner le nombre de bougeoires.....".

200 Another child tries the second diagram, he makes an error and comes to a halt admitting he must have gone wrong. T reacts - "Je vois que tu t'es trompé tu n'as pas besoin de le dire". He tries to correct his work on the board but his work is not very clear. The teacher shouts - "C'est illisible, tu écris comme un cochon!"

205 T is called out of the classroom . The boy who is now at the board has been told to continue. He makes a mistake. The other children whisper that the "opérateur" is a dividing one not a multiplying one. He finishes. The teacher returns. The children are keen to be chosen to put up the last problem. The teacher chooses different children for each stage. She leaves the room again while the children correct their work and does not return. The English teacher comes in for the English lesson.

Lesson write up Cotswolds Y5/Y6

28 children

Friday 24th September 1993 9.00-10.15

5 Start

A slow start to the day. Children are meant to be doing silent reading, which is the usual start to the day, but some are chatting. Two boys are on the computer and a group are working with the special needs teacher, who is there for one boy but often helps the others too, in the corridor area. Class quietens as the teacher goes through the register and children settle to reading.

10 T exerts control over a boy who starts to chat, she warns him that if he wants to stay in the place he must control himself - "It's your decision, your choice...you can sit on your own but if you sit with the others you must make an effort".

T also addresses herself to 2 other boys and warns them that they will have to take work home if they do not do more in class. The other children pay little attention to this criticism but continue reading.

15 Practice for assembly

Children sit on benches facing the front. They are joined by a girl and a boy from the Language Unit. T has to tell some children to sit change places as they are being disruptive.

She claps her hands for quiet and delivers a speech on behaviour telling them that as the top class they should show an example to the rest of the school. She addresses them collectively by their class name.

20 The theme of the assembly which they have already worked out is the enactment of three animal fables and their moral messages. (T had previously suggested the topic of animal fables and having read the children a selection they had chosen three of them. With the help of the special needs T the children had organised and worked out the three playlets. Similarly the children had chosen instruments and made up the music themselves) They Y5s did the acting and the Y6s provided the orchestra and choir.

25 Children rehearse. Y6s watching from the benches and contributing the music make suggestions to the T - "Why don't we use some of the apparatus for a well?" and also suggest they add cymbals for the chorus of one of their songs. T concurs with both suggestions. She also agrees to a boy's suggestion they alter the words in one of the scenes.

T directs but accepts pupil participation.

30

Friday 24th September 1.00-3.15

Partnered reading

Children leave the room to find their reading partners in their classrooms. Younger children enter the room to meet up with their partners. This session lasts half an hour and takes place every Friday.

35 Children settle down in various nooks and corners in the room, on the balcony and in the corridor area. It is mostly the older children who read to the younger ones from a book selected by the younger one. One

Y5 boy resists his Y2 partner's request to read him passages from the Bible he has brought with him. Sometimes, too, older boys and girls help their younger partners read from their reading books. The teachers and headteachers are proud of these sessions, which are very impressive to see. The children
40 often profess to dislike partnered reading, usually on the basis of their partners, but in practice seemed to be enjoying it.

T effectively has 30 minutes to herself as the children regulate themselves.

The ending is not very clear. The younger children leave one by one and the children that had gone to other classrooms wander back in.

45 T directs them outside and tells them to return in a more orderly fashion. She does not shout but reasons with them and put the onus on them - "There's lots you want to get on with so let's get on quickly and not waste time".

Topic work

50 T explains that as part of their topic work on the Tudors they are going to watch a programme about Henry V111. Children express neither pleasure or displeasure at this announcement. She asks them to take their 'ideas books' and a pencil in order to make notes.

Some disturbance as children go to the shelves under the board where the exercise books are kept.

Children take a few minutes to settle at the beginning of the programme. They express negative
55 comments at the sight of the current prime minister who is featured in the short introduction on power and government. Within a few minutes the children watch in rapt attention .

At the end the T gives the children a few minutes to write down anything that particularly interested them.

She then warns them they are in for a surprise - Some Tudor entertainment in the Hall. Again the
60 children express no excitement and seem quite passive. In the Hall a lute player (one of the governors and parents) and viol player/singer perform music from the Tudor period and put the music in its historical context. They also talk about their instruments and allow the children to try them out at the end. Once again the children seem to be in rapt attention.

65 End of day

Children return to classroom in an ebullient mood. T shows her authority, castigating them and sends two of them to the headteacher. She threatens the other children that she may have to talk to their mothers if they do not behave themselves better. The class is quiet and seems impressed. She tells them that the children on one table will have to be moved on Monday because they talk too much.

70 She hands back marked RE books and tells them to look at their work. If they have been given a sticker they are allowed to help themselves to a sticker on her desk and put in beside their names on the wall chart. (A chart showing achievement and effort for each child). There is so much moving around as

children get stickers and put away their RE books and get out their homework folders that it is not practicable for the children to compare their work

75 T wants them to do two things. She first explains about the sky at night and asks them to find out about the shape of the moon on Friday and Saturday night. One boy makes an inaudible but obviously negative comment. T asks -

T - "What did you say?"

Boy - "It's boring".

80 T - "I don't need to know your comments.....I'll find you something really boring".

She also hand out sheets of spellings to be learnt. On one sheet there are two groups of words. A girl asks about the Group 2 words. The T replies -

T - "Do you feel you would like to try them?"

85 The girl is hesitant so the T suggests she stay with Group 1 words and do them very well.

T explains to the class that the Group 2 words are for those that think that they can do them.

She finished with a "Good afternoon " to them all, to which some of them reply with an individual "Goodbye" on the way out. They do not rush out, some remain for some time putting things in their drawers, talking to each other or talking to the T.

classe les mots

roc - bord - Rocco - crocodile - dort -
dormir - encore.

ro

or

23rd May 11.00-12.00 Top set Maths

115 *TEACHER EXPOSITION*

T introduces the topic. She tells the children that the skill of estimation is an important one.

The children have been working on multiplication sums. She demonstrates on the blackboard that if they have a calculation of :

$$\begin{array}{r} 46.3 \\ 36.7 \times \end{array}$$

120

it is important to work out in written form a rough answer first to have an idea of what the answer should be.

She writes up the sum

$$\begin{array}{r} 39 \\ 6 \times \end{array}$$

125

She asks the children to work out in their heads a rough estimate. She elicits the process of how they will do this. A girl volunteers that they should "make 39 into 40". A boy then suggests that they multiply 4 by 6 and add a zero.

T demonstrates "rounding up" and "rounding down". She writes up the sum _

130

$$\begin{array}{r} 73.2 \\ 42 \times \end{array}$$

and elicits from the children that 73.6 should be rounded up to 74. They practise a few more examples in this way.

INDIVIDUAL AND SHARED WORK

135 The T then write up sums for them to work out as a rough estimate first, then the real sum e.g.

$$\begin{array}{r} 46.3 \\ 19 \times \end{array}$$

Children work together and aloud on this.

Those that finish put up their hands or call the T over to look at their work.

140 One boy comments aloud - "It's getting boring now".

Some children are not clear about the work. One girl is confusing her columns of tens and units, writing down

27.9	instead of	27.9
1 9		19

The teacher only deals with the children that ask for her help or who have finished. This particular child is not aware that she needs help.

145

125 8th October 10.45-12.00 Whole class session on creative writing
with Mrs Gibbs, Cotswolds, Y5/Y6 class 1

Plan for the morning is written on the board -

French

130 Poetry writing 1

T introduces the creative writing session. She uses their visit to a museum in Worcester the day before as the stimulus.

135 She asks the children to think about writing a poem about how they felt when they were they were playing with the Tudor toys in the museum. She first asks for contributions about the names of the toys. The children are enthusiastic and put up their hands to reply. She then asks them to suggest words that describe those toys. Again the children are full of ideas and put forward - "easy", "whipping", "swirling", "dizzy", etc. as the T goes through different toys. She writes these words on the board in groups according to the toy being described. All their suggestions are accepted, even adjectives like "brill".

140 Nearly everyone in the class participates.

She asks them to choose one toy or several toys to write about. They can make up a title or leave the title out so that the reader has to guess the toy being described. She asks them to write a poem but if they find that difficult they can write it in prose and she will help them to change its form later. The children seem quite keen. There is some disruption as children move about the room to equip themselves with exercise books and writing material. This allows them the opportunity to stay for a moment with a friend and have a chat. It takes about 10 minutes for everyone to be sitting down and concentrating.

145 The special needs T moves about the class giving help to those that seem uninspired. She asks a boy - "What are you going to write about?" He replies - "Not much". She tries to get him going and then moves on to a girl who cannot think of what to write about. She asks - "What did you like best?" and suggests she write about the toy that the girl mentions.

There is a low noise of talk as the children work. Both adults are asked to help with spellings and other problems as they occur.

155 After 20 minutes some children are showing their work to the T. They seem pleased with their work however the T doesn't share their opinions. She expresses this facially and makes quiet suggestions like - "Couldn't that be just part of a poem?" indicating that they have not produced enough work.

One girl who received this reply was asked -

"Are you pleased with what you've written?"

Girl - "Yes"

Q - "Was Mrs I pleased too?"

160 Girl - "She didn't think it was long enough, but I do".

160 The T fields the children who show her their work, encouraging them to add more or make corrections.
The relationship between T and child was relax enough for a girl to be doing up her teacher's buttons on
her cardigan as she talked to her. By 11.45 nearly everyone has finished. Despite the T's remark to me
that many children reproduce the ideas and vocabulary expressed by the class prior to writing and do not
produce much original work their work does seem to show originality. One poem describing a whirling
165 top is written in a spiral form; another poem in the form of a riddle has the answer - the name of the toy -
under a flap of paper; another poem uses the form of the first letter of each line spelling downwards the
name of the toy.

C.P. SCHOOL

11th November 1993.

Dear Parents,

As part of our continued programme of parents information meetings keeping you informed about current trends in education, we would like to invite you to meeting on :

Thursday 25th November at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting is for adults only, and you will be given an opportunity to try some simple problem solving exercises similar to those carried out by your children whilst in school.

Refreshments will be available, and there will be an opportunity to discuss issues you would like to cover at future meetings.

Advance warning : Next term a meeting will be held on Tuesday 8th February at 7.30 p.m.

and Donna Carter, Schools Health Promotion Adviser, has agreed to talk to parents.

--- oOo ---

I would also like to invite those parents who are interested in a walking weekend in Snowdonia, in conjunction with the "Gastrells' Ramblers", sometime during 1994 to an open meeting on :

Tuesday 16th November at 7.00 p.m.

We have been offered the use of the Wessex Mountaineering Club camping barn for a very cheap rate, but need to quickly arrange a date and other details in order to book a suitable weekend.

Yours sincerely,

C.P. SCHOOL

Dear Parents,

Outdoor Environment Week

Here are some of the events and activities we have planned to take place during the week:

EAGLES : Producing a Nature Trail guide and information sheets.
Putting up bat and nest boxes.

BUZZARDS : On the 'Badger Trail'.

PEREGRINES : Planning and building a raised garden.

KITES : Flower and tree map.
Tree games,
Protecting young trees with carpet squares.

OWLS : Model road network and street scene in playground.

Friday 11th June Mr. Tony Dean to visit Buzzards Class to introduce Badgers Topic

Monday 14th June The week is launched with a -

TOPS AND TAILS DRESSING UP DAY.

Dress up as a plant or animal you could find on the school field, and pay minimum donation of 20p. to 'Seeds of Hope' charity, to buy seeds for Albania.

Cotswold A.O.N.B. Countryside Ranger, Jeff Cherington, will take the assembly and spend the rest of the day leading environmental games with Owls and Kites.

Noted tree man John Workman will talk with Eagles in the afternoon.

Tuesday 15th June Roger Sanders, Organic Smallholder, will give an assembly and lead a discussion on Food as an Environmental Issue with Buzzards and Eagles.

Wednesday 16th June Sue Fyleman, Stroud District Council Recycling Officer, will lead an assembly.

Thursday 17th June Tony Boonham, the County Bee Officer, will talk on bees during an assembly and will bring an observation hive and honey samples.

Friday 18th June Steve Harrison from the Centre for Environmental Education will talk and show slides on the environment generally.

Stroud District Council Dog Warden to talk to the Owls, Kites and Peregrines.

Class picnic in the Outdoor Environment, weather permitting. Please ensure your child has a packed lunch. Those booking school dinners can be supplied with a packed lunch instead of the cooked meal.

In addition, throughout the week will be -

A display of the sculptures and collages made from natural materials and 'found' objects.

A competition within the classroom to name and design a name plate for the "senses" garden.

We hope every child will take an active part in the big effort to improve our school's outdoor environment, and will become more aware of its value for wildlife.

Thank you to parents who have offered help; you will be sent details nearer the week. We still need help -

- * Installing water butts.
- * Constructing an observation hide.
- * Constructing a bird table.
- * Erecting the school fingerpost.
- * Supplying 3' X 3' carpet squares.
- * Erecting fencing.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher.

HALF TERM ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR CHILD.

- * Make your Tops and Tails Costume. *
- * Make Natural objects Sculpture or Collage. *

3 *Même exercice.*

Le spéléologue parle de ses aventures. - Avec cette combinaison, on ne souffre pas du froid. - L'équipe préparait la descente. - Chacun regagnait son poste. - On installait le treuil. - Julien ressemblait à un scaphandrier.

4 *Ajoute un complément d'objet direct quand c'est nécessaire.*

Le spéléologue aperçoit. - L'équipe de secours arrive. - La descente est commencée. - Avec précaution, j'enfile. - Après beaucoup d'efforts, on franchit. - C'est au retour que l'accident s'est produit. - Demain, nous reprendrons. - Une salle grandiose apparaît.

5 *Constitue un GV en associant chacun des verbes suivants à un C.O.D.*

Ex. : explorer un gouffre.

examiner - découvrir - écouter - observer - gonfler - apercevoir - visiter - photographier.

6 *Constitue un GV en associant un verbe à chacun des GN suivants :*

l'entrée de la grotte - une longue corde - une lampe puissante - un lac souterrain - de belles stalactites - un froid humide - une minuscule chauve-souris - une chute sans gravité.

7 *Complète chaque phrase à l'aide d'un C.O.I.*

Du fond du gouffre, Sylvain téléphone à - On a beaucoup parlé de - Chaque mois, j'écris à - Souvent, la nuit, Sophie rêve d'.... - En descendant, méfie-toi de (du) - Ce jeune homme ressemble étrangement à (au)

8 *Même exercice.*

Le candidat n'a pas répondu - Les moutons se rassemblent; ils se méfient - Nicolas a très peur; il manque - Fais attention, ne touche pas - Ce chien docile obéit - Chaque soir, Nathalie s'occupe



9 *Donne la fonction des groupes soulignés.*

Ex. : Les deux amis parlent d'un projet (Sujet du verbe parler)

Nous avons frôlé la catastrophe. - Nous cherchions un nouveau passage. - Dans cette ouverture souffle un violent courant d'air. - Je descend les vingt mètres d'échelle. - Voilà un ouvrage consacré à la spéléologie.

10 *Même exercice.*

Sandra et moi nous traversons le lac. Nos lampes balayaient d'immenses espaces sculptés. Devant nos yeux s'offre un spectacle féerique. Nous n doutons plus de notre réussite. Nous songeons nos camarades restés à l'entrée.

11 *Trouve la préposition manquante.*

Je ne pensais plus ... mon compagnon. La peur s'empara ... moi. Qu'était-il encore arrivé ... ce treuil ? Une distance impressionnante me séparait ... fond de l'abîme. Je repris contact ... l'équipe de secours.

12 *Souligne le C.O.D. puis complète chaque phrase par un complément d'objet second.*

Julien offre des fleurs - Marie-Pierre tend la main - Ce commerçant propose une affaire - La semaine dernière j'ai reçu une lettre ... - En hiver, nous donnons des graines

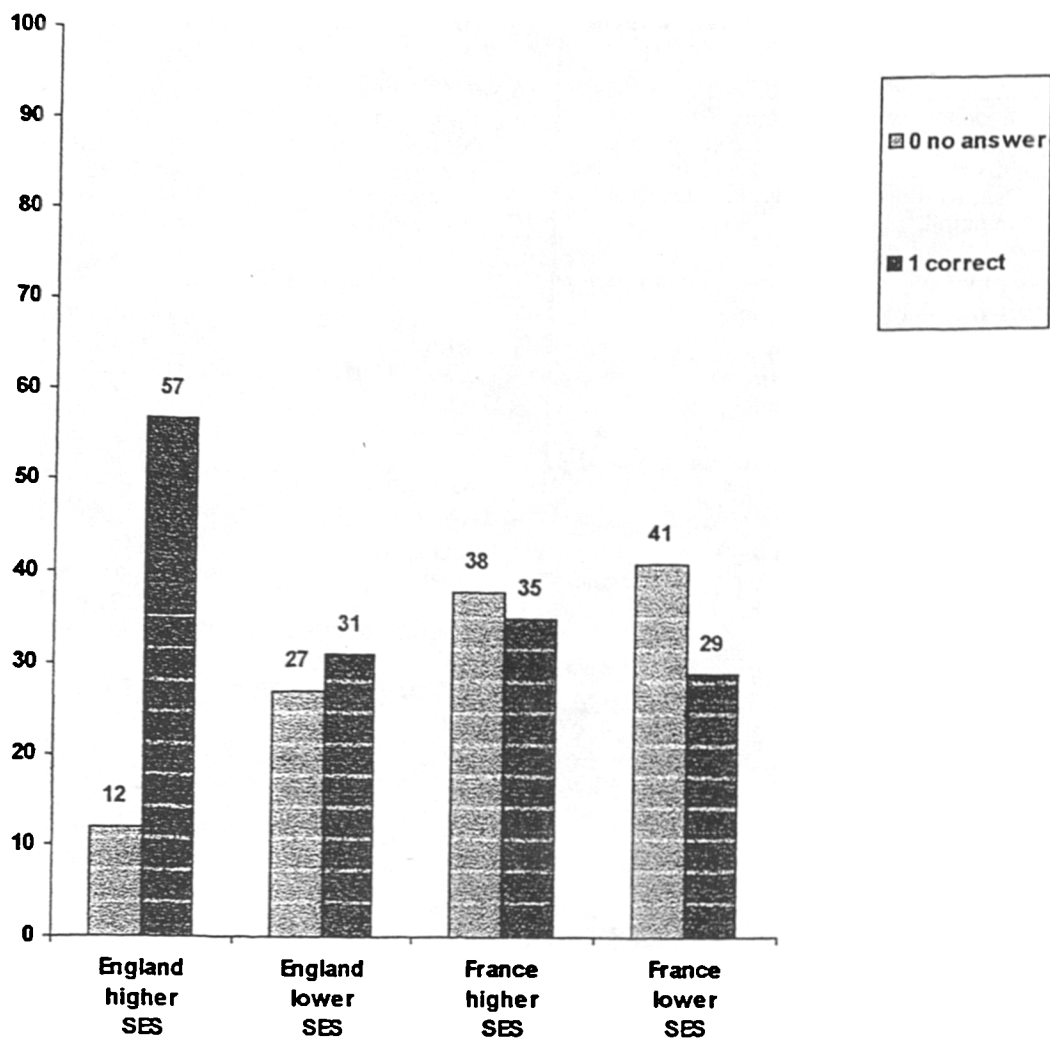
13 *Repère les compléments d'objet et souligne les.*

J'ai lu toute la journée. - J'ai passé toute la journée chez ma tante. - J'ai longé le bord de la rivière. - Le pêcheur s'est installé au bord de la rivière. - Le quartier de l'Opéra se trouve dans Paris. - Avec mes cousins, nous avons visité Paris.

14 *Écris deux phrases comportant un C.O.D. deux phrases comportant un C.O.I. et deux phrases comportant à la fois un C.O.D. et un C.O.I.*

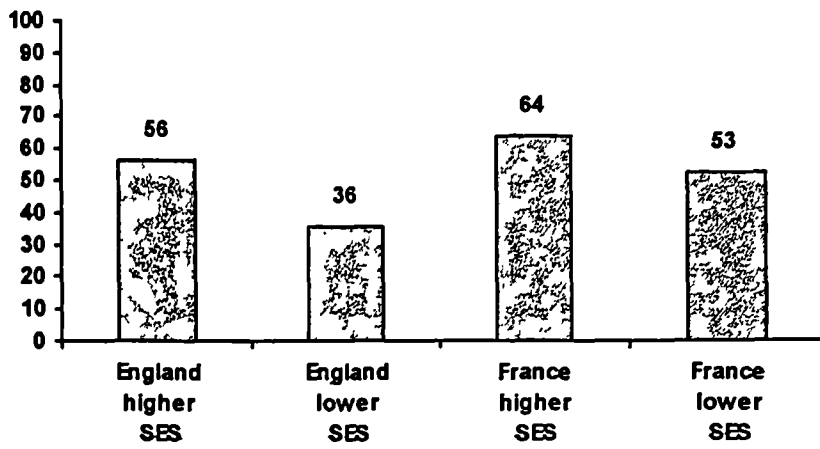


Evaluation values for Maths b 1996

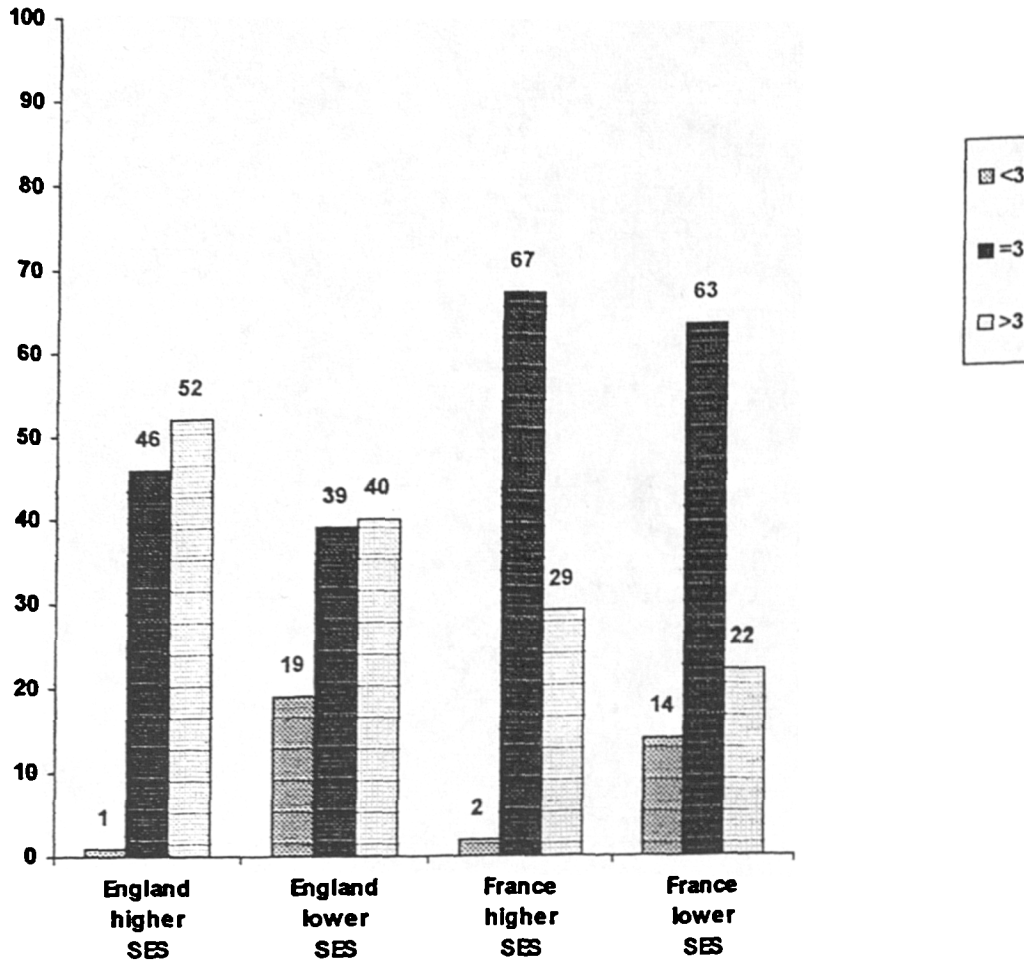


Number of children		
England	higher SES	65
England	lower SES	128
France	higher SES	110
France	lower SES	101

Average Score for maths a 1996



mathsc level 1996



Number of children		
England	higher SES	67
England	lower SES	128
France	higher SES	114
France	lower SES	98

**Appendix 29 Example of an individual strategy in computation
in an English script (QUEST project)**

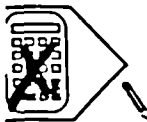
There were many more French pupils than English pupils who were able to set out and solve this computation in multiplication. Many English pupils set out the multiplication but were unable to follow through the process. They had not mastered standard algorithms sufficiently. English pupils were let down by this lack of expertise in many of the test items but conversely in the more open ended items it gave them an advantage. There was also more evidence of pupils using individual strategies in the more closed items. In the example of the script below a girl turned to an individual strategy instead of using a standard algorithm (or to check her standard algorithm). She conceptualised the problem as: $18 \times 90p + 18 \times 5p$, realising that 18×5 made $90p$, she then put the two sums together and calculated $19 \times 90p$.

This is what it costs to visit a castle.

Allington Castle Cost per person	
Adults	£2.45
Children (11 and over)	£1.30
Children (under 11)	95p

5c. How much will it cost for
18 children (under 11) to visit the castle?

You must show your working.



$ \begin{array}{r} 18 \\ \times 95 \\ \hline 90 \\ 1530 \\ \hline 1710 \end{array} $ <p style="font-size: small; margin-left: 20px;"> $90 (18 \times 5)$ $1530 (18 \times 90)$ </p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> $\begin{array}{r} 18 \\ \times 5 \\ \hline 90 \\ 4 \end{array}$ </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> $\begin{array}{r} 19 \\ \times 90 \\ \hline 1710 \end{array}$ </td> </tr> </table>	$ \begin{array}{r} 18 \\ \times 5 \\ \hline 90 \\ 4 \end{array} $	$ \begin{array}{r} 19 \\ \times 90 \\ \hline 1710 \end{array} $
$ \begin{array}{r} 18 \\ \times 5 \\ \hline 90 \\ 4 \end{array} $	$ \begin{array}{r} 19 \\ \times 90 \\ \hline 1710 \end{array} $		
$£17.10$			

A door opens.

One fine morning in Wallopville, the postman popped a packet of all-sport cards through Dr. P. Rana's letter box. P. Rana ran downstairs as he heard it fall onto the floor. he rushed over to the pack and ripped it open. "Okay!" he said, "Umbubble gum as recomended by Axel Mangohead of the Fantastic Fowl!" (at which point he stuffed the gum into his fanged mouth) "(chomp) Now then .. (chew) er got, got need, got, n-e-e-eed and need. And Hang on a mo! A note!" He unfolded the note and read it. This is what is said -

Dear P.M.

We need your help! Chicken-dude, our ex-mascot, seeks revenge on us! He says he will attack us by Tuesday the 4th. We don't know exactly where we are yet, but please search everywhere!

from -

Slimeball Mcgee, Axel Mangohead and Nick Nautious of the Fantastic Fowl rugby club

P. Rana quickly ran into his fridge and come out as Piranha-Man! "You can come too, Mega-Woof!" he said. They jumped into the Piranha-van and flew off. P.M. Waved the note at Mega-woof's nose. "Go gettim, boy!" said P.M. Mega-woof barked excitedly and ran towards a door With a padlock. P.M. had heard strange tales about this door. Tales of ghosts, gouls and zombies that bleed from their eyes! But I'm a hero, thought he. I'm not scared of anything! And so BOOM he opened the door with a well placed stick of dynamite. It was dark and cold the other side of the door. Mega-woof whined feebly. "Hello?" called P.M. "Is anybody here? I'm the Milkman, yeah, thassit, the Milkman." "No milk today thanks" called a mysterious voice. "It's fresh!" called P.M. "Listen punk! NO MILK, okay?" suddenly Chicken-dude jumped out. "SO" he said, "it's Piranha-man!" "Yes, evil doer!" cried P.M. "and I'm here to save the players! Take that!" he then hit Chicken-dude with an extremely wet and heavy fish. "Oh-yeah?" shouted Chickendude. He pulled a hen from his belt and threw it like a boomerang towards P.M. P.M. fell to the floor! Suddenly Mega-woof ran up to Chicken dude and bit him on the "Ouch!" cried C.D. and off he ran.

HOW IT ENDED

The players were saved and P.M. recieved a lifetime supply of gum.

THE END

Appendix 31 Summary of main differences in content in a sample of English and French story writing scripts (QUEST project)

	ENGLISH SCRIPTS 'REAL LIFE'	FRENCH SCRIPTS 'TRADITIONAL'
SETTINGS		
At home or near home (including moving house)	37/50 7/50	15/50 0/50
Forest, countryside or historical setting)	4/50	23/50
Other, including unclear setting, different worlds, different country or no setting	16/50	12/50
ELEMENTS		
Magic, witchcraft, monsters and ogres	3/50	16/50
CHARACTERS		
Involving self and others	26/50	19/50
Others, self not mentioned	24/50	31/50

**INCIDENCE OF CHARACTERISTICS IN STORY WRITING RELATING TO
A MORE 'TRADITIONAL' MODEL IN ENGLISH CHILDREN'S WORK AND
A MORE 'REAL LIFE' MODEL IN FRENCH CHILDREN' WORK**

**DATA: 50 ENGLISH, 50 FRENCH 'QUEST' STORY WRITING SCRIPTS
RANDOMLY CHOSEN FROM THE 8 ENGLISH AND THE 8 FRENCH SCHOOLS**