

**A Learning Conversation Approach for Teacher Appraisal and
Professional Development**

An investigation of the ways in which specific forms of appraisal of teaching performance evoke different levels of Learning Conversations, and how far this affects teachers' perceptions of their own performance.

A Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Abstract

Within the parameters of the development, since the 1970s, of the National Teacher Appraisal Scheme, and the current changes in Education, a research programme of observation, video-recording and analysis of teaching performance is described and evaluated. The aim was to ascertain, by means of specific techniques, the value and benefits to teachers in developing their personal and professional levels of experience on the path to becoming self-organised learners.

The potential of two specific methods of appraising teachers' classroom performance to generate developmental Learning Conversations is examined and compared. Using video-recordings of their lessons, two groups of ten teachers in one secondary school, individually reflected, discussed and evaluated their own performance with the researcher, by using either conversational repertory grid or conversational rating scale techniques, as the basis for an extended focused Learning Conversation. A third group of ten teachers was intended as a control group. The immediate and longer term developmental effects on the individual teachers, and on the school, were examined as the research activities gradually evolved from an original positivist experimental research paradigm to a conversational action research paradigm.

Parallel to the account of the changes and developments in the research project, the impact of the research journey on the personal and professional development of the researcher is also related.

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Chapter 1

The Development of Teacher Appraisal

1.i The Starting Place

In tracing the development of teacher appraisal, and in examining some of the factors that have influenced the Government in researching, developing and implementing the national appraisal system, a usefully significant point from which to start is the speech by Prime Minister James Callaghan at Oxford in October 1976. In making 'an authoritative pronouncement' in what is usually referred to as the 'Ruskin College Speech' James Callaghan is credited with having initiated 'The Great Education Debate', although the conflicts reflected in the issues discussed in the regional conferences which followed this speech had been gathering strength for many years.

Against a background of increasing economic stringency arising as a result of the oil crisis and world recession, and falling rolls, because the birth rate had decreased, a number of changes, innovations, and developments were taking place in schools in the late 1960's and early 1970's against which it is possible to identify a 'backlash effect' (Holloway 1985). Structural and organisational changes, including comprehensivisation, the development of middle schools, the introduction of open-plan schools, the growth of pastoral care provision and the introduction of alternatives to ability streaming, together with curriculum innovations, were causing public concern. This agitation was exacerbated by the impact of the publication of The Black Papers during the late 1960's which maintained a continuous attack on comprehensive and primary schooling, associating declining standards of academic achievement and pupil behaviour with educational innovations and developments.

This concern was reflected in the content of the Prime Minister's speech which linked education with the economic life of the country, and

raised the questions as to whether or not education was giving value for the massive investment in it, and who was ensuring that the money was well spent. His speech introduced three main areas of debate; **costs, standards and autonomy**, issues which have been fundamental to subsequent legislative decisions and which are still at the cutting edge of change and debate. He had, on taking office, identified the areas that were causing concern and required study and had called for a memorandum from the Department of Education and Science (DES). The four areas he specified were; the basic approach to the teaching of the traditional 3 Rs in primary schools, the curricula for older children in comprehensive schools, the examination system and the general problems of 16 to 19 year olds who had no prospect of going on directly to higher education.

The memorandum from the DES was critical not only of the policies being pursued by central government, its agencies and other interests in education, but also of the structure of the traditional partnership of Local Education Authorities (LEAs), teachers, establishments of Further and Higher Education and the Ministry of Education, as embodied in the Schools' Council. This memorandum, 'The Yellow Book' as it was called, was leaked to the press and so received wide coverage and stimulated a high level of public interest. It has been suggested that the recommendations for change contained in this memorandum were deliberately leaked, to create a crisis situation in which the Government could be seen to be taking a firm stand, to provide a scapegoat for the criticisms that schools were not providing pupils with the right kinds of skills needed by society, and to open up the opportunity for the Government to begin the process of centralisation of education. There is no doubt that the publicity surrounding 'The Yellow Book' came as a bombshell upon the education scene.

Mr. Callaghan's speech was, therefore, afforded much more than the interest usually paid to the conventional annual speech on Education policy given by the Prime Minister of the day. The teachers' unions were already prophesying a storm of protest against the far-reaching proposals in the leaked report and demanding to be consulted on measures which 'could totally change the basis on which the schools operate' (NUT 1977).

The Prime Minister's pronouncement listed the fields that he

considered needed study;

'These are the methods and aims of informal instruction; the strong case for the so-called "core curriculum" of basic knowledge: next, what is the proper way of monitoring the use of resources in order to maintain a proper national standard of performance; there is the role of the Inspectorate in relation to national standards; and there is the need to improve relations between industry and education.'

and provided the agenda for the ensuing debate, which questioned the record of the efficiency of the education system. Mr Callaghan's 1976 statements acknowledged and legitimised the level of public concern;

'Public interest is strong and will be satisfied. It is legitimate. We spend £6 billion a year on education so there will be discussion. If everything is reduced to such phrases as "educational freedom versus state control" we shall get nowhere..... where there is a legitimate public concern it will be to the advantage of all involved in the educational field if these concerns are aired and shortcomings righted or fears put to rest.'

and so offered to those outside education the opportunity to share their concerns and offer their opinions, and, more importantly, feel that theirs was the right to have more knowledge about what goes on in schools and to be involved in the decision-making.

A statement by the then Secretary of State for Education, Shirley Williams, that the curriculum is a matter in which many people – parents, teachers, employers, trade unions, Parliament and the Government itself - have a stake, further demonstrated the determination of the Government to widen the arena of responsibility, and provided a convenient term - stakeholders - to describe all those groups who felt they were justified in taking a stronger interest in education issues.

The issues of the necessity for cost effectiveness, of the advisability of

introducing a national 'common core' curriculum, monitoring and assessment, teacher training, the relationship between school and working life were debated in a series of regional conferences. Invitations from the DES to representatives from groups such as the Confederation of British Industries and the Trades Union Congress to take part in the regional debates removed support from the established convention of the partnership of LEAs, university examining bodies, and teachers in the form of the Schools' Council. The teachers' associations were quickly on the defensive, and the LEAs felt that their influence had been minimised by the regional pattern of the debates. Continued extensive press and television coverage ensured that wide public interest in these issues was maintained.

In July 1977, the Government issued *Education in Schools*, a Green Paper for discussion and comment (DES 1977a). It made little reference to the regional conferences, but made many recommendations, including increased awareness of the dangers of sex-stereotyping and the need for the broadening of multi-cultural education. Perhaps the most politically significant recommendations proposed a review of 'curricular arrangements' to be carried out by LEAs in consultation with their teachers, but it was the absence of any setting out of a 'common core' that caused the most comment in the press. After nine months of debating in the abstract it had been hoped that a specific proposal would be made. However, the movement towards more central direction over the 'public curriculum' did not slacken.

Reports and documents were produced by the Inspectorate, as well as a review of curriculum arrangements which challenged local authorities to give account of their management of the curriculum. The Secretary of State sent out Circular 14/77 whereby authorities were requested to undertake a formal review of the 'procedures they have established for carrying out their responsibilities under Section 23 of the Education Act 1944'. Attached to the circular was a questionnaire which covered almost all the areas already under review. The teachers' unions and the local authorities reacted strongly against this request. Two thirds of the authorities included in their answer a statement explaining that the authority had not established a formal system of detailed control over the curriculum of individual schools and did not wish to see one develop. These replies to Circular 14/77

convinced the members of the 1979 Conservative administration that the public education service needed major legislative surgery.

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) asked the authorities not to comply with this directive, seeing it as 'a movement in the balance of such responsibility away from the schools towards more control at local and national level'. The union declared 'if the Department wishes to conduct a serious enquiry into the curriculum it should seek information at school level' (NUT 1977). Only one LEA, the Conservative controlled Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames, did not agree.

The unions argued that any alteration of current policies would be an admission that those policies were wrong and it would diminish the professional expectations and responsibilities of teachers. Any imposition of local or national curriculum direction would lessen the teachers' autonomy, since the curriculum is 'far more than a collection of subjects: it describes what is taught and how it is taught' (NUT 1977).

The publication of The Taylor Report (DES 1977a) further increased the hostility of the many teachers who regarded it as another erosive attack on their professional autonomy. The report reviewed the arrangements for the management and government of maintained primary and secondary schools in England and Wales. It recommended that in every school, the LEA, the school staff, parents, and members of the local community should have an equal number of representatives on the governing body. The committee was not convinced that the best basis for deciding what was taught in schools was exclusive reliance upon the professional training and experience of practising teachers. The assumptions underlying the Committee's recommendations were that society can and does question the performance of schools and that the curriculum must be responsive to the needs of society.

'In our view a school is not an end in itself: it is an institution set up and financed by society to achieve certain objectives which society regards as desirable (para. 6.14).

.....there is no aspect of the school's activity from which the

governing body should be excluded nor any aspect for which the Headteacher and his colleagues should be accountable only to themselves or to the local education authority. It follows that the responsibility for deciding the school's curriculum, in every sense of the word, must be shared between all levels and between all those concerned at every level' (DES 1977a, para, 6.19).

'In every sense of the word' was meant to include not only the formal curriculum but also the way it is put into practice, in the rules of conduct, dress and homework, pastoral care, and the relationships between pupils and teachers. Many teachers were angered by what they felt to be an attack on their professional competence. The NUT argued that it was inimical to the interests of children, parents and society generally to present such sweeping powers to non-professionals, and that children should be protected from their intrusion. Elliott rejected the view that extra-professional bodies should take part in curriculum decision-making, making the point that although most would agree that schools should respond to the needs of society, this does not entail that society or its representatives should decide how these needs are met (Elliott 1980) .

Public and professional opinion was divided, but, despite much criticism, strong support was given to the recommendations by the House of Commons Education, Science and Arts Committee. This Committee recommended that the DES should amend its regulations so that each school would be required to publish a full statement of its curriculum aims and provide prospective parents with details of the curriculum offered.

In 1980-81 the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) reports and secondary school examination results provided more information for parents and increased the growing demand for information and participation from non-professionals. The political pressure generated by these publications was maintained by the press coverage and served to reduce confidence, not only the public's confidence in the effectiveness of the current educational provision, but also that of the profession, as it appeared to be made to feel that it was incompetent and responsible for society's ills. Press accounts displayed speeches by politicians, such as Sir

Rhodes Boyson who accused the schools of 'failing the nation' and Sir Keith Joseph who urged that the moral virtue of free enterprise and the pursuit of profit should be taught. Such statements were a reflection of the increasing demands upon the education system to align itself to the codes and practices of the world of business and management. The cumulative effect of these accusations was to strengthen the feeling that schools were ineffective and that some teachers were inefficient. The question of teacher competence and how to successfully assess it became increasingly of prime importance.

The White Paper, *Teaching Quality* (1983) added a significant dimension to this continuing 'Great Debate' on the subject of teacher effectiveness. This was the first statement of the Government's belief that the establishment of a systematic assessment of every teacher's performance related to a policy of staff deployment and training was the clear responsibility of those managing the school teacher force. The report advocated a school-based review arising from an accurate knowledge of the individual teacher's performance gained by classroom visits, an examination of pupils' work and an assessment of a teacher's contribution to school life.

'Employers can manage their teacher force effectively only if they have accurate knowledge of each teacher's performance. The Government believe that for this purpose formal assessment of teacher performance is necessary and should be based on classroom visiting by the teacher's Head or Head of Department, and an appraisal of both pupil's performance and work as well as the teacher's contribution to the life of the school' (DES 1983).

Assessment, it said, would help teachers to realise their full professional potential, identify those ready for promotion and enable those encountering professional difficulties to receive appropriate remedial action. In the Government's view, where this help was not successful, such teachers should be considered for early retirement or dismissal. Sir Keith (later Lord) Joseph, at the North of England Conference in January 1984, declared that 'appraisal was the means to remove unsatisfactory teachers

from a profession where they can do much harm'.

This last statement, so much emphasised by the media coverage, caused disquiet among a profession, as we have seen, already demoralised by the demand for public accountability, and further dismayed and angry by adverse public reaction during the lengthy industrial pay dispute. An analysis of the press coverage of the teacher's pay dispute shows 'the notion of appraisal itself was inevitably distorted and trivialised. No matter how much Joseph attempted to allay teachers' fears, even the 'heavy' press could not be shaken of its view (perhaps because of its enthusiasm for the notion) that Sir Keith was intent on 'sacking' or 'weeding out' large numbers of teachers' (Wilby 1986).

Sir Keith Joseph disclaimed this intention in his 1985 speech to a conference in Chester, but reiterated the intention to bring a more managerialist approach to the process of appraisal, a declaration which did nothing to diminish the feelings of apprehension and disaffection among the profession.

'I am frequently misquoted in terms that suggest that I am only concerned with the need to dismiss the very small number of incompetent teachers who can not be restored to adequate effectiveness. That is not the case. I am concerned with the whole range of positive advantages that would flow from applying to the teacher force standards of management which have become common elsewhere' (Joseph 1985a).

Mistrustful that the introduction of formal appraisal structures would result in 'professional enhancement of the individual teacher' (Joseph 1985a), many teachers felt uneasy with the stress on 'assessment of performance and standards of management'. The Permanent Secretary at the DES had outlined the proposition that the DES wished 'to apply to the teaching force standards of management which have become common elsewhere' (Hancock 1985). This statement seemed to imply the imposition of 'top-down' judgemental procedures based on some industrial models. While it was felt that these would most likely not be suitable for appraising teaching performance (Marland 1987, Nisbet 1986), some local authorities

did initially employ experts from the business world to propose management schemes which might be suitable for the evaluation of teacher performance (Northamptonshire and Croydon).

A study of private sector and local authority staff appraisal systems declared that these systems were not appropriate for schools. Autocratic models, it claimed, were not the best for teachers and those on offer appeared to be 'yesterday's model' since there were signs that progressive companies were moving forward towards more humanistic ways of managing people. It stated that those industrial appraisal schemes which had been modified to suit education always assumed that the starting point must be a job description. Performance was then measured against this yardstick. 'There is little, if any, observation on the job and very little opportunity to practise the central features of self-assessment, self-development, trust and mutual respect' (West 1987).

Earlier, (1984) Stenning and Stenning's consideration of staff appraisal schemes, commonplace in large companies, in relation to the growing need for systematic teacher appraisal had distinguished three separate objectives of staff appraisal. The first is a reward review, where assessment is made of the relative worth of staff - according to varying criteria - as the basis for differential pay increases based on merit (payment by results). The second objective is performance review, where appraisal is designed to identify and remedy defects in performance and offer effective strategies for accomplishing higher standards. The third objective is a review of potential where the purpose here is to identify and realise an individual's capacity to do different kinds or levels of work in an organisation. Exponents of 'good practice' in staff management state that these differing objectives should not be procedurally confused. (An individual who recognises that his salary increase will be decided by a supervisor's appraisal report is not likely to welcome objective discussion of his or her strengths and weaknesses.)

In relating these three kinds of review to the appraisal of teachers these authors suggest that the performance review is the most suitable since both reward and potential review are influenced by external constraints. They point out, however, that a reward or salary review could, by injecting an element of merit, benefit employers by improving motivation and inducing

enhancement of quality of performance of career teachers who wish to stay in the classroom, but argue that this system will only motivate if it conforms to the principles of perceived equity, justice and consistency and is supported by an effective review model and a flexible pay structure.

Two systems, reward and potential review, were juxtaposed in the employer's reforms of teachers' salary structures. New teachers could progress to qualified grade only if during their first three years they demonstrate the potential to make 'good' teachers. Progress could be accelerated for outstanding recruits and additional allowances could be awarded for demanding duties and responsibilities. However, within the contemporary institutional framework and the context of contraction in education, opportunities for development of potential were limited, and potential reviews can prove counterproductive if expectations are not met. 'It is clear that linking appraisal directly with promotion and salary increases can only serve to inhibit the frank and honest discussion which is necessary' (AMMA 1985). Whereas reward and potential review can have negative consequences, performance review appears to be a positive approach to appraisal most suitable to the teaching profession (Stenning & Stenning 1984, AMMA 1985).

This opinion was reinforced in the Government's publication in 1985 of a report by HMI based on the evaluation of assessment practice in 80 schools. In *Quality in Schools; Evaluation and Appraisal* the Inspectorate reaffirmed the earlier statements on the importance of classroom observation and concluded that watching a teacher at work in the classroom is an essential part of any appraisal scheme, and 'without classroom observation appraisal will lack real evidence of teaching skill and provide little that can be built upon to secure improvement' (HMI 1985) - a conclusion echoed in the Suffolk Report (Graham 1985).

While the teachers were trying to understand the implications of the possible introduction of formal appraisal, and some schools were starting or improving their own systems (Samuel 1982, 83, 85, Bunnell & Stevens 1984, Metcalfe 1985a, Trethowan 1987), the Government published *Better Schools* (DES 1985). In this White Paper, positive initiatives such as profiling, the common 16+ examination and more active learning approaches were

proposed but it was feared that the DES had lost so much credibility with teachers that the spate of initiatives it had sponsored were in danger of wholesale rejection by an embittered profession (Jones 1986). The contentious issue of teacher appraisal was summarised;

'All teachers need help in assessing their own professional performance and in building on their strengths and working on the limitations identified; all teachers need to be able to engage in in-service training relevant to their teaching programmes and professional needs' (DES 1985).

This statement does not appear threatening but subsequent statements became increasingly worrying as the Government revealed its intention to seek for new powers to impose a national system of teacher appraisal, although it claimed that the enabling legislation would simply 'lie on the Statute Book, until, in certain circumstances, it would be activated' (Joseph 1985b). The new powers desired by the Government were realised in Section 49 of the 1986 Act, a decade from James Callaghan's crucial linking of education with the country's economic needs. These powers were seen as a further eroding of teachers' negotiating rights and gave rise to considerable mistrust and resistance, reflected in the words of Peter Griffin, a former president of the NUT who helped to formulate that union's policy on appraisal. He pointed out that while the Education Secretary, Kenneth Baker, had shown his determination in removing negotiating rights from teachers, it was only by negotiation that the profession could see any agreement being reached on conditions of service in relation to appraisal. 'We feel that this section of the Act could be used at any time as a crude and insensitive instrument' (Griffin 1987).

Angela Rumbold, Minister of State for Education, was reminded of these feelings of resentment and of the considerable misgivings among teachers. Her speech to the Industrial Society did little to lessen the unease, when she pointed out that society today had much higher expectations of professionals, and, although the prospect of appraisal made teachers feel insecure, this was nothing new for other professions; doctors and lawyers felt insecure knowing they could be called to account for incompetence. She said that appraisal had to assess the key elements in the teacher's job; skill in

arousing and sustaining interest, in conveying knowledge and understanding and sustaining effort and application. For this purpose the Government had supplied an educational support grant of £3 million over two years to set up and monitor six pilot teacher appraisal schemes.

Further she declared that that 'if, in the end, appraisal does not produce more effective teaching in the classroom, then it will have to be abandoned because it will have failed'. Although she acknowledged that teachers were concerned about the connection between staff appraisal and pupil assessment in some schemes she added that teachers must expect 'promotion by results' and 'you would be pretty daft if you couldn't see that it's going to be linked ultimately. I think it will come slowly but surely' (Rumbold 1987).

Statements such as this did not favourably dispose teachers towards the introduction of a national appraisal scheme, and resulted in a concern about the purposes and uses of appraisal that did not diminish, partly because teachers were very busy with other initiatives such as the introduction of the National Curriculum and Standardised Tests. However, the six pilot studies mentioned earlier were initiated, and these and other surveys and reports of teacher appraisal schemes are reviewed in the next section.

1.ii Survey Studies and Report Findings

1984 was a significant year for the instigation of important surveys. The DES commissioned the Suffolk Education Department to examine appraisal schemes in operation in industry and commerce as well as in schools here and abroad. The first results of the Suffolk's team's findings and recommendations were published a year later under the title **Those Having Torches... Teacher Appraisal: A Study** (Graham 1985). This proved influential in promoting a positive approach towards the benefits and problems of introducing formal appraisal in schools.

The main conclusions were that while a national scheme of appraisal would be very costly in terms of time and training, it would be justified by results. Classroom observation was declared to be essential and should be followed by an interview where teachers could discuss their own performance and ways of improving it. Both teacher and appraiser, it stated, need to see observation in a constructive light, and poor teachers should be offered support and training.

Another survey, initiated in 1984, examined the various approaches to reviewing performance already operating within the educational system. This document, **Appraisal - Trick or Treat?** was produced by the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association (AMMA 1985) in response to concerned enquiries from its members. The title reflects the profession's uncertainty about the introduction of appraisal. This uncertainty can also be noted in later articles with titles such as 'Teacher Appraisal: Threat or Promise?' (Jones 1986), 'Teacher Appraisal: Some questions to Ask' (Dean 1986), 'Appraisal and Evaluation: Chimera, Fantasy, or Practicality?' (Marland 1986). The AMMA report attempted to cover the main areas of concern yet at the same time encourage a positive response to this emotive topic firstly, by beginning with the words of David Hancock, Permanent Secretary for Education:

'Appraisal should be seen not as a threat but as...the opportunity to discover how his or her performance is

perceived by management...formal appraisal may be the only opportunity for giving praise where it is due'. (Hancock 1985)

and then, by reminding readers that appraisal in schools is not new and, even if no formal system exists, daily informal and unsystematic appraisal by pupils, parents and colleagues has always been the case. The report points out that considerable benefits both to the organisation and to individuals are often claimed for those appraisal schemes that are usual in industry and commerce, the civil service, the armed forces and the police.

Main Methods of Appraisal

Details of the main methods of appraisal which the report found were already employed in schools are briefly described as follows:

1) Narrative appraisal

This method requires the appraiser to write, with or without the use of guidelines, a descriptive account of an individual's performance during a designated period. This may be undertaken after or during observation periods which are often very brief, although sometimes the most careful and detailed observations are made. It is the method most often used in schools for writing references and reports on probationary teachers and is a summary of some things seen and some opinions after the event, often long after. Although strengths, weaknesses and accomplishments may be emphasised, the criteria for performance are not usually stated or obvious. Very often the process takes place without any consultation with the appraisee who remains in total ignorance of the contents of the narrative. These 'historical' documents can give a very biased view of a teacher's performance and should be subject to question and discussion.

2) Self - appraisal

For most teachers this is a continuous process whereby the individual reviews his or her area of responsibility and attempts to evaluate the level of achievement of aims, improvement of skills, development of knowledge and the results of his or her efforts. Self-evaluation, 'a professional

responsibility incumbent on us all' (AMMA 1985) should precede any formal method of evaluation, whether peer or performance review. The process may be facilitated by the use of a check list or prompt sheet which can promote a greater depth of self-examination, and can, if used honestly, be useful to the individual, although, as the report points out, it can be of questionable use to the whole school organisation.

Before teacher appraisal became a political and legal issue there was some development in many schools and some LEAs (Oxfordshire, Solihull, and Inner London) of self-appraisal schemes, whereby individual teachers, departments and the whole school took stock of what they were trying to accomplish and how effectively they were achieving their objectives.

Self-appraisal was rarely seen as a compulsory stage of the appraisal process by LEAs but many recommended that it should take place at the beginning of the process and provided a proforma for that purpose.

3) Critical Incidents Method~

This approach entails the appraiser trying to make a detailed record of specific aspects of an individual's work, rather in the way a student teacher's supervisor traditionally does when observing a lesson. It usually culminates in a list of points of criticism or weaknesses identified for the teacher to attend to.

As a method of appraisal, used in this way, it is to be deplored. However, it can be gainfully used in peer appraisal when the specific aspects the teacher wishes to have appraised are defined and agreed beforehand. Its strength lies in its use as a basis for future discussion between the appraiser and appraisee when its skilled use can increase the possibility of productive communication. The difficulty of this approach can lie in determining which particular parts of a lesson presentation are 'critical' to its success or failure. Another difficulty is in separating one's preferred explanations or perceptions of what is critical from that which actually is critical, based upon grounded research in a variety of classrooms and settings.

4) Trait Rating Scales

Trait rating scales consist of a list of personal or professional qualities. The appraiser is required to indicate on a scale the extent to which the appraisee possesses the particular quality. The difficulties are that it can be highly subjective and sometimes can degenerate into a perfunctory paper and pencil exercise. It need have little or no sharing of the process, and can be altered or completed later. Whilst there may be some value in incorporating some more subjective technique into an overall appraisal system, on its own it seldom can provide a reliable assessment of a teacher's performance.

5) Management by Objectives

The report describes this approach with its commitment towards organisation goals, its emphasis on clarification of job specification, its participative nature and its focus on performance rather than personality as 'essentially forward looking'. The report defines four stages:

- 1) First, individual objectives which are related to the aims of the whole organisation are defined and set to be achieved in a specified period.
- 2) Teachers work towards these objectives which have been jointly agreed, with the possibility of being involved in periodic reviews.
- 3) The achievements are evaluated and an assessment is made as to how well the objectives have been met. It is at this stage, before the performance discussion, that self-appraisal is encouraged, to enable the appraisee to be fully prepared.
- 4) The final period is to establish fresh objectives for the next period, thus making the process cyclical.

Management by objectives is a model derived from American models from management in industry and commerce. In schools, it is a cascade system whereby objectives are agreed by the head and deputies, the resulting departmental objectives are agreed by middle managers, such as heads of pastoral and academic departments and the personal objectives which

follow from the departmental objectives are accepted by individual teachers. After a number of interim reports all objectives are reviewed at the end of the academic year.

This approach, much concerned with performance indicators, targets and goal setting the definable organisational products, was adopted in some of the first LEA schemes - Cambridge, Croydon, Northampton. A detailed description of a scheme which used this approach can be found in the account of the Warden Park Appraisal system (Trethowan 1986) later in this chapter.

The AMMA report also proposed guidelines for introducing appraisal procedures, stating that these can only be based on the clear understanding by all in the school of the organisational aims and objectives and of their roles and the roles of others. Another criterion for the establishment of a successful appraisal system is the wholehearted commitment from all members of staff at all levels within the school. This seems a criterion unlikely to be fully realised in the present climate, although personal experience has shown that teachers' attitudes to appraisal can change from mistrust and apprehension to pleased involvement.

That teachers should be consulted and involved in the development of acceptable criteria and procedures for appraisal was recommended by this report, which also advised that appraisal, to be consistent, should extend to all of the LEA education staff, and should begin at the top. Manifestations of this view appeared in statements in the press. The Chief Education Officer (CEO) for Northamptonshire stated his authority's view that appraisal should begin at the top so that what is expected of the Head of the establishment is clarified first before other responsibilities are distributed. The CEO for Somerset Education Authority said he intended to set an example by being the first to be appraised, although who was to appraise him was not specified.

The AMMA report also made the point that the appraisal interview is the most valuable feature of the whole process, and should be genuinely two-way, adopting a problem-solving approach, which provides positive feedback on past performance and underlines the mutuality of professional

aims and objectives. Preparation and training are requirements which must be invested in, as well as the resources to implement ensuing staff development programmes. The report concludes that 'if those in authority wish to know what is going on within the educational system in order to be more accountable and to effect improvements, then an atmosphere of confidence, openness and corporateness is fundamental. Relationships between the appraisers and appraised are critical in what is essentially a joint enterprise'.

As well as the publication of these surveys, two other main surveys were started in 1984 which examined the then current state of appraisal and attempted to trace the pattern of growth of teacher appraisal schemes. These surveys looked also at such questions as: who instigated the scheme, for what purpose and with what result? A scrutiny of their findings, published in 1985, offered an optimistic view of the possibilities for improvement in various fields as a result of the process.

The two surveys were:

- 1. A First Review and Register of School and College Based Teacher Appraisal Schemes**, carried out under the directorship of Professor D. Nuttall and P.Clift by G.Turner for the School of Education of the Open University, and funded by the Leverhulme Trust (Turner 1985).
- 2. Staff Appraisal Schemes in Comprehensive Schools - A Regional Survey of Current Practice in the South Midlands and the South West of England** carried out by C.R.James and J.C.Newman for the School of Education, University of Bath, and supported by a grant from the Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools, York (James & Newman 1985a).

Both the reviews used questionnaires to gather the information, but the initial launching of each was different. The Open University project began by placing an advertisement in the educational press requesting schools which had set up a scheme to contact them and send information about it for inclusion in the register. They also contacted schools which they understood to be operating any kind of scheme, using the database compiled by the Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools. Altogether they

gathered information on 56 schools which, as they pointed out, could not claim to be comprehensive, but could provide an indication of predominant tendencies. They did not impose any constraints on the type of schemes they were interested in, and consequently a wide variety was included. An interesting point they make is that the terminology varies, so that 'dialogue' or 'discussion' may be used in preference to 'appraisal interview', yet all of these may amount to the same thing.

The researchers identified three factors which they considered were crucial in the operation of any scheme:

1. The **climate** or 'ethos' of a school is important in terms of how appraisal operates. Schemes depend on existing modes of organisation and personal relationships to make them work, so it is not suggested that there is any single good type of scheme, or that a particular scheme can easily be made to work in another institution.
2. **How** a scheme is introduced is important. The most successful schemes appear to be those which developed slowly, were set up in a non-threatening manner, were voluntary and oriented towards professional development rather than assessment of performance. Some schools tried a pilot scheme and solved any problems before launching the scheme proper.
3. The **size** of the institution also seems to be an important factor. Large schools tend to operate through their existing management structures. Most schemes operate in an hierarchical fashion, with appraisal being conducted by senior staff, but there are a few experiments with peer appraisal and more open systems.

The research report found that the types of scheme could be placed in three main categories;

a) Appraisal Interview by Senior Management

This usually features an annual review of a teacher's work by senior management. This scheme relies on the skills and knowledge of the

interviewer and the ability and willingness of the appraisee to assess his or her own achievements. Since schemes of this type do not include any systematic observation of teachers at work the question arises as to what evidence is considered. It can only be based on indirect evidence and the appraiser's own knowledge and opinions. However, in some schools, the emphasis is on a two-way exchange of views and a shared appreciation of the teacher's situation with the aim being mutual benefit.

The main emphasis of the interview in these schemes is usually to improve individual teacher's performance. Obstacles to good performance may be removed, resource implications considered, arrangements altered and training needs identified, linked to the provision of In-Service Education of Teachers (INSET). Many of these schemes include target-setting, and require job-descriptions to be produced for all members of staff. Much emphasis is given to interview preparation, with an interview proforma often acting as an agenda.

b) Observation and Interview by Senior Management

These are very similar to those described in (a) above but in addition lessons are observed by senior management, usually the Head. In these schemes rarely is what is being observed and why made explicit, although observation schedules are sometimes used.

c) Departmental Review

In larger schools the requirement for in-depth evaluation by senior management, including lesson observation, may be met by undertaking reviews of one department at a time. The policies and practices of the department are appraised as well as individual teachers. This places considerable emphasis on the role of the Head of Department, and in some cases a proforma is provided to be completed in preparation for the appraisal interview. An analysis of the records reveals that the schemes are usually initiated by the Head, sometimes by a deputy and Head together, sometimes by a deputy, or, occasionally, by another interested member of staff. An interesting section of the replies deals with the changes that the schools felt had occurred as a result of the appraisal process. These ranged from 'none'

to 'raised morale, changed work practice, better planning of INSET, up-to-date information for references, hopefully, better teaching'. In the reliance upon the qualities and skills of Heads of Department it is evident that such schemes will be very variable, for the experience of this group is generally more limited than that of senior management, although not invariably so. The point raised about 'better teaching' is a crucial one for the views on this are often at variance within departments, with senior staff's practices being as equally questioned as those of junior staff.

The University of Bath study began by compiling a questionnaire which was validated by a group of teachers and then piloted in ten schools. After this pilot study the use of the term 'staff appraisal' was reviewed and a letter was sent with the questionnaires explaining that the survey was concerned with all staff appraisal schemes including those that formed part of a staff development programme. The questionnaire was divided into five sections and Heads were asked to answer questions in the section most relevant to the situation in their school.

The sections were;

A: For schools with formal schemes in operation. (There were 46 schools in this group, 22.3% of the total response)

B: For schools which have discontinued a scheme.
(9 schools were in this category, 4.4 %of the total replies)

C: For schools which will be implementing a scheme during this academic year. (17 schools, 8.3%)

D: For schools where a scheme will be implemented but not during this academic year. (70 in this category, 34% of the replies)

E: For schools where a scheme will not be implemented in the foreseeable future. (58 schools, 28.2% were in this category.) Others (6 schools replied which did not fit these categories, 2.9%). From a total of 233 questionnaires sent out, 206 replies were received, a percentage of 88.4.

Section A

Of the 46 schools in Section A this report also found that there was a great variety of formal schemes. It also stated that these schemes are a relatively recent innovation, with few (14%) in operation for longer than five years and many (55%) for just two. The majority of schemes had an annual cycle: 59% were voluntary and 36% compulsory. 63% of the schemes involved classroom observation and it appeared that much of the appraisal was carried out by the Headteacher. Schools were asked to outline the aims of their schemes. 90 aims were reported and were classified as follows:

- * to promote staff development (12)
- * to review performance, identifying strengths and weaknesses (12)
- * plan future career activities (11)
- * assess performance (8)
- * identify in-service training needs (7)
- * increase job-satisfaction and fulfilment (6)
- * aid communication (6)
- * assist systems evaluation and/or reorganisation (6)
- * identify and help with problems (6)
- * encourage self-evaluation by staff (5)
- * recognise and praise effort and achievement (5)
- * assist in the management of the school (2)
- * provide information for writing references (2)
- * motivate staff (2).

The number and variety of these aims, although there is some considerable overlap, would seem to indicate that those who are involved in appraisal systems view the outcomes optimistically as having wide-ranging benefits. The benefits and needs of the system, however, override those of the individual and this is more clearly seen when the aims are regrouped under a benefit system as follows:

- (a) Organisational development [45]
- (b) Staff development [30]

(c) Recognition and Motivation [13]

(d) Administration [2].

Although organisational needs and concerns are important and are reflected in responses (a) and (b), these are 'top-down' concerns. Recognition for work done and motivation engendered to achieve more seem to be the most important and significant parts of any scheme. When these are achieved the organisation as a whole can benefit.

Section B

In Section B, 9 schools reported that their formal appraisal schemes were discontinued. The reasons given were lack of time and pressure of other commitments, union opposition, negative climate, the lack of an end-product from the scheme, the wish to try other approaches, and that the person who initiated and directed the scheme had left. These are crucial considerations and suggest, in many of these instances, that the schemes were not well founded or properly introduced and supported.

Section C

In Section C, the 17 schools who said they would be implementing a scheme all had schemes which were designed to involve all staff with the Head and senior management implementing the scheme in the majority of cases. Nine of these school said they would be including classroom observation.

Section D

In Section D, the replies were vague as to when a scheme would be introduced – 'when the climate is right' although 34 per cent said they would be implementing a scheme in 1985-6. When asked to provide aims 130 were produced which, according to the researchers, largely corresponded with those of the schools in section A, apart from three;

- * To improve efficiency and quality - but this could be regarded as 'organisational development',

- * To improve staff morale, e.g. 'motivation and recognition',
- * To recognise pressures of accountability and 'administrative needs'.

Section E

The 58 schools in Section E gave 118 reasons why they would not be implementing any scheme and these were classified as shown:

- * Not a priority, lack of time, resources, expertise,
- * Too threatening, would damage morale, offer false hopes, damage staff relations,
- * Informal or departmental or self-appraisal schemes already in operation, [It is interesting that these were not seen as the schools' schemes!]
- * Opposition of staff, including union opposition, unwillingness of Head,
- * Implementation clouded by current link with national salary restructuring,
- * Awaiting nationally - imposed scheme.

Do we see ignorance, procrastination, over-cautiousness or negativism here? Are these examples of managerial opting-out or that an inappropriate analysis of appraisal has been made? Examination of the range of replies received in this survey endorses the findings of the other surveys. The need for commitment and resources and the mistrust and unwillingness shown in the largest number of replies is balanced against the more positive attitudes of those who have experienced some form of appraisal.

The authors of the report felt that the response to the survey, not just in the form of the replies but in the requests for information and advice, was a testimony to the fact that staff appraisal in schools is an issue of considerable importance. The range of schemes moved from an annual 30 minute unstructured interview with the Head to an appraisal by the Head and Head of Department which included classroom observation and an agreed statement. In examining the spread of schemes among local authorities it was worth noticing that the schemes were most widespread in

Oxfordshire, which has had a programme of self-evaluation for some time and requires its schools to complete a self-evaluation report every five years. This programme, encouraged by the former CEO, Tim Brighouse, may have created a climate of opinion where evaluation and appraisal are viewed positively in schools and are not perceived as a threat.

The report concluded that appraisal in some form would most certainly be a feature of most schools by the end of the decade, but found very few existing schemes included observation of the teacher in the classroom. The researchers also found that training appraisers and appraisal of Heads was 'almost non-existent'.

It is not surprising that many of these schemes fail to include the appraisal of the teacher actually teaching. This has not been customary practice. Indeed, once training is completed, many teachers do not receive any formal observation of their classroom teaching or even a discussion of their performance generally. The idea of classroom appraisal is often initially resisted, not least because of teachers' unwillingness to admit an observer into the classroom and the uncertainty about what is being examined, by whom and to what purpose. The consensus of the opinions put forward by the surveys reviewed is that the only way to assess whether an individual can actually teach is to watch him or her teaching, and that classroom observation should be seen as central to the process of appraisal.

The centrality of classroom observation is also a feature considered seriously in some of the pilot studies in local authorities which were financed by the Government in 1987. A survey of the methods employed by the pilot studies is undertaken in the next section.

1.iii Survey of Appraisal Schemes

The Six Pilot Studies

In an atmosphere of doubt and resentment six pilot studies were negotiated with local authorities. These pilot schemes were undertaken by LEAs; Croydon, Cumbria, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Salford, Somerset and Suffolk, chosen by the Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker, from those authorities who put forward proposals for appraisal schemes and who generally already had some appraisal initiatives in operation. These LEAs represented a geographic and demographic cross-section of appraisal, a wide range of appraisal experience, and, 'so it seemed, an even wider range of expectations of the outcomes of a national appraisal scheme' (Poster 1991).

At first, the launch of the schemes was threatened by the resentment generated by the prospect of a Government-imposed pay package, and it appeared that the teacher unions would decide to withdraw from the schemes. However, agreement was reached after two months' negotiations during the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) talks on teachers' pay and conditions (1986). The unions agreed to consider a three-stage development:

- * setting up a steering group to establish national criteria for appraisal;
- * running of pilot schemes in local authorities;
- * drawing up guidelines for locally agreed schemes.

In return, the unions wanted renewed assurances that appraisal would not be used as a punitive measure to discipline or dismiss teachers or be linked directly to pay or promotion, but would help the professional and career development of teachers based on observation and discussion and leading to support, advice, additional training and wider opportunities. The price tag for providing an appraisal system which would fulfil these

requirements was estimated to be £40 million to cover the costs for special training in appraisal methods, time spent in classroom observation, interviewing and follow-up work, extra teachers and secretarial back-up. This sum did not include further costs for in-service training needs which would result from appraisal.

Although, in the past, the unions had not initially welcomed the introduction of appraisal, seeing it as evidence of the Government's desire for greater control, they were forced to adopt a more positive approach, since the 1986 Education Act (No 2) gave the Secretary of State reserve powers to impose an appraisal process by requiring LEAs and others to ensure that the performance of teachers would be regularly appraised in accordance with such requirement as might be prescribed. In the conditions of service which had been enforced on teachers in 1978 there was an agreement to comply with an appraisal process 'within an agreed national framework'.

Nevertheless the unions warned the Government that unilateral imposition could be disastrous, as would inadequate funding. 'There will be total resistance to a scheme which diverts from our principles or which fails to deliver adequate resources' (Griffin 1986).

The ACAS proposals, which had been influenced by the findings of the Suffolk report, resulted in the adoption of the three stage development plan. The National Steering Group, with representatives from the DES, LEAs, and the unions was set up to monitor progress and to oversee individual schemes. The six authorities, backed by a £4 million Government support grant, began their pilot studies at a time when teachers' trust and confidence were low. Again the Government was warned that, to the majority of teachers, appraisal appeared as another weapon in the hands of an observing hierarchy. Many felt they would be under judgemental surveillance. ' "Hunt the teacher" was an ancient sport. Now it could become a popular sport and a sport for which it was always open season' (Lister 1986).

The range of pilot schemes chosen seemed to indicate that the DES had welcomed diversity and was not trying to impose too prescriptive a view of how the pilot schemes should work. The key tasks of the pilot schemes were to tackle the particular crucial areas where, up to then, there had been little

experimentation, such as the appraisal of Headteachers, the particular needs of primary schools and training for appraisers. As we saw in the accounts of appraisal schemes, most appraisal schemes in schools had mainly been voluntary, agreed by staff in advance and introduced in well-run schools where teachers trusted the Head. These pilot schemes were to try to devise appraisal schemes that could help teachers where these conditions did not apply. The LEAs involved were also given a particular responsibility to keep track of the resource implications of what they did.

The Croydon plan initially proposed to use appraisal for assessment and promotion, with possible salary bars, as an integral part of an effective system. They had to re-submit their proposal to the steering group because of concern that they linked teacher appraisal too directly to pupil performance. Teachers felt that there was insufficient correspondence between the tone and intent of the documents Croydon had produced and what were seen as the guiding principles agreed in the ACAS talks. Critics warned that children are affected by other factors, such as family and social environment, and the atmosphere of the school and the attitude of other teachers, and that pupils' skills were a risky basis for teacher appraisal since a recent study (Dockrell 1986) had found no simple or obvious relationship between teaching and learning. It is interesting to note how the emphasis in the later booklet produced by Croydon for its teachers stressed much more the benefits to be gained for all involved rather than the process of assessment of pupil performance.

Cumbria and Salford shared a similar approach in that the principle underlying their work was that the appraisal of the individual cannot be separated from the needs of the school, but that whole school review and individual appraisal are complementary and inextricably linked, with school-focused in-service work being the natural consequence. Cumbria used the Guidelines for the Review and Internal Development of Schools (GRIDS), a nationally-recognised, questionnaire-based approach developed by the Schools Council. The stages followed in the Cumbria system were:-

- * setting the climate - how this is done needs to be detailed,
- * appointment of co-ordinator - this is a key appointment,
- * full range questionnaire including identification of

- priorities - all have equal voice and share responsibility,
- * specific working parties are set up,
- * a report back to whole school is made, an action plan is drawn up and implemented by ... ,
- * review by

The assumption underlying this scheme, which stressed the desire to increase professionalism, was that the aims and purposes of the whole school must be identified before individual teachers can be appraised, since individuals cannot be appraised in a vacuum. It also assumed teacher competence and emphasised that appraisal must not be seen as a disciplinary procedure. It is interesting to note that during the troubled negotiations between the teachers' unions and the Government, the teachers of Cumbria made it known that they wanted to continue with the schemes that were being piloted in fifteen schools.

Cumbria produced a training pack of three video-recordings which demonstrated that the system could be successfully applied in many different schools, and that teachers felt that they benefited from this approach, not only in the supportive appraisal of their teaching, but in the feeling of being involved in the decision-making and development of their school. Improved working relationships and a greater feeling of collegiality were also claimed.

Salford had a proven track record in the area of appraising primary teachers, and this authority's plan was based on school self-evaluation aimed at identifying the training needs of the individual and the institution and included classroom observation.

The pilot project in Newcastle-upon-Tyne was managed by an LEA Plan for the overall policy, planning and development of the Appraisal Project. The Senior Inspector of Schools was in overall charge of a team of three co-ordinators seconded from a school at primary, middle and secondary level. The project had a fully-equipped base which offered secretarial, reprographic and administrative facilities to the schools involved in the pilot project. The Newcastle Project was based on the firm view that teacher appraisal systems should only be devised in full

consultation with teachers, and that systems must fit particular schools. Its aim was actively to involve all teachers in producing a system for all teaching staff which was consistent with teachers' views, recognising the outcomes they, as individuals, require from an appraisal scheme. It was based on the premise that no system is wholly transferable, even from one school to another. Newcastle LEA produced a manual, 'School Teacher Appraisal Formative Framework' (STAFF) based on the findings and working practices of other school appraisal working groups in the Authority. After a visit by a co-ordinator promoting the benefits of a good appraisal system, this manual was designed to be used by a school appraisal working group as the basis for creating the right climate and structure for the introduction of appraisal, by considering the important questions about appraisal, such as purposes and philosophy, processes, design, etc. as they relate to that school. It was considered that this system, by opening the discussion to all teachers, provided that it was initially well-presented, could prevent the lack of interest or feelings of resentment that can arise when systems are imposed (Newcastle 1986).

Somerset stressed that central to its scheme would be the appraisal of those in authority – the employees in County Hall, and first to be appraised would be the chief education officer, followed by the county's Headteachers. All the secondary Heads in Somerset attended three residential conferences on how appraisal works and, with the help of training officers from Clark's, the shoe firm, were instructed in the listening skills, interview techniques and methods of self-evaluation they would need. The training of primary Heads was also undertaken. The appraisal of Heads was carried out by two other Heads from a different catchment area, with advisers taking part too. As a starting point the appraisal team examined the job description which had already been drawn up by the Head and an adviser. As well as training Headteachers, the scheme also trained school senior management teams whose task it was to appraise classroom teachers. The in-service training of classroom teachers to prepare them for appraisal was designed to be a later part of the process, provided that they continued to support the scheme. As the chief education officer pointed out, 'You can't force people to review their own performance'.

This 'cascade' method, which attracted other authorities such as

Surrey, requires substantial resources, for training, administration, supply cover and the subsequent in-service training that the scheme promised to administrators and teachers. The authority, while not able to offer definite amounts, stated that the costs of appraisal would be 'very significant', and that it was essential to provide the means to fulfil the training outcomes, since it was the basis of the authority's agreement with the teachers who would 'feel deluded' if training to improve performance was not offered.

To be successful cascades need to be small ones, involving only a moderate number of people, and have few stages, rather than, as seen in many instances, a succession of increasingly larger groups, who, often feeling inadequately prepared themselves, are required to inform and train the next level, frequently with detrimental results. One Head who had attentively undertaken the three days' appraisal training provided by one LEA reported that she felt 'informed but very apprehensive about being the sole introducer of appraisal.' She also stated that providing detailed appraisal information and training just for Heads had been perceived as divisive by her staff, especially as she had been away from school for three days attending the appraisal course, which was held in a very comfortable seaside hotel.

The influential Suffolk scheme, again a 'top-down' model, stressed the need for appraisal at all levels, and included classroom appraisal as an essential component of any scheme. It advised that appraisal should not be used for promotion purposes or to decide salary levels, but to provide a framework to overcome weaknesses in teachers' work for 'professional development and to identify in-service needs' (Graham 1985). The recommendations of the Suffolk Team for a six-stage appraisal model, starting with self-evaluation, an initial interview with an appraiser, classroom observation and a subsequent interview, an appeals procedure, if necessary, and a recording system, greatly influenced the ACAS working group's guidelines. The emphasis the Suffolk Team's reports placed on the positive aspects of appraisal was praised by the unions.

The Cambridge Institute of Education Evaluation Studies

A contract to evaluate the six schemes was awarded to the Cambridge

Institute of Education. The brief was to compare and contrast the development of the schemes. Literature from the DES stated that the 'end result of the project should be a tested set of procedures and documents which non-participating LEAs would be able to adopt', but, as one of the evaluators pointed out, the initial DES directives to LEAs stated that the consortium members would be expected to develop practical programmes for 'introducing the appraisal procedures and methods outlined in the ACAS Working Group Report on appraisal into schools of varying types and size thus, in a sense, predetermining the national guidelines'. The concern was that as a consequence, the ACAS document had 'pre-empted much in the way of creative, innovative, individualistic approaches to appraisal at school or Local Authority level. What remains to be seen is the variety of ways in which schools can put flesh on that framework' (Dadds 1987).

The Cambridge Institute initially determined several questions to be researched (Dadds 1987) which seemed likely to emerge from schemes adhering to the ACAS principles:

- * In what ways has appraisal improved the quality of induction of Entry Grade teachers?
- * Has it made assessing their performance easier and more reliable?
- * Has appraisal changed the way in which teachers participate in INSET?
- * Has appraisal led directly to new or modified roles for teachers, and how have those involved perceived the process?
- * Has appraisal successfully identified potential for career development?
- * Has the related support been made available?
- * Has appraisal helped those teachers who are experiencing performance difficulties?
- * What relationship with disciplinary procedures has emerged?
- * How is this difficult area perceived by those involved?
- * What relationship, if any, has emerged between records of appraisal and appointment procedures and references?

The emphasis of the enquiry was placed on researching and comparing the perspectives of the participants, at the beginning, during and at the end of a teacher's first appraisal 'cycle' as well as an analysis of teacher attitudes and teachers' views about the purpose of appraisal. In-service courses on

teacher appraisal at the Cambridge Institute led the team to recognise that many teachers felt confused, threatened, ill-informed and cynical as a result of the negative national climate which, as we have seen, had been evolving for some years.

An interesting point raised by a member of the evaluating team and one which is close to the concerns of this research is the consideration that the appraisal process may be more complex than the original proposals suggested. No account appears to have been taken of the reflective processes which appraisers and appraisees undergo. 'Since reflection will be the pivot upon which the whole issue of learning, development and change revolves, it seems crucially important that this be a focus for research, and thus the evaluation of the pilot schemes will attempt to penetrate the vital and complex parts of the process that may fall between (and, possibly, out of) the ACAS net' (Dadds 1987).

After the first round of meetings between the evaluators and the pilot LEAs other issues emerged, which included such issues as:

- * To what extent new approaches to appraisal can be integrated into existing policies,
- * The degree of flexibility that a national framework can afford at LEA and school level,
- * How much autonomy will be accorded to individual schools to develop their own system within prescribed guidelines?
- * How will the interests and perspectives of different roles be balanced by different schemes and does this have an effect on subsequent developments and attitudes?

Not least among these issues is the problematic issue of criteria for appraisal, and how these may be defined and by whom. This difficult area seems to offer a minefield of problems since there is no general agreement on the nature and degree of flexibility of criteria.

One of many important points raised for consideration was that most of the schools in the pilot schemes entered voluntarily and so the sample was not really representative. Among the many questions raised by the

evaluating team were:

- * Would the framework provided by ACAS and the pilot schemes be appropriate and effective in less willing schools which lack the necessary climate of trust and commitment?
- * How would those teachers who were not accustomed to systematic self-evaluation adapt to self-appraisal, classroom observation and performance review? This raised the question of preparation for appraisal and the kind and amount of training needed for all involved.
- * Would the enormous resources required be forthcoming?
- * Would the favourable funding of the appraisal pilots be available, not just to introduce and develop worthwhile schemes, but to fulfil the resource implications of the training and development needs that such schemes reveal? (CIE 1989)

(Although it was not altogether appropriate to equate the current allowances with those of the evaluation, it was calculated that the costs of evaluating the pilot studies (£100,000 per year) would provide capitation expenses for a village school for thirty-five years, and that the modest expenses of a researcher for two visits to a participating school almost equalled the school's INSET grant for the year. The question was asked whether two or three visits to a school by a researcher, who might not be a qualified and experienced teacher, could do justice to the evaluation and could find out what was really going on and how appraisal was working.)

These questions of response, costs, resources, training and evaluation would require close attention by the Government. The teacher force was feeling under considerable threat from those other areas mentioned by James Callaghan - the introduction of a core curriculum and the establishment of national assessment procedures. Any national system would need to be introduced carefully and be well-resourced, or it would be rejected and thereby counter-productive.

Despite the gloomy response by many teachers there were examples of

schemes which had been successfully introduced (Bunnell & Stevens 1984) and were working well, and two such schemes are outlined in the next section.

1.iv Case Studies in Appraisal

Warden Park School

As demonstrated by the surveys examined earlier many school appraisal schemes were initiated by the Head. One such scheme was that of Warden Park School which has been in operation since 1974. It was initiated by the Headteacher, David Trethowan who believes that there is no effective management without appraisal. Fundamental to his school's approach is the premise that a teacher needs to be aware of three things: - responsibilities, standards and targets. Even experienced teachers need to know what is expected of them, that is, the basic task must be clearly defined and agreed so that targets (tasks mutually agreed between appraiser and teacher) are set over and above the basic task.

Initially he conducted all the appraisal interviews for his 80 staff personally, but found the experience was 'overwhelmingly time-consuming, inefficient and worst of all, often ineffective'. Now the task of appraisal is shared by all the middle and senior management and is based on joint target-setting. It is his claim that the appraisal and target-setting approach benefits both the school and the individual teacher. He believes the school gains in institutional awareness and the ability to solve problems. Open communication is encouraged, as are supportive relationships, and as a result teamwork develops, which all contributes to the growth of a caring school. The management of change is facilitated since the management is aware of the policies and targets already in action.

He considers that the teacher gains by having a clear conception of the expected role and the basic tasks. In participating in target-setting teachers feel that they are influencing the planning of the school and that their contribution is valued. Appraisal also affords them the opportunity to discuss career prospects and to gain credit for their performance. Feeling valued can reduce teacher stress, an especially important factor in view of the current pressures upon the profession. Each teacher also benefits from this style of open management since references are written from more

objective knowledge and the teacher is aware of what will be included. He concludes, 'In the final analysis, appraisal and target-setting amounts to a respect for the individual and for his or her performance at school'.

Trethowan also credits systems of appraisal and target-setting with having three main aspects attractive to those charged with providing an effective, efficient education service at reasonable cost :

- * the efficient use of resources, ranging from finances to teacher time and equipment;
- * the maximising of teacher development in terms of appropriate placements and effective use of training;
- * possibility of effective control in that real targets could be set for schools and schools would have the necessary organisation to pass these on.

Although he did not state that this aspect is an essential feature of the development of staff appraisal in Britain, he suggested that 'should the nation decide it would like to do more than mildly influence its schools, appraisal and target-setting might be the way to achieve this'.

It is interesting to find that classroom observation does not figure largely in his approach. It is an area which he believes is difficult to execute since he considers that the quality of a lesson cannot be assessed merely by watching it. He advises that an appraiser needs to employ a range of devices with which to support a limited amount of classroom observation. A role for classroom observation which he defines as essential is when a teaching problem has to be analysed, although a series of brief visits to several lessons may be found to be more useful than a formal observation which he feels can distort class behaviour (Trethowan 1986).

Heathland School

This view is not shared by Geoffrey Samuel who since 1982 has reported the progress of the appraisal scheme in operation at his school. He

believes that 'greater emphasis should be placed on classroom appraisal'. He has arrived at this standpoint as a result of experience of his school's appraisal system which was developed from three strands of assessment which were introduced early in the school's history. One strand was a programme of informal 'inspections' of subject departments on which he embarked during the second year of the school. Another strand was the appraisal and support work with probationary teachers as part of their induction programme. They found the process was very helpful and expressed a wish for its continuation. He explains that it seemed natural to extend this balanced programme of support and appraisal to teachers higher up in the school. The third strand was a voluntary scheme of institutional self-appraisal to be assessed against the stated aims and objectives to produce a detailed written report for the governing body.

As Samuel significantly points out, the generation of the right climate for appraisal is generally agreed to be of prime importance and, unwittingly, the introduction of these three forms of evaluation and support had laid the foundations for staff acceptance of appraisal.

He emphasises that it was essential initially to stress the identifiable benefits to members of staff. At first the scheme was voluntary and began with self-appraisal, followed by an interview with two appraisers from a panel which consisted of the Head, deputies and the professional tutor. The aim was a genuine two-way dialogue culminating in a discussion of career prospects, and it was thought that generally the scheme was successful.

An outside industrial consultant was invited to review the scheme and, while she admired its honesty and openness, in her opinion the main fault with the system was the failure to differentiate between job appraisal and career development. As a result of this examination of the system a major review was undertaken and a new two-stage scheme was introduced. It was made compulsory, since it was averred that those most in need of appraisal would be the first to opt out, an observation this researcher would uphold. In the first stage, appraisal of job performance would be carried out by one's immediate superior, with the intention that during the process 'targets' would 'emerge' which would be agreed and not imposed. It is stressed that these targets have been of a professional rather than a strictly

quantifiable nature.

The second stage of review is not concerned with whether the targets agreed in the first stage have been attained but can concentrate on career and professional development, or examine the contribution to the general life of the school. As with the first review an agenda of two or three jointly-selected areas for discussion is agreed in advance. These second stage reviews were found to be most useful when they related directly to new responsibilities and the professional support needed to ensure success, and equally when they resulted in the determination of agreed personal priorities, such as attending a course or forging links with primary schools.

In his reporting of Heathland's developing scheme Samuel (1982, 1983, 1985, 1987) considered some of the questions and problems that beset the introduction and running of an appraisal programme, such as

- * Who is to appraise the Headteacher?
- * Should ancillary staff be appraised? and,
- * What is the role of the local authority adviser?

This brief examination of these two well-established schemes reveals that both advocate a clear job specification, both have developed a target-setting approach, both use a 'line-manager' system and both are claimed to have been successful in motivating and developing staff and in improving communication and caring levels. Another aspect that both schemes recognised as important was the need for training of appraisers and adequate preparation of all concerned.

An analysis of the research findings of the surveys of appraisal schemes and the published accounts of schemes in operation indicate the necessity for an effective, supportive, performance-enhancing appraisal scheme, which while providing a national framework would allow schools to tailor their appraisal procedures to their own ethos and style of organisation. The Secretary of State for Education acknowledged this at the North of England Conference in 1985:

'An appraisal system is also needed for the **professional enhancement** of the individual teacher. Other professions - and some schools - have found that appraisal interviews provide an opportunity for constructive self-evaluation of individual and collective training needs. To be fully effective an appraisal system would have to be complemented by better arrangements for the individual teacher's career development - including induction, in-service training, guidance on possible teaching posts and promotion. When I refer to the management of the teaching force I have this whole range of positive activity in mind' (Joseph 1985a).

The premise that an appraisal scheme should and can be a positive activity leading to greater self-evaluation and improvement of performance has been tested in a pilot scheme (Montgomery 1984b), and extended into a research project involving mainly probationary teachers (Montgomery & Hadfield 1989a). The method of appraisal consists of classroom observation followed by a review session wherein the positive aspects of the teacher's performance are emphasised and a theoretical framework of strategies is detailed. Using the guidelines the teacher is encouraged to assess his or her performance and by engaging in a 'Learning Conversation' become a Self-Organised Learner (Thomas and Harri-Augstein 1984). A detailed account of this method and its modus operandi can be found in Appendix 1.

'Self-organisation in learning consists of the ability to converse with oneself and others about the processes of learning; and to review, search, analyse, formulate, reflect and review on the basis of such encounters' (Thomas and Harri-Augstein 1985).

Self-organisation in learning was and is a crucial element in all the developmental work with students and teachers under the aegis of Diane Montgomery at Kingston Polytechnic and later at Middlesex University. The adaptation of the Learning Conversation as part of her philosophy arose from an earlier joint project with the Centre for the Study of Human Learning (CSHL) at Brunel University and Gypsy Hill College (as Kingston

Polytechnic was then known). This had been convened by Diane Montgomery, Laurie Thomas and Sheila Harri-Augstein in 1972 to explore reading as a learning skill. The research involved trainee teachers from Gypsy Hill College in learning to distinguish, self-evaluate and improve the order and pattern of their reading habits into reading to learn (Harri-Augstein et al 1982).

1.v A National Framework for Appraisal

In the 1986 Education Act (No.2) the Secretary of State took reserve powers which would allow him to impose an appraisal process by requiring local education authorities and others to ensure that the performance of teachers would be regularly appraised in accordance with such requirements as may be prescribed. These reserve powers had been included in the Conditions of Service imposed in 1978 which were enforced on teachers so there was already an uneasy agreement to comply with an appraisal process 'within an agreed national framework'.

In the autumn of 1989 HMI issued a survey of developments in appraisal in 69 authorities, including the six pilot authorities, which was circulated with the National Steering Group's (NSG 1989) report on two years' intensive work on the teacher appraisal pilot schemes **School Teacher Appraisal: A National Framework**. In this report most of the aims and purposes for appraisal put forward by the ACAS report were endorsed. In particular the NSG defined the following aims as being appropriate for any teacher appraisal scheme:

- * improving the confidence and morale levels of teachers;
- * improving communications and professional relations within schools;
- * improving the planning and delivery of the curriculum;
- * increased participation in in-service training;
- * improving the 'targeting' of in-service training;
- * helping teachers with career planning;
- * contributing to better informed references.

More generally, the NSG recognised that appraisal should become an 'integral part of the management and support of teachers and must not be treated as an isolated exercise', thus underlining the need for the aims and purposes of any appraisal scheme to be enmeshed into the overall aims and purposes of the school.

There was a general consensus that although teachers were

overloaded the introduction of an appraisal system could help professional development, and that the NSG's model of appraisal was the best available. However, in a covering letter to all Chief Education Officers, the DES indicated that the new Secretary of State, John MacGregor, was proposing a six-month consultation period, unlike his predecessor, Kenneth Baker, whose consultation period was usually six weeks. Mr Macgregor had decided that

'in view of the far reaching reforms on which schools are now engaged it would not be right to make Regulations in the near future which required all schools to introduce appraisal within the next few years'.

This was interpreted as his 'going cold' on appraisal and strangely, perversely perhaps, the reaction of many educationists was one of disappointment. Despite having complained of fatigue from too many innovations, there were several cogent reasons for this response:

- 1) this was the one innovation in which the teachers' local and national representatives had been scrupulously involved;
- 2) appraisal had been skilfully steered away from a judgemental process to a developmental one;
- 3) many LEA appraisal initiatives were well under way, and;
- 4) there was a growing realisation that appraisal could well be the key to the successful management of these other innovations.

Indeed, far from seeing appraisal as an additional burden, John Heywood of the Secondary Heads Association argued that

'A nationally agreed framework for appraisal provides the key to the implementation of the Education Reform Act, and the National Curriculum in particular.'

It is likely that the costs of adequately resourcing this innovation lay

behind Mr Macgregor's decision. The estimates for the cost of introducing appraisal had ranged from £100 million by the NUT, to £70 million by the Suffolk pilot team and, at the time of Mr Macgregor's decision, were set at £40 million.

The unions understandably refused to support any appraisal process unless part of an agreed national scheme, and it was clear that, whilst ostensibly relieving schools and LEAs of a major pressure, he had in fact provoked much teacher opposition. This opposition had not lessened when the draft national appraisal framework was issued in 1990. This appeared to stipulate a line manager model and a biennial review, when, as HMI had pointed out, most institutions considered that for the majority of teachers the natural appraisal cycle is the academic year. Again it has been argued that 'the decision to have biennial appraisal has been made, not on educational criteria but because of the cost' (Poster 1991).

In July 1991 Kenneth Clarke, the Secretary of State, established The Appraisal (School Teacher) Regulations to introduce a National Teacher Appraisal Scheme and a timetable for implementation, requiring all teachers to have completed their first appraisal by the end of the school year in 1995. The National Framework and the statutory instrument outlining the legal requirement presented the managerial approach to staff appraisal. The scheme, wherever possible, required appraisal by those who 'already have management responsibility for the school teacher' (DES 1991). Targets and development were to take account of institutional requirements and 'meet the needs of the school as well as those of the individual appraisees' and there should be individual support between appraisal and development planning. In defining the duties and purposes for appraisal the Regulations (1991) state:

'Appraising bodies shall secure that appraisal assists

- a) school teachers in their professional development and career planning; and
- b) those responsible for taking decisions about the management of school teachers (para 4 [1]).'

The Regulations (1991) and the Guidelines issued with them provided a framework for LEAs to develop their own appraisal schemes and required them to introduce appraisal training programmes for all teachers. The response to this legal requirement varied considerably, as some authorities and schools had done little to set up any appraisal initiative and had to start from scratch, whilst others had considerable expertise informing detailed schemes and were progressing with implementation.

In the same year, the Teachers' Pay and Conditions of Service Document was altered to include the necessity for Headteachers to introduce appraisal and for teachers to take part. Every teacher who worked for more than 0.4 of a full-time post had to be appraised between 1992 and 1994; the Headteacher was responsible for selecting an appropriate appraiser, who should, normally, have line manager responsibility for the teacher; there would also be observation of classroom teaching lasting an hour or more, with at least two observation periods.

It was stated that central funding would be provided to enable LEAs to introduce appraisal within the necessary time scale, but was intended only to initiate the process. This funding was to be provided for four years, ceasing in March 1995. It would allow a degree of preparatory training for all teachers and pay for cover for the required two periods of classroom observation to take place. Formal classroom or task observation was considered by the DES to be the only aspect of the appraisal process that was new to schools. All other aspects of the appraisal process, which in general require a minimum of eight hours teacher time to carry out in the first year, were not supported, but were to be regarded as 'normal management function'.

The level of funding was regarded as insufficient by many. Some LEAs provided considerable extra funding to allow more favourable levels of training and better allowances to schools; in others, there were considerable delays in implementation while teacher union representatives fought over the details of the local scheme, which they considered seriously underfunded. These disparities have not lessened. One of the basic tenets of appraisal, equality of opportunity, can not be said to have been upheld.

'In the wake of all the political arguments, the pressures from the introduction of the National Curriculum and other changes, and the repeated threats of boycott from teacher unions, appraisal was introduced in minimalist form. There was no national proforma, nor were grades awarded. Dismissal and promotion were not accorded a high profile..... Appraisal had become a legal requirement for the first time in England' (Wragg et al 1996).

Over leaf is a summary of the development of teacher appraisal up to the present day (Figure 1).

In providing this account of the national development of Teacher Appraisal I have been describing the wider context in which this thesis is placed. In the next chapters I will introduce the more personal context and rationale of my research activities, and then describe and evaluate those activities before returning again, in Chapter 6, to a presentation of my recommendations in that wider national context where I began.

Figure 1

The Development of Teacher Appraisal up to the Present Day

1976	Callaghan's speech	'standards, costs, autonomy'.
1976	'The Great Debate'.	
1983	Teaching Quality - DES.	
1985-86	Teachers' Pay dispute.	
1985	Quality in Schools.	
1986	Education Act ACAS Report of the Appraisal & Training Working Group National Steering Group (NSG) established.	
1987	6 Pilot projects began.	
1988	Education Reform Act.	
1989	NSG report	HMI report Cambridge Institute Evaluation.
1989	Appraisal regulations postponed - consultation period.	
1990	September: Secretary of State, John McGregor, decides against the introduction of regulations for appraisal. He proposes instead a National Framework based on NSG recommendations, involvement in which would be voluntary.	
1990	December: Kenneth Clarke proposes Regulations for compulsory teacher appraisal to be phased in by 1995.	
1991	April: Draft regulations issued for consultation.	
1991	October: Regulations and Circular issued to all schools. Pump priming funding for implementation, training and classroom observations.	
1995	Funding ceased. National Evaluation Surveys show appraisal is having a beneficial effect. National Conference recommends continuance of funding and LEA management.	
1996	Initial Teacher Training Agency and The Office for Standards in Education undertake national survey.	

Chapter 2

The Research Project

This chapter describes the context of the research project and explains the rationale. The intended format of the research, the proposed use of the selected instruments and methods of working are described. The first section, however, is a personal account of the genesis of the research. It explains how I started on the research journey which proved to be longer and more complex than I anticipated. Further sections introducing statements of personal reflection will be interspersed throughout the thesis as appropriate. To highlight these personal comments these sections will appear in a different typeface.

2.1 My Research Journey: First Steps

This account of my research journey follows sequentially the progressions and difficulties encountered during the course of what evolved to become my action research and seeks to examine the evolution of my own learning as well as the learning of the teachers. I hope, in these sections, to examine what has been called the 'deeply personal roots of the research process' and the 'concern, directions and meanings which guide it' (Salmon 1992).

At the start of this research I had taken time off from teaching to become involved in a three-year research project, funded by Kingston Polytechnic, as a research assistant. This project, based on an earlier successful pilot study, was to research classroom interactions using a particular observation method (Appendix 1). This pilot study had sufficiently convinced the Kingston Research Committee of the potential value of the interactive method that a grant had been made. This was to extend

the scope of the earlier research and to seek further validation of the method. Although the research programme was set in a scientific positivist research paradigm, a form acceptable to the research committee, the intervention in the classroom was developmental in intention so that the proposed research method was a hybrid. My role was to organise the field work programme of classroom observation. Part of my contract was to teach, and also to undertake my own research project, but for a time I was so busy with the main project that I hesitated to decide on an area of research.

There were many factors affecting this indecision. I had but recently entered a stimulating new world, that of higher education. In this teacher-training establishment I was undertaking new roles, learning every day, gaining in confidence, excited, interested, but generally being guided and directed. I was assisting in a research programme which was structured and purposeful, and practically based. I wanted the same criteria to apply to anything I did, but I did not have a particular method or intervention I wanted to explore. Simply, I didn't know enough to know what I wanted to do. I didn't feel able to make informed decisions. While interested in everything about me, I didn't have any strong enthusiasm for a particular course of research action. 'Action' is the crucial word here.

The kind of research I had undertaken previously had been of a different kind. It was literary research on the works of Samuel Richardson, a little-read but influential eighteenth-century novelist. It was intense, private, solitary, inactive, and academic, dealing with exploring ideas, comparing literary theories, and analysing writing structures. This kind of 'ivory tower' research would decidedly not be acceptable in a Department engaged very actively with the education of teachers, nor with the project ethic,

practically geared towards action research.

To initiate my own research, I needed to be able to imagine myself doing it. I now had a changed image of a researcher as someone who went out into the world, a pioneer, who was sure of the value of what they were doing, who probably knew what the outcomes would be, but needed to provide evidence that would convince others. I just didn't feel like that. As a relative beginner in this kind of people-centred enterprise I was unsure about what were the standards and expectations.

While observing and recording data during the Kingston Research Project, it was obvious that the sessions were of practical benefit, not only to the teachers taking part, but also were confirming a theory and practice of positive intervention that was of practical value generally to educators. So, in accord with my revised view of research, any programme I might design had to be of use to the participants, and, ideally, develop theory and practice of general value and application.

One of the virtues claimed for the Montgomery Method (Appendix 1) was that it encouraged teachers to engage in 'learning conversations'. In trying to discover the source of what this meant I read about the technique of repertory grids (Thomas & Harri-Augstein 1985). The apparent simplicity of the technique intrigued me. Encouraged by the assertion that it was a valuable learning tool, I experimented by eliciting a repertory grid for myself. Even in this tentative trial it was clear that a repertory grid elicitation could be a stimulating, if not necessarily a comfortable, learning experience. More practical application was needed, so I tried a few simple repertory grids with friends. Despite my inexperience with the technique their responses were remarkable; they talked, thought, reflected and made connections in ways not normally

stimulated by our conversations. The process appeared to have a strong effect, unlocking previously unrealised meanings of a very personal nature.

Two instances, in particular, seemed to have particularly significant effects. One friend constructed a repertory grid based on elements of 'recent changes in her life'. She talked about how she now hated to visit her parents who lived three hundred miles away, whereas until quite recently she had enjoyed going every six weeks. She also realised that she had not included any mention at all of her husband in her repertory grid, which she found strange. During the completion of the repertory grid she said she came to realise that her degree of absorption in her new baby over the last few months had radically changed her relationship with her husband, her family and friends. Among the many insights about her relationships that she gained, one in particular appeared to give her immense satisfaction. She told me that she now realised why the thought of going to her parents had distressed her. It was because the travelling now involved the baby. She was tense in case he was fretful on the journey. In future, she decided, she would travel in the late evening when he slept, and recapture the pleasure she had had in visiting her parents.

This was a simple example but it seemed to demonstrate that a process of learning had been set in motion which was of deep personal significance. Over the next few weeks whenever we met, she would refer back to her repertory grid and bring me up to date on her thinking and tell me of any thoughts or actions she considered were a result of her continuing reflections.

Another close friend, in reviewing her learning experiences, included some of the difficult times she had had; a contested divorce, financial hardship, illness and single parenthood, as well

as some of her hard-won academic achievement. She described her life as 'lurching helplessly from crisis to crisis', but as she defined her constructs she said that she could see that, although she had always felt that she had dealt weakly 'with a series of hammer blows,' she had in fact coped well with all the situations, and, from her own resources. A pattern of determined perseverance and courage emerged which was acknowledged as being true but never before openly recognised and accepted. This learning experience gave rise to an apparently profoundly changed self-perspective which was examined in later discussions.

In both cases I felt I had been involved in a conversation of some importance to the individual but the deeper levels of personal significance and the implications of the changed view point were known only to my friends, in 'their unique position as observer of their own experience' (Thomas & Harri-Augstein 1985).

The repertory grids completed at this time were all with friends and colleagues. The experience appeared to have significance for all of them. Although I had read that the technique had originally been developed as a therapeutic tool (Kelly 1955), I was surprised at the level of involvement and attention that the repertory grid process promoted, and the apparently beneficial, almost cathartic, effect of some of the conversations. The process appeared to clarify situations, aid problem-solving and prompt decision-making to a degree that had not happened when we had discussed concerns and dilemmas previously. The discussions were much more closely focused and of direct relevance to those involved, stimulating reflection of a different kind, at a deeper level.

An interesting phenomenon which arose from these conversations was that, often, when I met these friends and

colleagues later, there appeared to be an assumption that the issues examined in their repertory grid conversation were in the front of my mind, and that I was somehow involved in their thinking processes and could immediately continue the conversation at the point to which they had progressed. This continuity of shared dialogue normally only occurred with some very close friends, so it seemed that it was the intimacy and sharing of the repertory grid dialogue that created a bond of trust and involvement on this deeper level.

As we have seen, these early experimental conversations were open and intimate exchanges, sometimes on very personal matters, but all with people I knew personally or professionally. I wondered whether the open, trusting atmosphere arose from familiarity. Would the same level of dialogue be generated with people I had never met? I tried some repertory grids with people I did not know and found that they too were willing to talk openly. They seemed to find the experience worthwhile and stimulating. This was encouraging and exciting. I recognised that, even in the simple form I was using, repertory grid technique provided a useful method of facilitating conversations with meaning and value. Thrilled to have 'found' a way of talking to people that I enjoyed using, that I could see was stimulating, dynamic and powerful, I decided that I would like to employ this technique in the research project. Had I found something to spark the 'touch of passion' I would need to sustain the effort to follow the work to the end (Bogdan & Biklen 1982)?

I had also been holding another form of conversation in my newly-acquired role as teaching practice supervisor. When visiting students in school I had been using a criterion rating scale, designed to assist tutors in their assessment of students, as the basis for what I considered to be useful conversations. I was interested in using and comparing these two methods of

stimulating conversations.

With the help of my then supervisor, Diane Montgomery, a research proposal was prepared to go before the research committee. We were both aware that the research proposal was putting forward the use of conversational methods, procedures difficult to assess and measure, to a committee in a climate which favoured tight, scientific methods with clearly measurable outcomes. Tendering the proposal was an intimidating process for a variety of reasons:

- * it was a very formal presentation to a committee,*
- * it was commonly accepted that the acceptance of a research proposal by this committee was a major achievement,*
- * all the members of the committee were scientists, I am not,*
- * all the members of the committee were male, I am not,*
- * traditional scientific methods of research were favoured,*
- * they were not likely to welcome research which involved 'conversations,'*
- * none of the members was engaged in the education of teachers,*
- * they held the purse strings.*

The design of the research proposal took account of these prevailing conditions, and it was presented with trepidation. It was not rejected outright, as were nearly all the others presented at the same sitting, but some alterations were suggested to 'firm up' the programme. It was 'suggested' that the research design was altered to indicate the numbers in each group and to include a third group of teachers which would have no intervention but serve as a control. However, while the proposal was being re-drafted for re-submission, permission to begin was granted. The first external hurdle was nearly cleared!

While recognising that the research committee no doubt had to apply stringent criteria to ensure quality research projects, the effect of this prevailing research climate on the proposers was a dispiriting one. It gave rise to feelings of doubt and alienation. I felt as though what I wanted to do, while supported in the Education Faculty, did not belong to the larger Kingston College ethos. I did not feel full ownership of the ideas or image of the activities. Later I identified my growing unease as stemming from the realisation that the research procedures I was intending to use were not congruent in the sense that there was a mis-match of open-ended developmental activities, the 'conversations', which were being held within a rigid framework of a 'before and after' scientific framework. At the time I was carried along by my wish to investigate and compare different ways of working with teachers, and just relieved to be able to start.

Fortunately, my supervisor was experienced in dealing with the committee and very supportive at the representation meetings and afterwards. After she had guided me through the research application, she trusted me to get on with the research programme. At the time I did not realise that this degree of freedom resulted in my having to be responsible for my decisions from the beginning. Although I met regularly with my supervisor it felt more like I was making progress reports rather than receiving direction. She managed the change of my role from research assistant to researcher expertly.

The proposed research format required me to have three groups of ten teachers, so I started ringing headteachers to ask for permission to recruit volunteers, as I had been doing for the Kingston Research Project. I was invited to approach the teachers of a comprehensive school, Woodside School, on one of their in-

service days, and I was very fortunate to find all the teachers needed at that one visit. (The reasons why this occurred are discussed in Chapter 3.i.)

So the research programme was launched, and after a great deal of negotiation with the teachers, I set off with my lists, timetables, notebook, tape recorder, video-camera, tripod, microphone, video-monitor, cables, adaptors, and good intentions. I was nervous but excited, and aware that intervening in teachers' professional activities was a serious responsibility, particularly when so many would be allowing me into their classrooms.

The equipment I was using was not the most up-to-date. All of it was cumbersome and had seen much use, but it was available on long term loan from the college. There was much lighter, more efficient equipment but it had to be returned each day before 4pm, and often was needed by students. The school secretary saw me struggling with the heavy camera case and the tripod and arranged to borrow a super market trolley. This was a tremendous help, and I became a familiar sight, pushing the laden trolley round school and enlisting help to move it between floors. We jokingly titled the research project 'The Waitrose Project'. Gradually, a sight that was at first novel and slightly comic became a normal occurrence. I think the research project was helped by this, in that all pupils quickly became accustomed to the idea of their lessons being video-recorded, often before it happened in their particular lesson. After a very short time pupils took very little notice of the presence of the camera.

Other work commitments meant I had to function on a tight schedule of pre-arranged visits. This meant that, at first, I was rushing between schools and college, supervising students on teaching practice, continuing with the main research project, and

attending and delivering courses. Some of these activities were new to me, and although I was pleased to be developing new aspects of my role, these were very tiring and time-consuming, and detracted from the amount of time and energy I had for reflection about what I was doing at Woodside. This difficulty of conflicting demands is a common pressure and too often the research becomes the victim. In the juggling act of keeping up work, home and research commitments, it is the latter that is most often dropped. I had not worked out a 'personally viable mode of working' (Salmon 1992).

Two factors really did help me; one was the interest the headteacher took and was seen to take, and the other was the frequent conversations I had with one of the deputies, Nerys James, who was really committed to the research and supported it in every way she could. Describing how I had fared, sharing with her those observations that were not confidential, answering her questions, and asking my own, were all useful. They were useful to me in clarifying my own responses and experiences, and useful to Nerys in keeping the school up-to-date with progress.

As I began to visit the teachers in their classroom I gradually realised that I was being given a tremendous amount of trust, not only by the management of the school but by the individual teachers. From the start I was aware of how fortunate I was in securing the involvement of so many of the teachers, but as the visits and conversations continued the sense of responsibility grew, and has never decreased. Teachers' time is precious, so I felt that my time with them had to be useful to them and to the school. This led to discomfort and concern about my activities with one group, as I describe later.

Despite the constraints I have outlined, and my own feelings

which fluctuated between optimism and wonder at my own temerity, I began my research journey, not really aware of the baggage I was bringing along, but expectant and excited, wondering what would happen.

Initially my research was registered at Kingston Polytechnic, but after a few weeks of research activity at Woodside School, my supervisor at Kingston suggested that I made a visit to the Centre for the Study of Human Learning at Brunel University because she thought that the philosophy of the Directors was more supportive of the kind of research activity I was attempting than the prevailing one at Kingston. Subsequently my research project transferred to CSHL and I was fortunate to gain Sheila Harri-Augstein as my supervisor.

2.ii Context and Rationale for this Research.

As the interest in the wide context of the development of the national system of teacher appraisal, traced in Chapter 1, grew from the emphasis placed by James Callaghan on the relationship of cost, standards and teacher autonomy to Education so the the more personal interest and context of this research started from the experience of mentoring probationary teachers in my role as Head of Department. When I was required to support, develop and assess two probationary teachers I realised I had never formally observed another teacher teaching, or really considered how to analyse the interactions in the classroom. When one of the probationary teacher's highly individual methods of teaching less able pupils were more successful than the established Departmental modes, I realised that observation of what was actually taking place in our classrooms needed to be analysed and the effective practices discussed and shared. It was a salutary experience to realise that judgements could be made about a colleague's teaching based on prejudice or rigid adherence to accepted methods, rather than detailed observation of what was actually being taught and learnt.

This interest in classroom interactions led me to apply, successfully, to be a research assistant in a classroom observation research project based at Kingston Polytechnic (now Kingston University). **The Kingston Polytechnic Research Project** was concerned with applying a particular method of evaluating and enhancing teaching performance pioneered by Diane Montgomery which had been validated in an earlier successful pilot study at Kingston Polytechnic (Montgomery 1984b).

After I had been trained to apply the method, a year of intensive practical fieldwork confirmed the efficacy of this positive method. The Montgomery Method, [Appendix 1] consists of a classroom observation followed by a review session during which the positive aspects of a teacher's performance are emphasised, and a theoretical framework of strategies is introduced. Using these guidelines the teacher is encouraged to self-appraise his or her performance and by engaging in a process of review, search, analysis, formulation, reflection and review, that is, by undertaking a 'Learning Conversation', to become, over time, a Self-Organised Learner (Thomas & Harri-Augstein 1985).

'Self-organisation in learning consists of the ability to converse with oneself and others about the processes of learning; and to re-view, search, analyse, formulate, reflect and review on the basis of such encounters.' (Thomas & Harri-Augstein 1985)

Self-organisation in learning was and is a crucial element in all the developmental work with teachers and students undertaken under the aegis of Diane Montgomery at Kingston Polytechnic and later at Middlesex University. The link with the Centre for the Study of Human Learning at Brunel University had been established earlier with research into Reading for Learning. This had involved students from Kingston learning to distinguish, self-evaluate and improve the order and pattern of their reading habits.

In the **Kingston Research Project** teachers were provided with a structure with which to self-evaluate and improve their teaching. As a research assistant part of my role was to arrange and take part in the field work, which took place in a variety of volunteer schools in and around Kingston. These visits involved observing and videoing a lesson which was followed immediately by a detailed conversation based on the running record of the lesson written by the researcher. During the conversation the teacher was introduced to the principles of the Montgomery Method. A second visit, following the same format, provided further support to teachers and evidence of any improvement.

As well as the visits to schools for the research project purposes, many visits to schools were made to assist teachers who were experiencing difficulties. The same method was used successfully with them. While these two kinds of visits were continuing, a school in a nearby LEA requested assistance with setting up an appraisal system including introducing classroom observation. In all these situations, the use of the observation method followed by a conversation had positive outcomes and sometimes remarkable improvements were gained. As the various activities continued it became apparent that the method was effective in improving teachers' self-esteem and individual performance. When introduced to all members of staff in a school, the method assisted in determining whole school

development needs as well as improving communication and the overall direction and ethos of the school. A very wide range of schools was visited and thus the classroom observation method of appraisal was used with many different levels and styles of teaching, and proved to be generally successful, regardless of the subject content or style of teaching.

The teachers appraised by this method certainly appeared to make gains in self-awareness which beneficially affected their perception of their performance and also improved their effectiveness in the classroom, as later visits demonstrated. In general, those appraised appeared to gain in confidence, self-esteem and motivation. Any apprehension they may have previously felt about being observed appeared to diminish or disappear.

Apart from the immediate pleased and interested response to the experience of being appraised, the conversations, structured around the principles of the method, provided a language which not only facilitated further exchanges between the teachers and the appraisers, but also gave the teachers a framework and language for examining and reflecting on their own performance. It was obvious that the classroom performance review interviews were very powerful, enabling conversations which had beneficial effects generally, and profoundly re-motivating and re-energising effects on some teachers. All the teachers appeared to enjoy and value the conversations, which generated an atmosphere of trust and sharing between the appraiser and teacher and had the effect of improving communication when the teachers discussed the experience afterwards.

Although this recent experience of appraising teachers was so positive, my own memories of the negative experiences of being appraised during teacher training, and similar accounts of destructive appraisals, both past and recent, recounted by colleagues, teachers and students had made me aware that many so-called appraisal experiences were threatening and detrimental assessments. Conversations about appraisal with teachers and advisers on in-service training sessions indicated that, although there had been recently much more information and debate about appraisal, there were many teachers for whom appraisal was an experience to be viewed with alarm. Their apprehensions were exacerbated by negative press reportage representing appraisal as judgemental assessment.

Despite sharing the general concern among teachers about the imposition of a national appraisal scheme, the recent experience of the potentially affective power of the appraisal process deepened my interest in observing the fluctuations in the progress of appraisal during the last fifteen to twenty years. I also became interested in the kinds of appraisal schemes and methods currently in use and interested in evaluating their relative effectiveness, particularly in the light of the Government's stated intention to legislate for the introduction of national appraisal procedures.

The experience, offered by my involvement in the Kingston Research Project, of applying one specific method of appraisal of classroom performance led me to a consideration of those factors which appeared to generate positive reactions in the teachers involved. Analysis of this particular method of appraisal led to the conviction that its success derived from its conversational, negotiative nature and the positive supportive exchanges, based upon close joint observation of a lesson record. It was obvious from the amount of interest and time willingly given by these voluntary participants that this particular process of assisted self-evaluation was rewarding and valued.

Another important factor which facilitated the application of the method was that it was content free, and had been successfully applied in every subject and age range in schools. Further, the principles of the method were apparently easily assimilated and could be claimed to provide a framework and stimulus for further development, either with researcher and teacher working together or for individual teachers progressing alone. When we returned to visit some of the schools where we had introduced the method, it was apparent that some teachers had continued to self-evaluate and were indeed continuing to hold Learning Conversations about their teaching, as had originally been claimed for the method, or, at least, had adopted some aspect of the structure.

So, set against the broad context of the growing national interest in appraisal and classroom observation, in the narrower context of personal, reported and professional experience of appraisal, I began to analyse the particular features of this positive reflexive method and to consider other questions;

- * Would this be a suitable method for adoption nationally?
- * Were there other specific forms of appraisal which could have similar enhancing effects, and would similar levels of learning conversation be generated?
- * To what extent does any positive intervention affect teachers' perceptions of their performance and the performance itself?
- * Does the form of the appraisal matter as long as it is concerned with positive evaluation of performance?
- * Is the detailed conversational analysis essential to bring about a change, either in perception or performance?
- * How is an appraisee's attitude to appraisal affected by the process of being appraised?

It was with these questions in mind that I began to consider what form the research proposal I was about to tender would take. I decided to look for other forms of appraising classroom performance that might have the potential for bringing about equally positive outcomes in terms of raising teachers' self-esteem and generating learning conversations.

There were constraints I had to consider. First was the amount of time I could afford to give to the research project, since I was involved in so many other activities, as a research assistant, teaching practice supervisor, student tutor and fledgling lecturer. Second was the difficulty of designing a research proposal acceptable to the Research Committee, who had agreed funding for the project on which I was already working and who expected a similar positivist research design.

My recent experiences and experiments had introduced me to two methods of generating analytical conversations which I believed might stimulate learning and provide positive experiences all round. The next sections introduce these methods and describe how I proposed to use them.

2. iii Research Instruments.

Given the limited amount of time available for the research project, and the research format dictated by the institution supporting it, I decided to limit the research area to a comparison of two methods of examining performance I had recently been trying. I sought methods which would involve some of those conditions which applied to the Montgomery Method i.e. detailed classroom observation and structured, negotiated review dialogues. I chose to use repertory grid technique and a rating scale procedure.

The two conversational procedures proposed were;

- 1) **'Repertory Grid'** conversations based on the selection of incidents from an observed lesson to serve as 'elements' for the elicitation of a repertory grid, and later analysis of any changes,
- 2) **'Rating scale'** conversations based on comparisons of levels on a criteria rating scale as the basis for a discussion of observed lessons, and any changes.

The choice of these instruments, which I believed would facilitate the necessary conditions, was prompted by two activities, both fairly new to me, but both offering opportunities for extended conversations. Firstly, recent experiments with repertory grids had convinced me that this was a successful way of generating useful repertory grid conversations (Chapter 2.i). I believed that this technique, in conjunction with video-recordings of lessons, would enable teachers to closely examine their teaching, and allow me to structure detailed, reflexive conversations. Secondly, as a recently-appointed supervisor of students on teaching practice I had been issued by Kingston Polytechnic Education Faculty with a criteria rating scale by which to assess teaching performance. I intended to use this is to stimulate conversations based on the examination and comparison of the teachers' ratings of their performance with my ratings.

The following sections deal in turn with the two methods adopted, and provide a fuller explanation of how I proposed to use them.

2. iv Repertory Grids

This conversational method was originally designed as a therapeutic tool by Kelly (1955) for examining complex changes in individuals. A repertory grid is so called because it springs from Kelly's original theory that each of us has our own construction of the world, our own repertoire of personal constructions of experience. Personal construct theory rests on the assumption that we are actively engaged in making sense of and extending our experience. Understanding each other, for Kelly, depends upon the extent to which we know how the other goes about making sense of his or her world. The personal construct system we each develop is our own model or set of representations of the world. This model is both shared with others to some degree and unique to the individual.

The process of completing a repertory grid enables us to tap into our construction of the world and to examine our thoughts and feelings in our own terms (Thomas 1976). It is usually completed on a one-to-one basis, between a practitioner (teacher, trainer, tutor, therapist, coach, counsellor, custodian, researcher) - and a subject (student, client, patient, pupil, teacher), but it is possible to apply the technique to any size of group, or to undertake the process individually, so that one is both practitioner and subject, using an interactive computer program if desired. It provides, in a two-dimensional matrix form, a systematic representation of personal meaning. The technique has great flexibility, both in design and application.

Pioneering experimentation and research carried out at **The Centre for the Study of Human Learning (CSHL)** at Brunel University by Laurie Thomas and Sheila Harri-Augstein and others has elaborated and imaginatively developed Kelly's original methods to provide creative techniques for revealing more of the deeper and significant personal meaning within the conversational exchange of a repertory grid elicitation. These techniques have been developed for application in many situations, with or without the use of computer programs. The work of the Centre has transformed the repertory grid technique as a tool and applied this conversational methodology to an extensive range of topics, varying in size from a seven-year action research study of the appraisal and enhancement

of the performance of the work force of a national service industry (Harri-Augstein & Thomas 1995), monitoring the changing attitudes of Olympic athletes (Groves 1992), to defining teacher competencies (Johnson 1994).

The Centre has also pioneered and developed many specialised interactive computer programs which facilitate the use of repertory grids as 'conversational tools' for increasing self-awareness, exchanging or sharing experience and prompting Learning Conversations (Reid 1975, Mendoza & Thomas 1972, Harri-Augstein 1979, Thomas & Shaw 1978, Thomas & Harri-Augstein 1985).

The first step in eliciting repertory grids is to decide on the specific purpose for doing so. In this project the intention was to use repertory grids as a way of negotiating the meaning of the teachers' perceptions of their classroom performance and monitor any changes in their perceptions and performance. However, the purpose of completing a repertory grid can relate to any situation or topic where the exploration of personal meaning and learning is desired. During the last thirty years the repertory grid has been used to explore personal meaning in an ever-widening range of situations. As well as retaining its original clinical application it is being applied to the encouragement of personal learning in all levels of educational establishment (Pope & Keen 1981, Crosby 1982, Fransella & Dalton 1990, Salmon 1988, Johnson 1994). Once the purpose has been decided upon it should be kept in mind during the completion of the repertory grid, so as to keep the conversation on course.

The next stage is to identify the 'elements', those items of personal experience relevant to the purpose. There are four main methods of establishing elements:

- 1) They can be provided, in the form of role or situation descriptions where a number of types of people or specific experiences are provided, as in the classic Kelly repertory grid where twenty-four role titles, such as 'A person with whom you have worked who was easy to get along with, Your sister, brother, husband, mother, employer, a teacher you liked, a teacher you disliked,' etc. are presented. The subject then provides his or her own specific examples to fit these general

descriptions.

- 2) They can be supplied: a list of poems studied, incidents on a video-tape are pinpointed, a named list of individuals, samples of sculptures, paintings, objects, chapters in a book, course elements, etc.
- 3) They can be defined by asking the subject to name a group, such as 'name five subordinates', 'list three people who have influenced you', 'name several leisure activities you are involved in', etc.
- 4) They can also be elicited in the course of a conversation between the teacher/subject and the researcher/appraiser where the topic of interest is discussed, the purpose of completing a repertory grid is agreed and a list of specific elements jointly drawn up.

The next stage is to generate the personal meaning the elements hold for the subject, that is, his or her personal construct system. Each individual construct is concerned with discriminating between elements, which have already been selected as being within the same class, or what Kelly terms the 'range of convenience'.

Easterby-Smith (1981) has summarised the four main ways of generating constructs:

- 1) The quickest way is to supply them, so that a member of a group may be asked to rate the other members of a group (the elements) on given dimensions that are accepted as representative of the ones that would have been produced spontaneously and are readily understood; for example, a group of managers on a personal skills course may be asked to place the other participants on constructs such as 'listens well/doesn't seem to hear', 'supports new ideas/inhibits new ideas'.
- 2) The classical approach is to elicit them from triads. Those elements defined earlier are presented, usually on cards, to the subject, who sorts them into order of significance, and chooses ten to fifteen as being the most representative. These elements are then offered in series of threes (triads) to the subject, who is asked to consider carefully the three

elements presented, and to find a way of expressing how any two are alike and the other different. The two 'like' elements are recorded on one side of a matrix, and are called the 'emergent' pole, while the third is called the 'implicit' pole. The procedure is intended to produce two contrasting poles, not logical opposites. Thus, in a repertory grid recently completed by a student-teacher about some of her pupils, although the logical opposite of 'bright' would be 'dull', she put 'biddable', which had more meaning for her.

This process of reflection, discrimination and alignment is repeated with successive triads and the results recorded on the repertory grid. The triads are chosen on a genuinely random basis or selected by the elicitor to bring out the greatest contrast in the available elements. Distortion of a repertory grid is prevented by arranging that elements are given a roughly even chance of appearing in triads, and are not repeated in near succession.

It is also possible to use only two elements (dyads) to construct a repertory grid, particularly with children, who find this method easier.

- 3) The third method is based on a card sort. The elements are written on cards and the subject is asked to sort them into piles of similar cards. The position of the cards is noted, and the subject is asked to sort them again using some other basis for sorting. In this way a matrix is built up which allows the relationships between elements to be examined. This method can be usefully applied for discriminating consideration of objects, such as pieces of art work, objects d'art and manufactured products which are being subject to quality control inspection.
- 4) The fourth method generally used is known as 'laddering' and is normally used with one of the other methods. When a few constructs have been elicited the subject is then asked to reconsider the first construct. He or she is asked which end of the construct is preferable and why this is so. To use the example given by Easterby-Smith, in a repertory grid based on people, the construct 'extrovert - introvert' might have been elicited. The subject has indicated that 'extrovert' is preferred. The conversation might then proceed as follows:

- A. Why would you prefer to be extrovert?
- B. Because people respect extroverts; introverts are disregarded.
- A. Why is it important to be respected?
- B. Because it indicates that you are a valuable person; people who are disregarded are worthless...

In this way new constructs can be elicited from any of the original constructs and they are likely to be increasingly fundamental to the subject's personal construct system. A little practice in repertory grid elicitation reveals that some general constructs, such as man/woman, tall/short are not useful in generating useful repertory grid conversations, unless they are seen as important indicators of people's natures (Easterby-Smith 1981).

There are many ways of recording the decisions made by the subject. Figure 2 is an example of the simplest method. It is a particularly useful one for conversations and for hand analysis which uses ticks and crosses or some other simple symbols - ticks for the left-hand 'emergent' pole and crosses for the 'implicit', right-hand pole. This layout and methods of analysing the contents were developed at CSHL.

✓	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	×
tense	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	easy
giving	×	✓	×	✓	×	✓	wary
organised	✓	×	×	✓	✓	✓	chaotic
accepted	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓	not valued
trendy	✓	✓	✓	×	×	✓	paradoxical
Ann Lucy Ed Peter Joyce Graham							

Figure 2 Simple Example of Repertory Grid

Where quantifiable measures are required, a rating procedure is usually used. Here the elements are rated on a 1-5 or 1-7 scale. Ranking is another method where the elements are put in order on each construct. Both these latter methods provide greater discrimination and it is important to allow the opportunity for making these finer discriminations. However, the tendency is to relate the rankings to the emergent pole, thus unbalancing the repertory grid.

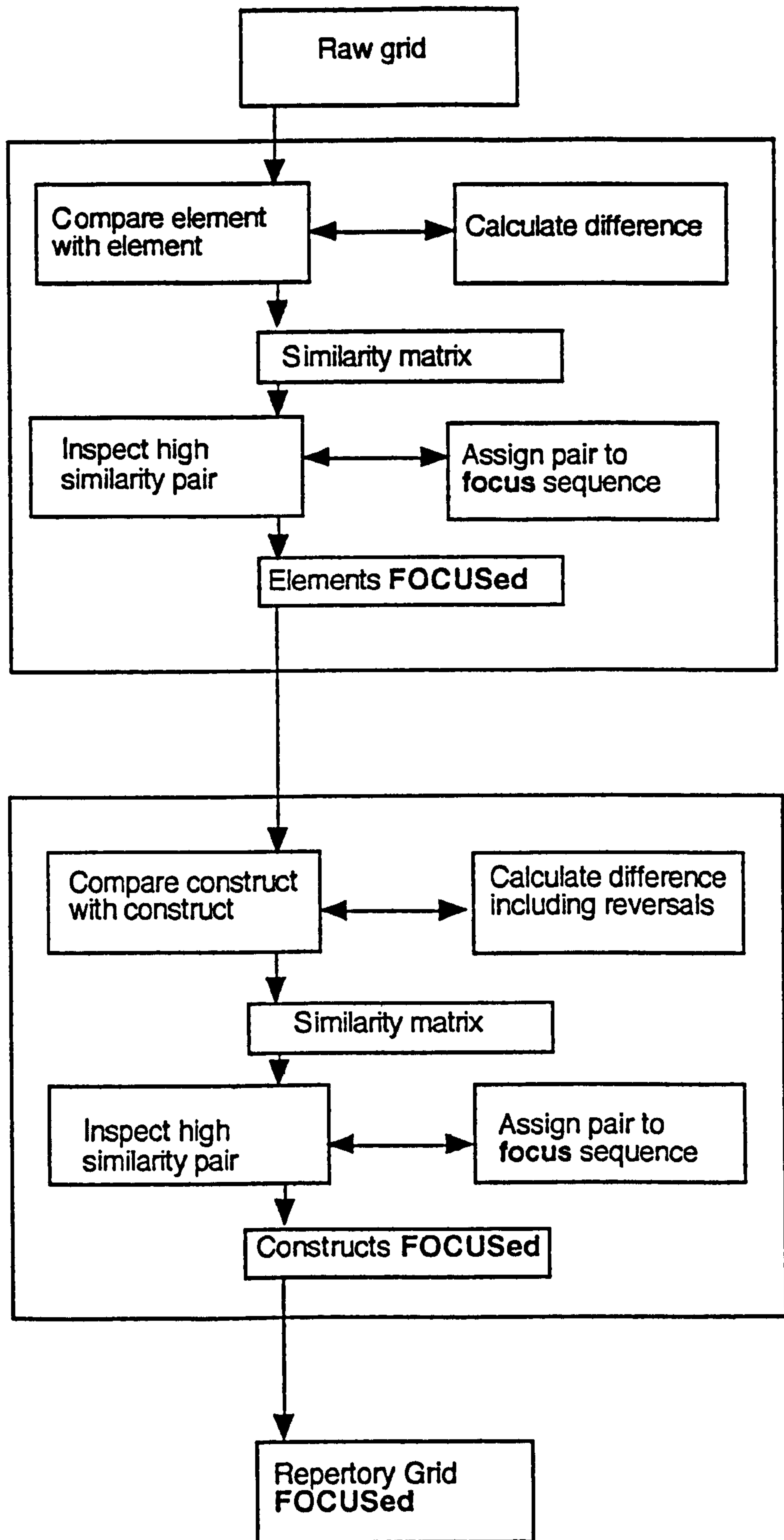
An examination of the completed repertory grid can immediately display how the subject attributes meaning to the areas of experience selected for the repertory grid, whether these are people, events, articles, poems, etc. Lines of similarity of construing can be explored if these are evident, but whilst this 'raw' repertory grid, as it is called, shows the client's repertoire of personal constructs, and it also shows how each element is assigned to the poles of each construct, it does not display the total pattern of personal meaning that lies within it.

The 'raw' repertory grid, described above, can be subjected to the process of being re-sorted. This sorting process, called FOCUS, is based on a numerical cluster analysis procedure (Thomas 1978). This process directs attention to the clusters of meaning which may have been hidden in the raw repertory grid. The process re-orders the constructs and elements in terms of similarity, and emphasises the personal meaning within it, and by providing a visual display, can reveal to the subject more of the ways in which he or she construes the world. It is particularly helpful if, in a 'ticks and crosses' repertory grid, two colours are used to highlight the clusterings.

The FOCUSing process can be done manually, as described in Chapter 4 of **Self-Organised Learning** (Thomas & Harri-Augstein 1985) and with the aid of 'The Hand sorting Grid Method and Kit' (CSHL 1978). The speedier alternative is to use FOCUS, a computer analysis program specially designed to carry out the two-way cluster analysis and present the raw repertory grid in a form specifically engineered for giving feedback (Thomas & Shaw 1976). A further refinement is a SPACEd FOCUSed repertory grid which emphasises the clusterings of the elements and the constructs and the relationships between them.

Figure 3 is an algorithm of the process of FOCUSing a repertory grid.

Figure 3 FOCUSing a repertory grid



From: Self-Organised Learning (Thomas & Harri-Augstein 1985)

If these FOCUSed repertory grids are examined again after a length of time and the subject re-considers and re-negotiates the alignment of the elements and constructs, then further conversation can reveal the kind and degree of any changes in perception, and provide a record of the measure of change.

The FOCUSed repertory grid is presented to the client and he or she is encouraged to read the element descriptions slowly and carefully and helped to recapture the original significance of each 'item of experience' that the elements represent.

The same process is repeated with the construct pole descriptions encouraging the client to recall exactly what he or she had in mind originally and also to explore how this had changed or consolidated as the elements were assigned to one or other pole.

The major areas of similar response highlighted by the groupings are re-examined and discussed first, then smaller and smaller groupings, until all the responses have been surveyed. The client is encouraged to consider whether all the elements might be subsumed under one 'verbal label'. The tight clusters of elements and constructs are next inspected and any additional 'items of experience', or 'construct poles' are noted with the intention of determining any unifying principles. The FOCUSed repertory grid is reviewed in the light of the original purpose. It is this sharing and developing of a refining, reviewing, reconstructing, and reflecting experience that gives repertory grid conversations their power (Thomas & Harri-Augstein 1985).

The conversational process of completing a repertory grid is usually deeply interesting and appears to be a valuable experience, particularly for those who are reflective by nature and can see the benefits to be gained from close appraisal of some aspect of their life. Although completing a repertory grid by oneself can be useful, the repertory grid conversation is much more stimulating and focused in the hands of a skilled practitioner. Although many people rightly think that repertory grids can be concerned with gaining quantifiable statistical evidence needing computer processing, this is not the main purpose for which they were initially designed. It is the process

- the conversation during the elicitation and completion, the discrimination and the reflection afterwards that provides the clarification of the personal construction the subject places on events.

2. v Proposed Use of Repertory Grids

In this project it was proposed to use repertory grid technique with one group to discover teachers' perceptions about their teaching performance, and by analysing and re-constructing the emergent patterns of meaning enable the subjects to become more aware of their perceptions concerning their teaching performance. It was hypothesised that this increase in self-awareness would give rise to changes in perception and performance as the subjects carried their increased self-knowledge into everyday life (Pope 1977).

It was proposed that the elements for the repertory grids would not be offered by the researcher but would be generated by the teachers while watching, with the researcher, a video-recording of their lesson. The purpose of watching the video-recording together would be to allow a teacher to see her or himself in action by re-creating the lesson from an observer's point of view. The teachers would, by being encouraged to identify and examine incidents and interactions, gain greater understanding of their classroom performance and the factors affecting it. It was suggested that the conversational process of explaining their intentions, seeing the cause and effect of their actions and those of their pupils would enable teachers to make explicit their tacit understanding of the teaching and learning activities in their classroom.

Those identified interactions, incidents or examples of teaching strategies in their lessons would be written on small cards. The teachers would then be asked to choose those they thought were most significant to be the elements in their repertory grid conversation. It was proposed that this further refining of the selection process would clarify and emphasise for the individual teacher the fundamental concerns and issues relating to their performance, and facilitate focused learning conversations.

The repertory grid procedure to be adopted was a simple one, using a basic repertory grid format and identifying the poles by using ticks and

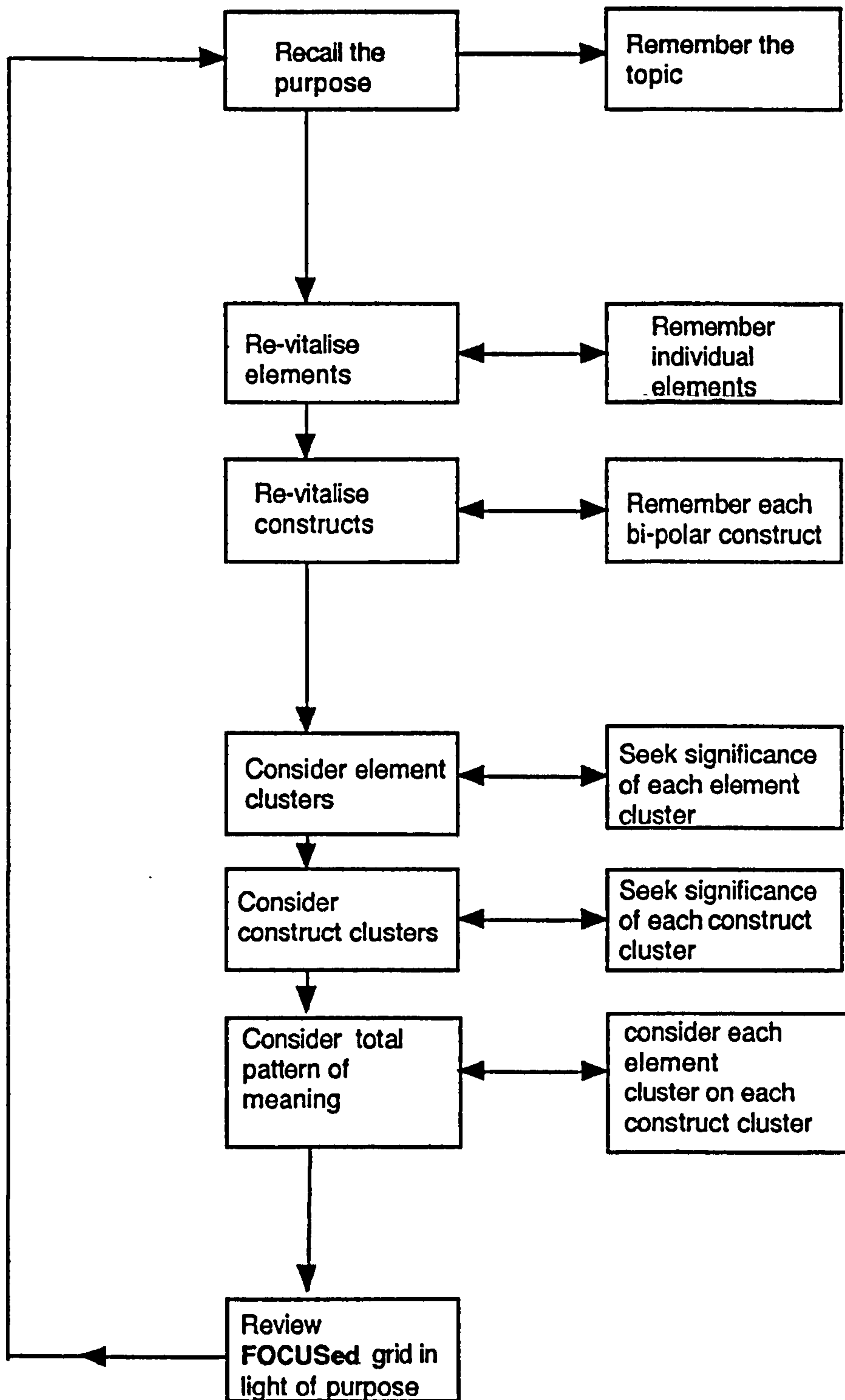
crosses (Thomas & Harri-Augstein 1985). This procedure was selected because it was considered effective, was practicable and non-threatening in use. Initially the intention was to analyse the 'raw' repertory grids obtained by using a hand focusing method, called FOCUS, where, by a two-way cluster analysis (systematically comparing and re-ordering each element and construct strip with each other), areas of similarity are identified (Thomas & Harri-Augstein 1985). This emphasises the pattern of personal meaning within the repertory grid and facilitates giving feedback.

When I transferred the registration and supervision of my **Woodside Research Project** from Kingston Polytechnic to CSHL at Brunel University, the opportunity to use FOCUS, a computer program specifically designed to be used in the interpretation of repertory grids (Thomas & Shaw 1976) arose and this was adopted. This program can, from the raw repertory grid, produce a matrix of elements and construct matching scores, which, when subjected to cluster analysis, reveal and highlight the patterns of personal meaning which are implicit in the raw repertory grid. This FOCUSed repertory grid is particularly suited for talk back and reflection since it provides a readily understandable display.

It was surmised that a subsequent re-examination of the initial raw repertory grid in a FOCUSed presentation would reveal any changes in perception that had occurred since the initial dialogue.

Over leaf is an algorithm of the process of talk back through a FOCUSed repertory grid (Figure 4).

Figure 4 : Talkback through a FOCUSED grid: an algorithm (Thomas & Harri-Augstein 1985)



2. vi Rating Scales

One of the attractions of using rating scales is that it is a relatively easy procedure. It can be a simple pen and pencil exercise which arbitrarily places judgements about performance on a scale of 1-5, for example, from strong to weak (Figure 5).

Attribute	Scale					Comment
	1	2	3	4	5	
Preparation						
Organisation						
Discipline						

Figure 5 Simple Example of Rating Scale

The simplest may only require a decision between satisfactory or unsatisfactory, such as the one used in Ontario, Canada where teacher performance is measured against published criteria, available to those being evaluated. The following example of a more detailed rating scale (Figure 6) was collected from the German Teacher Evaluation Documentation during the Suffolk investigation into appraisal methods in industry and education (Graham 1985).

1.	has met the requirements to an outstanding level.
2.	has met the requirements comprehensively
3.	has met the requirements satisfactorily
4.	deficiencies are discernible but on the whole has met the requirements
5.	has not satisfactorily met the requirements but it is clear that the deficiencies can be made good within a foreseeable period
6.	does not meet the requirements and it is clear that there will be no marked improvement in the foreseeable future.

Figure 6 Example from German Teacher Evaluation Documentation

The dangers of using rating scales are that the decisions required from the rater are highly subjective and there is often no shared meaning written into the script. There is also the drawback that the scores can be altered or completed later, as happened recently when the high scores achieved by all the staff in a bank section were downgraded because it was decided that all the high scores were unacceptable, there had to be a range. This decision not

only angered the employees who had been striving to improve, but also devalued the whole system.

Behaviourally-anchored rating scales (BARS) are more sophisticated versions of rating scales and are used in performance observations. The factors chosen for rating isolate what are considered to be key behaviours. These criteria are usually defined by the evaluators and rarely are the evaluated asked to present their criteria for good performance.

Rating and check sheets that are used in the observation and evaluation of teachers can lead the evaluators and teachers away from improvement of instruction or quality of teaching and learning. An American survey (Awea 1978) of evaluation instruments found the criteria used most frequently are related to conditions within the teacher and do not refer to pupil growth and learning or the conditions necessary for learning. Indeed the criterion 'produces satisfactory student academic achievement' was placed as low as seventeenth in rank of the most frequently found criteria, lower than 'fulfils responsibility punctually' and 'is well-groomed and appropriately dressed'. Reyes (1982) echoing Gagné (1965) argues that the criteria for teacher evaluation should be written either in terms of pupil outcomes or in terms of specific teacher behaviours which have been found by research to be associated with learning. There is no suggestion, however, that research offers general and continuing criteria to structure teacher observation, or supports the notion of a single best method of teaching. As Reyes points out, Popham's earlier research (1971), outlining an approach to teacher evaluation which was based directly on the teacher's ability to promote students' attainment of pre-established specific objectives, made the disturbing discovery that teachers could not demonstrate higher instructional effectiveness, when measured by pupil achievement than a group of people brought in off the street for purposes of comparison.

It could be surmised that Reyes' plea for more considered attention to be paid to criteria appropriate to improvement of teaching and learning has been heard when we examine the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) criteria currently being applied by the teams of inspectors carrying out school inspections. The criteria make clear what OFSTED inspectors are assessing in terms of quality of teaching and learning. Unfortunately these

criteria are applied with no consultation, negotiation or explanation. It is interesting to note that while originally the OFSTED rating scale was 1-4, it has now been extended to 1-7 (1996a). Could it be that the first scale was inadequate or inappropriate?

Teachers are often wary of the word 'criteria', as Hopkins (1992) discovered when he asked an appraiser head what criteria she used when observing her colleagues. She replied angrily, 'We don't use check lists in this school'. Yet when asked what she was looking for in the classroom, she gave a fairly sophisticated description of 'good primary practice'. Hopkins points out that criteria are nothing to be frightened of, particularly if they are negotiated and agreed before the start of an observation, and subject to continued review as those involved refine their definitions of good practice. 'When viewed this way the discussion of criteria can act as a 'road map' for development as well as providing standards by which to discuss the outcomes of an observation' (Hopkins 1992).

That a rating process can be developmental is propounded by Phillida Salmon who, influenced by Kelly's personal construct psychology, has developed a simpler approach than his repertory grid technique which can be used to identify and compare meanings. In the example given, children were asked to make a mark on a line, 'The Salmon Line', which represented where they stood at the moment in general competence in Design and Technology (Figure 7).

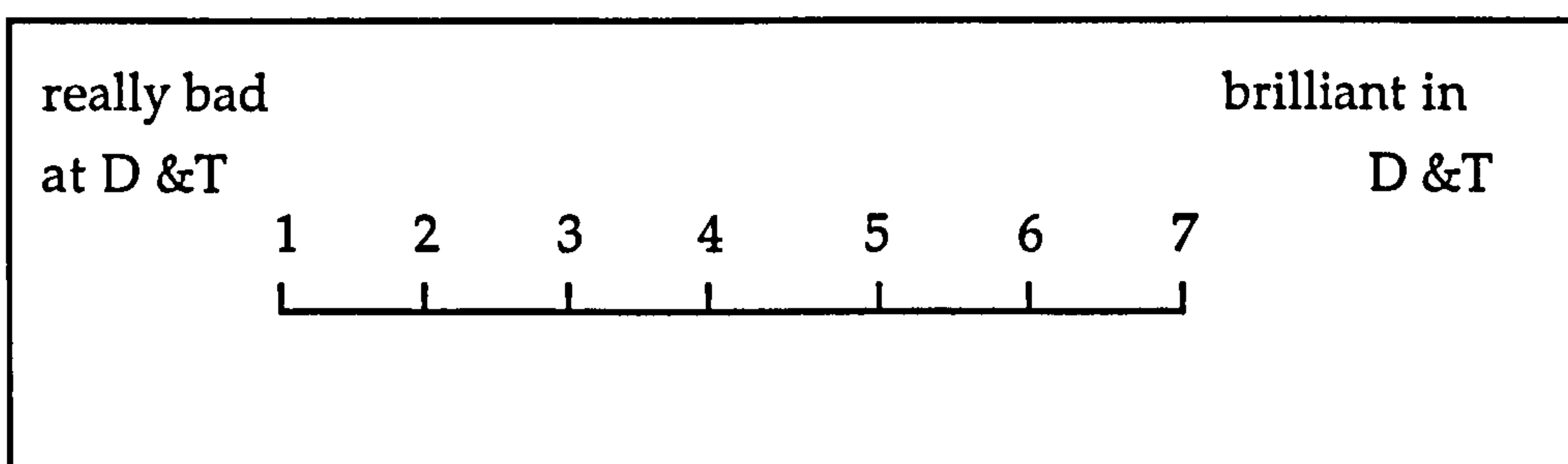


Figure 7 'The Salmon Line'

In conversations with the children these ratings were 'fleshed out' as they were asked to identify someone who was very competent, and someone who was incompetent. The teacher was also asked to rate his pupils along this line. 'Out of this material emerged some profound differences in the

ways in which this particular teacher and his classroom group perceived the meaning of their D&T lessons' (Salmon 1988). The opportunities for learning and increasing mutual comprehension offered by this approach are obvious.

Generally the use of rating scales is not thought of in this way, as providing a route for development, although the intention in adopting one for this research was to examine its potential as a developmental tool.

2. vii Proposed Use of Rating Scales

It was proposed to use a criteria-rating scale with the second group of teachers, **Group 2**. This method was chosen for three reasons;

- 1) its general relevance to appraisal in that it was a form which appeared to be growing in favour as more versions were published (Cowan 1984, Metcalfe 1986, Graham 1987, Trethowan 1987).
- 2) it was an appraising method with which I was becoming familiar,
- 3) it appeared to be capable of adaptation to developmental practice.

The rating scale initially selected is shown overleaf, (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Kingston Polytechnic Criteria for School Experience

The criteria have been compiled to provide guidance for school staff, college staff and students who are involved in teaching practice. It is recognised that the 7 dimensions are by no means independent of each other but nevertheless provide a check list of the main skills involved in teaching. The levels described for each dimension are cumulative and represent stages in progression along that dimension; they require further interpretation in the light of that particular school circumstances.

1. Personal and Professional Qualities

Level

- 0 Avoids personal interactions with pupils and adults by withdrawn or ego-centric behaviour. Behaviour is rigid. Shows inability to act on cues from the social environment (particularly teachers and pupils).
- 1 Adjusts to social cues e.g. in content of conversation, tone of voice. Shows interest, involvement and commitment to teaching. Is co-operative. Accepts and applies professional advice.
- 2 Demonstrates the ability to become a member of a professional team.
- 3 Is able to share in a range of professional tasks within the school.
- 4 Is able to adopt a variety of roles (including some as an initiator) within the school.

2 Verbal and Non-Verbal skills

These comprise a very wide range of behaviour, appearance, classroom presence, use of voice, gesture, facial expression.

Level

- 0 Speech articulation is poor. Uses inappropriate vocabulary and syntax.
- 1 Uses vocabulary and syntax appropriate for the pupils. Speech is firm and clear.
- 2 Communication uses both verbal and non-verbal techniques. Shows skill in conveying and interpreting expression and attitudes.
- 3 Uses social skills to promote improved responses and participation by pupils.

- 4 Shows ease in using a variety of social skills as appropriate in the classroom situation.

3 Planning and Preparation

Level

- 0 Plans set-piece schemes of work unrelated to the learning environment of the school or to its curriculum. Has inadequate knowledge of the content required. Is unable to meet the requirements of the school curriculum in literacy or numeracy.
- 1 Shows awareness of the work in which the pupils have been involved. Has adequate knowledge of the content required. Makes clear statements of short term objectives.
- 2 Chooses content closely related to stated objectives. Shows evidence that the range of performance of the class has been taken into account. Provides evidence of strategies for a progression of work.
- 3 Provides evidence of detailed sequential planning with reference to the points above for a programme of work over three or more weeks.
- 4 Demonstrates understanding of the contribution which a planned programme of work is making to the whole curriculum.

4 Relationships with pupils (including class control and organisation)

Level

- 0 Withdraws from formal interaction with pupils. Lacks ability to secure attention from the class as a whole.
- 1 Shows some ability to secure attention. Shows appropriate interaction with individual pupils and groups/the whole class.
- 2 Secures attention sufficiently to allow effective learning. Changes class organisation smoothly to suit changing activities e.g. at the beginning or end of a lesson.
- 3 Interaction with pupils shows that encouragement and reception of ideas are more frequent than direction. Is responsive to individuals as well as to the class as a whole.
- 4 Is able to sustain class cohesion and also a high level of motivation in individual pupils.

5 Presentation of materials

Level

- 0 Does not provide sufficient material. Presents material which is unsuited to the attainment of the pupils. Uses material unselectively.
- 1 Presents material (including display and apparatus) which is appropriate in quantity and suited to the attainment of the pupils.
- 2 Uses a variety of methods in presentation as appropriate.
- 3 The presentation of the material is closely integrated with verbal discussion e.g. analysis, synthesis.
- 4 The material takes account of both product and process objectives.

6 Achievement by the Pupils

Level

- 0 Does not give the pupils an opportunity to make a response, requires them to undertake tasks which are not adapted to their ability.
- 1 Prescribes tasks which are generally appropriate for the rate of progression of class. Allows sufficient time for them.
- 2 Prescribes tasks which are adjusted to the range of performance among pupils in the class. Provides for feedback.
- 3 Uses individual work, group work and resource-based teaching effectively.
- 4 Meets the needs of a mixed ability class.

7 Recording and Evaluation

Level

- 0 Fails to provide statements of behaviour which are relevant to the teaching/learning situation.
- 1 Makes statements related to specified objectives and keeps appropriate records, with attention to the range of performance and to individual problems.
- 2 Evaluates the extent to which objectives have been attained and uses evaluation as a spring board for future planning.
- 3 Records and evaluations show a recognition of both process and product dimensions.
- 4 Employs a variety of techniques for self-appraisal.

This detailed rating scale was the one provided by Kingston Polytechnic for the guidance of staff, students and teachers in assessing teaching performance. It had recently been revised and was intended to assist supervisors in evaluating and grading the performance of students on teaching practice. Unless the students reached certain specified levels in several criteria they were deemed to have failed. The students were not aware of the criteria by which they were being judged, unless their particular supervisor chose to show them.

As well as using the rating scale as a prompt for observing my students in the classroom, I also used it as a means of discussing their performance and together identifying where they were on each level, as a means of identifying strengths and discussing strategies for improving those areas that needed attention. I considered that this approach could be used as a basis of a Learning Conversation.

The teachers would be observed teaching a lesson which would be video-recorded. Together we would view the recorded lesson and then engage in a discussion of the lesson using the Kingston document. We would have before us the visual evidence to substantiate our decisions and the chance to re-examine any part of the lesson. I proposed that by discussion, and negotiation of any discrepancies in our ratings, we would reach an agreed joint placing on each scale.

2.viii Control Group

Although the aim of the research was a developmental one, desirous of stimulating conversation and reflection, it appeared that, in order to fulfil conditions relating to the research ethos of the establishment, and to the research project to which it was linked, it would be necessary to have a control group to provide a measure of comparability. This third group of teachers, **Group 3**, would simply be observed and video-recorded, at the beginning of the project, and at the end, but would receive no other intervention from the researcher. In theory, therefore, there would be no demonstrable change in their teaching performance when extracts of video-recordings from their lessons were compared.

2. ix Video-recording and Equipment

During the course of the Kingston Research Project, video-recordings of the appraised lessons had been made before and after intervention. These had successfully provided the means for both internal and external validation. I decided to adopt the use of the video-recordings, using them not only to facilitate the visual assessment of any changes, but also as a means of recreating the lesson with the teacher. Watching the video-recordings together would provide the stimulus for conversation and an opportunity for the teachers to choose incidents which appeared significant to them, rather than for me to impose my choice of topics or criteria. With **Group 1** these incidents would then be used as the elements for an initial repertory grid. With **Group 2**, the video-recordings would be used to jointly examine the levels achieved on a rating scale. **Group 3**, the control group, would also be video-recorded but would not have any conversation about their lessons.

The equipment I used was borrowed from Kingston Audio-Visual Aids Department and was not the most modern. In-college drama projects by students had priority, and the only equipment that could be allowed off the premises, for as long a period of time as I wanted, was old, cumbersome and shaky. As I needed the camera to be as placed high up to catch as wide a view of a classroom as possible, the camera needed a tall tripod. Unlike later versions, it also needed a separate microphone and a cassette recorder. So I could watch without standing behind the camera, I had a small monitor. Fortunately, I did not realise just how outdated the equipment was until towards the end of the project when I had the chance to use a state of the art video-recorder. This was light, had an in-built microphone and cassette and produced much better quality recordings. However, it is a poor worker who blames her tools. I mention the equipment for several reasons;

- a) It indicates the status afforded to research projects in the Education Department at that time. Research activities were fought for and seen as 'added on' rather than an integral part of the education process.
- b) I accepted that it would have to do and felt glad to be able to borrow it.

As a teacher I was accustomed to making the most of whatever equipment was available, almost without question. This reflects a common attitude in schools whereby teachers often have to accept second best and to make do.

- c) It had to be physically manoeuvred from room to room, constantly being dismantled and re-set.

2.x Proposed Use of Video-recording

In the Kingston Research Project (Montgomery 1984b), the use of the video-recorder was intended solely as an instrument to assist validation. It was used pre- and post-intervention, to record lessons. The teachers had a structured conversation based around a written record of their lesson, but did not see the recorded lesson. That was not the intention. However, one day, after we had finished recording an art lesson and the following discussion, the teacher asked if she could see herself on film and, as unusually, we did have time, she was able to watch herself teaching, in this case, for the first time. She was fascinated, moving quickly from nervous giggling to serious concentration on what had taken place as she had moved around the art room. She noted the effect of her passage round the room, who was working and who was not, and made comments such as 'You were right. I did manage to get them all started quite quickly, ' or 'Yes, Paul did stop working as soon as I passed to the next group.'

While we were watching with her it was obvious that actually seeing the recording of the lesson, in allowing her to re-experience the lesson, was positively reinforcing the points that had been examined during the detailed discussion, but there was also another dimension. We were all watching the fine details of the myriad interactions in the lesson and broadly attaching the same interpretation to them, but for the teacher these had a significance that was intensely personal, and revealing. Although at the time I would probably not have thought of the situation in this way, I think that during the negotiation of the written record of the lesson she had been involved in a joint construing of the meaning of the interactions in the lesson, and during the viewing of the recorded lesson, she was going through a process of examining the validity of those constructs and relating them to a new

construing of the same events, as well as recognising the personal significance of other incidents. A real Learning Conversation experience, in fact.

At the time I recognised that having the time to watch the lesson again after the dialogue had added another dimension to the experience for all of us, but particularly for the teacher. It was a positive experience in that the lesson had been generally successful and many instances of her good teaching had been highlighted in the discussion. She could then see that this was so, which was affirming and re-assuring and, at the same time, confirmed the expertise of the observer and validated the comments previously made. I thought of it as a useful extra, but I did not believe that viewing the recording would have been as valuable to the teacher if there had not already been a detailed recreation of the lesson during the dialogue.

After this incident the Kingston Research Programme was not altered to allow other teachers to view their performance, because we were validating the conversational process. We continued to record lessons for that purpose only. However, as I look back, I realise that this incident was crucial in affecting how I chose to use video-recording in my own research project.

When I started the Woodside Research I envisaged the video-recordings as being useful in two main ways; firstly, as a tool for validation by comparing extracts from lessons for all groups, as in the Kingston project, and secondly, to enable me to hold conversations with the teachers in Groups 1 and 2 based on their teaching as seen in the video-recordings. By the end of the research project I was much more aware of the potential of video-recording as a tool for learning, and had become a fervent advocate of its controlled and focused use.

With Group 1 my preconception was that the potential for identifying teachers' perceptions of their teaching and for affecting their learning lay mainly in the detailed conversational analysis of the interactions in the classroom. Viewing a recording of a lesson I believed would allow the most typical and significant incidents to be selected as elements to form the basis of a repertory grid Learning Conversation. I expected the most significant

learning to take place in the repertory grid Learning Conversation. I had not fully realised that potential for learning also lay in those processes of viewing and selection.

With **Group 2** teachers I intended to view the recorded lesson with them and then together discuss where we would place them on the rating scale given the evidence of the lesson.

With **Group 3** teachers, as a control group, the intention was just to record their lesson without any discussion.

2. xi Validation

This research project, the **Woodside Project**, would be concerned with comparing and evaluating the two kinds of intervention, and also the results, as revealed in changes in teachers' perceptions of their performance and changes in the performance itself. It was intended that this research project would inter-relate with the research project on appraisal and enhancement of teacher performance already being undertaken at Kingston Polytechnic, and that a comparison of the two research programmes (Chapter 4.x) would reveal useful information from which recommendations concerning the design and implementation of appraisal systems would arise (Chapter 6).

Progress reports would be made to the headteacher once the project was underway and regular contact would be maintained with a Deputy Headteacher. Comments made during the course of the project by anyone involved would be noted. It was proposed that verification of any change in the pre- and post-intervention video-recordings would be externally assessed by presenting random samples of video extracts of teaching performance to groups of professional judges e.g. experienced, trained teachers who would judge whether extract A was better than extract B with randomised order of presentation, as in the Kingston Research Project. (See Appendix 2 for a summary of the Kingston Research Project Validation and Chapter 4. vii for Validation of this Woodside Project)

2.xii Questionnaires

As a way of gathering contextual and validating information two questionnaires would be used ;

1) A short questionnaire at the beginning.

All the teachers would be individually asked the same three questions by the researcher at the beginning of their interview if they were in **Groups 1 and 2** and after the second visit for **Group 3**.

Question 1 Why did you agree to take part in the project?

The responses to Question 1 can be found in Appendix 4 and analysis of the responses in Chapter 4

Question 2 What kind of teacher do you think you are?

The responses to Question 2 can be found in Appendix 5.

Question 3 How do you see yourself in the future?

The responses to Question 3 and further comments about what had happened a year later can be found in Appendix 6. Discussion of the effects of asking these questions can be found in Chapter 4.

2) A fuller questionnaire at the end of the research project.

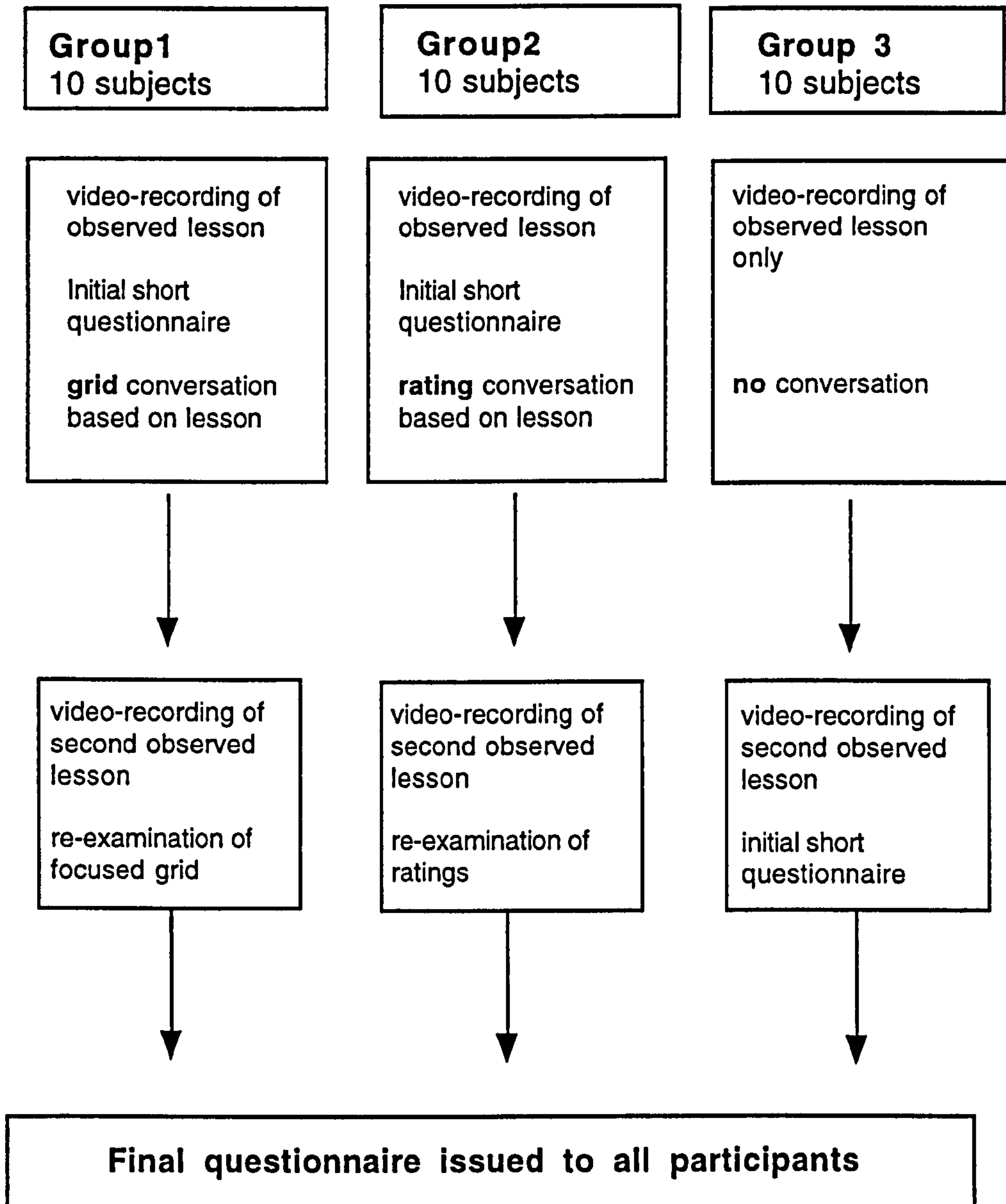
All those who took part in the research project would be asked to complete a questionnaire circulated at the completion of the research project (Appendix 3). This was designed to discover to what degree, and in what way, they thought they and their pupils had been affected by the presence of the video-camera and the researcher. They would be asked about what learning they thought had taken place as a result of watching the video or talking with the researcher, and whether they had made any changes. They were also asked if their attitude to being appraised had altered.

The collated responses to the final questionnaire can be found in Appendix 7. Analysis of the responses to the final questionnaire can be found in Chapter 4.viii.

Figure 9, overleaf is a summary of my proposed research programme.

Figure 9

Summary of Proposed Research Programme in Physical Science Paradigm



Chapter 3

Account of Research Action

This chapter presents the form the research project actually took, taking into account the changes in circumstances and my thinking as I came to try to put into practice my proposed research programme, as defined in Chapter 2.

3.i Recruitment of Teacher Volunteers

Having clarified the area of research and determined a plan of action, all I needed to begin the research was at least thirty volunteer teachers. All of these volunteers had to be willing to allow a researcher, with video-recording equipment, into the classroom to observe and record a lesson. Two thirds of them had also to agree to give up precious free time for a conversation about their teaching and then, a few weeks later, repeat the whole experience.

My experience of recruiting volunteers from many schools to take part in the Kingston Research Project led me to believe I would be able to recruit enough teachers for my own separate research project, but I expected to recruit them from different schools, as I had been doing. However, during the Autumn term of 1986, the Head of a local comprehensive school, Woodside, invited me to talk to him about my own proposed research project. (Since my research project took place at Woodside School I have called my research project The Woodside Research Project to differentiate it from the Kingston Research Project, which was still operational at the start of my research.)

Mr Crauley, the Headteacher of Woodside, suggested that I approach his staff during their forthcoming In-set days when they would all be gathered in Departmental meetings. The format and requirements of the project were outlined to all forty of the teaching staff, visiting each

department in turn. The positive approach was emphasised and confidentiality was guaranteed. Those concerned about the effect of the camera on pupils' behaviour were assured that past experience has shown that this is usually minimal. **Thirty of the forty teachers volunteered immediately.** Of the other teachers, five said straight away that they did not want to have any involvement, the rest wanted to think about it. The degree of response was unexpected and heartening, and required analysis, I felt, particularly since so many teachers were 'working to rule' because of the pay dispute and therefore were taking on nothing extra to their stated duties.

The following brief description provides a snapshot of the school. Woodside is situated in pleasant surroundings, with its own nearby playing fields just on the edge of a small, prosperous town in Surrey in a very largely middle-class area. The school building was an undistinguished, long, two-storey building softened by the surrounding trees and bushes. The display areas around the school were generally not well-used, although some individual rooms had excellent showings of pupils' work. Apparently the school was used in the evenings by local groups so it was not felt appropriate to mount displays. The behaviour of the pupils appeared well-ordered, with almost all wearing school uniform.

The staff seemed relaxed and friendly. The staff room was a cheerful, busy place, and almost all staff appeared at break, and used it in non-contact time. Compared to some other secondary schools visited, the atmosphere was noticeably easy, the staff were confident, caring and co-operative.

The Head was a very powerful influence. He appeared to be almost a father figure for many of the teachers. He was an astute manager. While in school he was available and approachable. His managerial skills and experience had been recognised externally in that he was invited to stand on many committees, representing headteachers. These extra external activities had two important effects on the school;

- 1) In his absences the Senior Management Team gained confidence and valuable experience by running the school. The responsibilities were delegated according to their strengths.

- 2) The Head was very well-informed on all educational issues, and passed on his knowledge and experience to the staff. His forward planning was enhanced by his external activities. The staff appeared to appreciate that they were kept up to date and respected his judgement.

The procedures in the school were well-established and ran smoothly, with the day-to-day running of the school in the hands of the Senior Management Team. Communication systems appeared to work well and there was a sense of relaxed efficiency, with time for jokes and banter. The Head and two of the three members of the Senior Management Team had all been in post, working together, for some seven or eight years. This good working relationship was one of the great assets of the school, and provided a stable base. This then was the school context in which the research was to take place, and the ethos that promoted the factors that affected the successful recruitment.

The culture of the school was a mixed one. The head was definitely at the centre, but there was also a changing hierarchical structure. A task culture was developing in some areas, such as the recently set-up working group for the introduction of a Personal and Social Education course. One of the most important factors was that the Head and Senior Management of Woodside were very welcoming and supportive. The Head had given his permission and his backing and had prepared his staff for the exploratory visit. He also gave up a great deal of his time to discuss the concerns and responsibilities of his job and completed his own repertory grid Learning Conversations. This leading action not only demonstrated to the staff that the Headteacher felt the research was beneficial but was typical of the forward-looking attitude he adopted to all the current initiatives. The Headteacher and his Deputies gave a high degree of trust and the freedom to organise and implement the research programme without interference but with genuine and continued interest. This was a very important and valued aspect of the Head's and Deputies' support, since it gave encouragement and validity to the exercise.

The school had some time earlier been involved in the Kingston Pilot Teacher Appraisal Research Programme and two of the present staff had been directly involved, one as an appraisee and one, a Deputy Head, had

undergone training in the Montgomery method of classroom observation (Montgomery 1984a). This meant that some of the staff were already aware of the potential benefits of this kind of research work. Another important factor was that the research was presented as being related to staff development and research rather than appraisal. Appraisal at that time was a very contentious issue because the press had emphasised the idea that the Government were anxious to introduce appraisal schemes with the purpose of 'weeding out incompetent teachers' and implementing payment by results.

The successful work carried out previously by Diane Montgomery with some of the staff meant that the researcher was provided with a degree of credibility as a colleague of hers, as well as a degree of status from being employed by Kingston Polytechnic. These status factors were important in making the research project acceptable to the staff and greatly facilitated the daily interactions with the staff and pupils. It also helped that it was known that I had been, until recently, a class teacher and a head of department in a very large comprehensive school. As has been shown, the credibility of the appraiser is crucial (Montgomery 1985a, Gane 1986, Bennett 1992).

These factors - the commitment of the head, the enthusiasm of the senior staff, their earlier research experience, the open ethos of the school, the voluntary nature of the participation and the credibility of the appraiser - are interestingly similar to those identified as being necessary for the introduction of a successful appraisal system in the surveys examined earlier in Chapter 1 (Graham 1985, James & Newman 1985b, Montgomery 1985a, AMMA 1985, Turner 1985). I was aware that I was very fortunate to receive this level of involvement, since not all schools would have felt able to take part, particularly in view of the constraining effects of the then current pay dispute. I recognised that, although in many ways the willingness of the majority of the staff to take part would be very helpful, it raised other issues about the sample I would be using. This was obviously a very special school in its open and trusting response to the request to take part, especially when they had had only a brief outline of what was required of them from someone they had never seen before. (My experience on the earlier research project of recruiting volunteers had been varied, ranging from enthusiastic participation to brusque refusal, with some schools not interested at all.) I

decided to ask them all why they had joined in the project and to try to discover the reasons why some had not. (Their collated responses to the question, 'Why did you join in the research project?' and an analysis of them can be found in Appendix 4).

The result of this willingness to participate meant that the whole research project could take place in one school. All the implications of this did not strike me immediately, but the effects of having such a large proportion of the staff experiencing some form of directed self-evaluation had the effect of widening the scope of the research project, since it would, in effect, be almost a whole school appraisal.

Basing the research in one school also meant that the practical aspects of the research - the transport and storage of the recording equipment - would be easier. Less travelling time would be needed and the general running of the project would be facilitated, but the opportunity to compare different schools would be lost. So, almost before starting the research programme, the recruitment process had affected the kind of information that might be forthcoming. Instead of being based in several schools, the project would be centred in one and so I had to take into account that these factors could affect the degree of generalisation of any outcomes.

I enquired of those who had not volunteered why they had felt unable to take part. Some said they wanted more time to think about it but five did not want to join in at all. One, the Head of the English Department, felt that the pressures of introducing new courses and preparing new syllabuses were already burdensome, and that visits from a researcher would be an added strain. The rest of this department, however, did not share her feelings.

Two teachers making up a small History Department said they regarded the research as an unwelcome intrusion, and were not prepared to be involved in any discussion of their teaching, particularly since they felt aggrieved at the current status of teachers as presented in the press.

Another two teachers from the large Art, Design and Technology Faculty gave no reason other than they were just not interested, and despite being urged by colleagues, both at the beginning and during the project,

never showed the slightest interest. Interestingly, later discussions with their Head of Faculty revealed he was concerned about the performance of both these teachers and had hoped that they would gain some benefit from having an unbiased observer in their classrooms, but had been unsuccessful in persuading them to follow his lead in joining in.

3.ii Research Programme

The thirty volunteer teachers were randomly arranged into three groups (Figure 10). Each teacher was informed individually as to which group she or he had been assigned at the first meeting. At this meeting, with the aid of the school timetable and my own college timetable, visits were arranged with teachers by negotiating mutually convenient times. Most teachers came to the staff room before school, and at break and lunch times so it was possible to catch them at those times. The teachers were given reassurance of the positive research approach and also of confidentiality. A time and day for the lesson observation and the review session would be agreed as well as, whenever possible, times for the repeat sessions a few weeks later. The intention was to observe the teacher teaching the same class on both visits wherever possible. The lessons observed were generally double periods, and the follow-up discussions were arranged to take place immediately afterwards or as soon as possible afterwards. The constraints of the two timetables dictated which teachers I saw so teachers from all three groups were visited in no special order.

The programme of negotiated classroom visits started well, with discussion time planned to follow after the lesson, either immediately or very soon after. There were very few cancellations or alterations to the agreed times at first. Difficulties about finding time sometimes arose when we wanted to continue a conversation beyond the agreed time. Most teachers, however, would suggest continuing through lunchtime or after school, if they felt they wanted to extend the discussion.

The pupils very soon adjusted to finding a camera in place when they entered their classroom and took very little notice, particularly when I was able to observe the lessons through a small monitor rather than directly through the camera.

As the research programme continued through the school terms the teachers became noticeably more tired. There was more illness, absences became more frequent and there were timetables changes for a variety of reasons. All these factors increasingly affected the smooth running of the research programme. This worried me at first because I wanted conditions to be as similar as possible for the two observations with each class, but the longer I went on with trying to maintain the programme the more I understood that there were so many variable factors affecting each lesson that it was impossible to claim to have replicated anything.

At the end of each observation, after I had made a positive and specific comment about the teaching I had observed, I asked each teacher how he or she had thought the lesson had gone. 'Too often we fail to consult the richest of all the sources of data, namely, the subject's own self-knowledge' (Allport 1995).

Figure 10

Woodside Research Groups

Group 1

1. G1A Allicia *
2. G1B Harrald *
3. G1C Ava *
4. G1D Cerys
5. G1E Sian*
6. G1F Esther
7. G1G Chris *
8. G1H Nerys *
9. G1J Tom
10. G1K Viv *

Group 2

11. G2A Sarah *
12. G2B Monique *
13. G2C Jack *
14. G2D Stephan
15. G2E Roy
16. G2F Glen *
17. G2G Elaine *
18. G2H Margery *
19. G2J Bub *
20. G2K Marnie

Group 3

21. G3A Maryann *
22. G3B Myra *
23. G3C Auriel *
24. G3D Rula
25. G3E Francie *
26. G3F Jan *
27. G3G Geraldine *
28. G3H Miles *
29. G3J Bill
30. G3K Elizabeth.

* = Completed final questionnaire

3.iii Individual Repertory Grid Learning Conversations - Group 1

The following records are of the repertory grid Learning Conversations undertaken with individual members of **Group 1**.

The order of the presentation of the repertory grid Learning Conversations follows the order arrived at by the original random selection (Figure 10). It was my intention at the beginning of the research project to follow this order sequentially but last minute changes, caused by absences or timetabling alterations, sometimes affected the arranged order.

Within the reporting of the process of the repertory grid Learning Conversations I have occasionally inserted comments and reflections on my own thinking during that process. To highlight these insertions they are indicated by * () and are printed in the same type as *My Research Journey: First Steps*. (Chapter 2.i)

When the original raw repertory grids were typed into the FOCUS computer program the ticks, indicating the left hand, emergent pole were represented by the number 1 and the crosses, the right hand, implicit pole by the number 3. The few elements that were defined as 'not applicable' were shown by number 2. The number of letter spaces on the computer program provided for typing in element and construct descriptions was not always sufficient to show all the detail of the teacher's meaning so the best abbreviation was used. The fuller descriptions are explained in the detailed reports of the repertory grid Learning Conversations.

The computer printouts of each repertory grid, using the FOCUS and SPACEd FOCUSed programs, are included at the end of each repertory grid Learning Conversation (Figures 11 to 20).

Where it is available, at the end of each account of a repertory grid Learning Conversation there is a summary of the teacher's responses to the final questionnaire. Not all the teachers completed the final questionnaire.

Allicia G1A

The Context

The first person to be observed was a teacher who had only been at the school for a few months. In our initial meetings and in the staff room, Allicia was cheerful and friendly. I was surprised to discover that she was a probationary teacher because she seemed so established, confident and relaxed. Allicia was a specialist art teacher, trained at Camberwell College of Art. Her specialism was screen printing for which there was a need in the school's craft provision. Allicia had understood at her interview that she had been taken on specifically to introduce and develop this craft. However, she said she was finding it difficult to implement studies in her special area of expertise, for a variety of reasons: – she was not working in a specialist room, but was working in a room that was also used for another subject; she was far away from the Art and Design Block, and so cut off from the other specialist art teachers; she had not been provided with sufficient resources; and, most frustratingly, the sink was blocked and damaged, so that water supplies were difficult. She had made several complaints and had been promised action, but was now resigned to coping as best she could.

She had switched to setting design tasks which involved planning, illustrating, and making articles using a variety of sewing techniques. Although she said she felt frustrated, irritated and resentful about the situation, she appeared to be coping very well and had adapted to the situation admirably, in that she was providing varied and interesting activities for the pupils. Despite her claims that she was not a competent needlewoman herself, the design tasks she had set had produced excellent design projects from her classes. Some of their design folders were on display with the finished articles, and included the use of painting techniques, embroidery, weaving, beadwork and dyeing and printing. Although they were all small scale, the range was impressive, particularly when Allicia claimed no expertise.

Allicia informed me that the group I was to observe was made up of

the girls from a mixed class of twenty-seven pupils. As well as the basic art course, the school operated a carousel system whereby pupils had a term's design experience, working in smaller, single sex groups with different media, so the boys were involved elsewhere. Allicia also taught these girls as part of the whole class, and found that much more challenging.

The First Lesson

The class was composed of fifteen fourth-year girls who were all working on a small individual piece of quilting. Some were hand-sewing their quilting designs and some were machining them. The designs were based on their own paintings. They showed an understanding of different types of quilting and there was also a printed reference sheet. The girls worked quietly and contentedly, and appeared absorbed. Allicia moved round from pupil to pupil throughout the lesson, giving help and encouragement, and it was obvious that she knew them well, and liked them. They also appeared to like and respect her, and listened readily whenever she explained anything. The atmosphere was calm and industrious. It appeared that Allicia really enjoyed the practical aspects of the lesson. She liked physically handling the work and enjoyed taking over a difficult or tedious job, such as unpicking mistakes, and mending the sewing machine. This was confirmed later in conversation. Allicia did not bring the lesson to a close early enough so that the last few minutes were chaotic and the room was left in a very untidy state.

The Learning Conversation

At the end of the lesson we went to a quiet place and I asked Allicia first the three general questions that all the volunteers were asked.

1. Why did you agree to take part in the project?

'I'll try anything to help me. I'm willing to have any advice and I'm used to being televised from college days - anything to help me teach better.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I'm happy when I'm teaching my subject but I'm not academic, and I'm really happiest when I'm using my hands and really involved in actually doing the work with the class'.

3. How do you see yourself in the future?

'I don't think I want to stay in teaching. I'd like to try part-time work or teaching adults and have my own workshop. I really need to do my own work. I would like to work in a technical college or adult education and eventually have my own gallery.'

We then began her repertory grid. The elements were selected by Allicia from a number of incidents as we watched the video-recorded lesson. She chose those which seemed particularly significant and which she thought would be interesting to examine more closely. All the elements she chose were related to practical activities, which is perhaps not surprising as this was a practical needlework lesson. However, when she began to watch the video-tape of the lesson and saw how peacefully the girls were getting on with their sewing, by contrast, it reminded her of a disturbing incident which had occurred the last time she had taken this group, and she wanted to include it as being important to any discussion of her relationship with this class.

This group of girls she was teaching was half of a class which Allicia also taught in full. The frightening incident had involved some boys from this same class who, the previous week, had come into the classroom at the beginning of a lesson before Allicia had arrived. They had threatened the girls with scissors and ran off just before Allicia had arrived. The girls had been extremely upset and Allicia had had difficulty in dealing with the situation to her satisfaction. She had tried to get to the bottom of the incident and had reported it to a member of the Senior Management Team but had received no feedback about this alarming situation. Her need was that it should be dealt with quickly and firmly, as she had to teach the whole class later that week. She felt that much more concern should have been shown and more support given to her and the pupils, not just because she

was new to the school, a probationary teacher, and a woman, but because it affected every aspect of school life if such dangerous and threatening incidents were not investigated and resolved. In particular, she felt one boy was being 'contained' by the school when he ought to be in a school for children with behavioural difficulties.

** (Allicia appeared to be unnerved, angry and apprehensive, not a good state for any teacher, and certainly not a probationary teacher. At this stage I had no experience of seeing this boy in any other lesson, nor did I know what the school's normal disciplinary procedures were, so I felt quite uninformed and unable to gauge whether this was a typical incident. Allicia was so concerned about this incident that I felt it was important to listen to her account of this alarming episode, before she would be able to concentrate on the repertory grid discussion.)*

The eight elements finally selected were;

- E1** Sewing machine demonstration
- E2** Claire helping herself
- E3** Co-operative self-help
- E4** Picking off tracing
- E5** Asking them what they think
- E6** Helping to put the machine away
- E7** Frightening 'scissors incident'
- E8** Packing away at end of lesson

The first three elements were presented. Allicia placed E1, the sewing machine demonstration, and E3, the way the girls co-operatively helped each other at the sewing machines together and construed them as *instigated by me, under my control* whereas E2, the incident of Claire helping herself to some material, was an example of a situation which Allicia felt she *had no control over, not reaching the pupil because of an outside influence*. Allicia explained that Claire was a very accomplished needlewoman who had been taught by her mother. She quietly got on with her sewing and took materials as she needed them. Although Allicia

recognised the pupil's superior ability, she felt somewhat undermined by Claire's competence and self-sufficiency. She explained that seeing Claire's competency reminded her that she was being forced by circumstances not only into abandoning the subject for which she had been employed, but also into trying to teach a subject in which she was not expert.

As we aligned the other elements she was pleased to realise that she was in fact very much in control most of the time. She believed that only in two other areas, E7, the scissors incident and in E5, asking them what they think was she what she described as *not reaching them*.

The next three elements were

- E4 picking off tracing - where Allicia had spent some time picking off a tracing for a pupil - a job which Allicia enjoyed but the pupil found tedious,
- E5 asking them what they think - a common occurrence in the lesson where when a pupil asked a question such as 'What shall I do now?' Allicia's usual response was to ask what they thought, and
- E6 helping to put the machines away - a situation where she had helped to put the sewing machines away rather than instruct the pupils to do it themselves.

For the second construct Allicia described E4 and E6 as *physical activities where I 'pitched in'* because she liked to be involved and active. As Allicia was thinking about this pairing she said 'Perhaps I ought to do these things less often, and instead get the girls to do more things themselves or ask them to unpick their own tracings'. E5 she defined as a *verbal activity, designed to make them think*. It was noticeable throughout the lesson that Allicia's usual response to a question was a question, asked in a non-threatening manner. The questioner generally came up with some sort of a solution, or a classmate made a suggestion. Allicia would then add any missing information or helpful idea, if necessary. It was a practical technique which Allicia had consciously adopted. She said it was really useful to see how well this technique worked, time after time.

Construct 3 was generated from

- E1 The sewing machine demonstration
- E7 The 'scissors incident' and
- E8 Packing away at the end of the lesson.

Alicia explained that E1, the sewing machine demonstration had surprised her. She had sat down at a machine to remind one girl how to set up the thread in a sewing machine and had quietly said 'If anyone else would like a reminder on how to thread a machine, do come and watch'. Almost all the pupils left their seats and gathered round to watch, although they had been shown how to thread a machine several times and had had plenty of practice. Alicia interpreted this as the girls having no confidence in themselves.

** (My interpretation was that the chance to cluster round the sewing machine was a welcome diversion for the girls as they had been sewing for quite some time, but I did not offer this comment as I realised it would be imposing my construction on this element.)*

We had examined E7, the frightening 'scissors incident' earlier, and we went on to discuss E8, packing up at the end of the lesson in more detail. Alicia said she had been shocked when she had seen the appearance of the room on the video-recording and realised how awful the messy end of the room looked. She said she had seen the room as it must look to others and she recognised that it did not look inviting, particularly for an art room, despite the excellent work on display.

Alicia said she had chosen the ending of the lesson to be an element because she wondered whether, although she liked the easy-going atmosphere in her lessons and tried to make them relaxed and enjoyable, she was going too far and ought to try to introduce some more rules regarding tidying and care of materials. Watching the lesson on the video-recording had made her see that she really did need to do something both about the structure of her lessons, particularly at the end, and the appearance of the room.

Alicia said this was a difficulty she had been struggling with since she

had started teaching. She had wanted to be seen as a friendly teacher, and she felt that the kind of practical activities she provided allowed a degree of freedom. Talking was allowed and pupils could choose where they sat and with whom. Allicia explained that she was now beginning to feel that she had been too relaxed and was looking for ways of introducing more control without friction or destroying the good feeling she had cultivated.

She considered the three elements and perceived that E1, the sewing machine demonstration was *a strong point* whereas the other two were *weak points where I felt lacking*. As we aligned the other elements she was pleased to realise that she had many strong points. The repertory grid Learning Conversation clarified and re-presented for her examination those areas that had already been causing her concern. By making these areas more explicit, by bringing them to the forefront of her mind, the conversation focused on the need for some form of action.

** (I was pleased that Allicia was beginning to articulate targets for herself in these areas. Allicia's recognition of the disorder at the end of the lesson was a factor of more significance than she perhaps realised:*

- 1) dissatisfied comments about the chaotic state in which the room was often left had been made loudly in the staff room by those teachers who worked on the same corridor and those who sometimes took lessons in there,*
- 2) as a probationary teacher, Allicia was soon to be visited by an inspector who would ultimately be responsible for deciding whether she had successfully accomplished her first year of teaching,*
- 3) the pupils were not being helped to develop responsibility and consideration for others or care of equipment.*

I considered that her decision to do something about the

haphazard closing of lessons and the chaotic state of the room was a crucial one; it would improve her relationships and standing with other staff, it would prevent all the positive aspects of her teaching from being diminished by the rather casual procedures for putting away, and she would be inculcating good habits in her pupils. My hopes were that viewing the level of untidiness and realising how it looked to others had provided Allicia with a valuable prompt, and that our discussion would lead her to take action to improve these areas she had identified.)

Construct 4 was gained from considering elements

- E3 Co-operative self-help**
- E5 Asking them what they think, and**
- E7 Frightening 'scissors incident'**

E3 and E5 Allicia placed together and termed them *the results of my teaching, can do it without me*. These were conscious strategies on her part of attitudes she wished to encourage, whereas the scissors incident, E7, she described as something which made her *like to have closer contact, wish to have smaller groups*. She felt that she was not making the kind of relationships she wanted particularly when she had the whole group of twenty-seven pupils, because the group was too large for her to talk to them individually and get to know them. It was also difficult, she stated, to find absorbing activities to interest and occupy so many of them in an inadequate room.

It appeared that in the course of our conversation Allicia had moved on from expecting the school management to do something about the unruly boys in this class to reflecting on the reasons why she was not making the kind of relationships she wanted with them, and perhaps looking for solutions for herself.

**(I was hesitant here. I felt uncertain whether to discuss the whole-class situation with Allicia or continue with the repertory*

grid discussion about this lesson. My decision was not to offer any classroom management strategies at this time but to follow up later.)

The next construct was determined from elements

- E2** Claire helping herself to material
- E4** Picking off tracing, and
- E6** Helping to put machines away

Alicia quickly identified the latter two elements as *giving me an excuse to use my fingers* while E2 she described as *an area of uncertainty, a situation over which I had the least control*. As we placed other elements on this construct Alicia remarked how she felt confident doing things with her hands but felt uncertain about her ability to direct the activities of others in some circumstances. She realised that she was uncertain how effective the system of working together at the sewing machines was, although she had introduced it. Unfortunately we had to finish our conversation there but agreed to meet again to continue it.

Commentary

During the next few days, although guaranteed confidentiality, Alicia talked openly to her colleagues about how beneficial she had found the experience of eliciting her repertory grid, the areas covered and what she had learned about her teaching. This was very helpful to the progress of the project in that it helped to allay fears others may have been having. It also brought a measure of reassurance that the conversation had been as successful as I thought, particularly so early in the project. I then hardly saw Alicia for some time as she did not come down to the staff room often, but she always said she was 'getting on very well' whenever I asked her. I presumed this meant she was working on those targets she had set herself, such as the management of the boys and improving the closing procedures of her lessons and the general tidiness.

However, when I next visited Alicia the room was even more untidy, but in a different way. Many of the areas were wet and smeared. Suspended

from a clothes line she had rigged up along the length of the room were dozens of drying prints. There were drying screens and piles of materials everywhere. Allicia was hastily cleaning up after a very messy printing lesson and preparing the materials for the next one. She was urging pupils reluctant to stop their printing to go to their next class.

She informed me that as a result of thinking about her situation during and after our repertory grid Learning Conversation, she had realised she really wanted to have another go at introducing silk screen printing and had decided to get on with it as best she could in that room. She told me that although the sink still did not work properly, she was trying to cope by using other materials for printing in some lessons. She reported that most pupils were really keen and some tried to come up at every chance to do more, but this had caused difficulties with other staff at breaks and lunchtimes.

The Second Lesson

For the particular lesson I had come to observe she intended introducing the pupils to printing using polystyrene tiles. The pupils got on with the task with enjoyment. There was an excited buzz as results were achieved quickly and were displayed immediately. This was the same group who had quietly enjoyed quilting a few weeks earlier. In this lesson they were much more animated and actively engaged. The lesson seemed to go at a very fast pace and the enjoyment was evident. Allicia appeared to be rushed and somewhat fraught. She was on her feet all the time, moving round the class, busily involved. At the end of the lesson Allicia encouraged them to think of suitable designs for next time and to bring in tee shirts and other items to print on. Efforts were made to clear up, but the final effect was not welcoming to any teacher who had to share the room.

The Learning Conversation continued....

We were able to hold our post-lesson discussion in the room since it was not in immediate use. When we started the discussion, Allicia said she was glad she had decided to try again with printing. As a result she reported she was now much more tired than she had been, but much more content with what she was teaching. She was improvising with materials and was

constantly in a rush, but she thought the results were excellent, the pupils were keen and she felt she was getting back to being herself. At home she had started to do work of her own again, despite the lack of space, and was looking for either a bigger flat or studio space.

When we examined her SPACEd FOCUSed repertory grid Allicia said she felt that it made very explicit those areas we had discussed, and she 'agreed' with the clusterings. She made three changes to the constructs, all indicating progress in areas where she had felt less confident. Allicia stated that the repertory grid Learning Conversation process had made her step back from her teaching and given her the ability to view her performance with a greater degree of insight. She realised she had a lot of good teaching skills and claimed she was still 'working on' the areas for improvement we had discussed.

In particular, she reported that she had found that the conversation had caused her to re-assess her role as an artist who was not practising her skills. She asked for a copy of the repertory grid to pin up because she felt it really showed what she had said about her teaching and how she felt about being at this school generally. She said that although her her boyfriend was sick of her talking about 'her grid', she wanted to keep looking at it, to remind herself about her decisions, to keep her 'on track' as she put it.

Allicia reported that the repertory grid Learning Conversation had given her a 'necessary nudge' and she had thought more about the areas of dissatisfaction she had described, and had decided to stop moaning and do something. She had made several decisions: she would leave at the end of her probationary year whether she had another job or not; she was actively looking for part-time work in an adult education college; she would build up her portfolio of work; she would try to sell some of her work and get commissions.

The decisions Allicia was making and effecting were more wide-ranging than the day-to-day interactions in the classroom. She was far more excited about those decisions than about whether she had been working on the classroom management issues we had identified in the first conversation. She said her targets of improving the endings of lessons and

to leave the room tidy had not been wholly forgotten, but at the moment, she explained, she was so caught up in organising progression in the pupils' printing experiences that she often overran, and found herself frantically trying to both clean up and set things up in between classes. While we were talking Allicia slowly looked round the room, and it seemed as if the disarray made an impact on her again. We reviewed the strategies we had identified in the first conversation and explored ways of preventing other teachers being upset.

Commentary

There were different levels of conversation taking place, one level related to the classroom issues and one level concerned with the answers to the three questions asked at the beginning. Seeing herself in action and discussing her teaching seemed to have clarified issues for Allicia, and given her power to address those issues. She was now more concerned with what she was teaching than how. Allicia certainly claimed to have made important career decisions. I felt she was flying high with the impetus of these decisions, and that re-examining conversations about her earlier needlework lesson was less interesting and probably less relevant than it had been. It brought home to me the realisation that the agreed emphasis of the conversation, the classroom interactions, was dictated by the direction of the research enquiry, whereas Allicia's thinking had been directed by her own concerns.

This repertory grid Learning Conversation prompted other reflections. I had been pleased with the targets Allicia had set herself during the initial conversation. I thought her raised awareness of the untidy state of the room would lead to an improvement in its appearance which would have been of general benefit to other teachers and pupils, as well as encouraging good habits in her own classes. I found I was quite dismayed at first when the room was actually worse, but I could see that the pupils' level of interest, active involvement and enjoyment was greater. I wondered: How would I have felt if I had been Allicia's manager in a formal appraisal setting? How would I have dealt with the conflict between the needs of the pupils, the school and the individual? What would have been my criteria for deciding whether Allicia had satisfactorily completed her probationary year, if that

had been my responsibility? Would I have put pupils' learning, other teachers' distress, or Allicia's achievements and failings first?

Issues were raised for me about my role in the conversations. In these conversations with Allicia I had avoided offering any interpretations or suggesting alignments as I saw my role as facilitating the teacher's thinking mainly by listening and reflecting, and allowing the repertory grid process to generate the reflection. I had been directive only when Allicia asked for suggestions for managing the boys, or strategies for managing the ends of lessons. There had been times when I had wanted to take a firmer stance, or directly offer advice, but I felt that was not part of my role as researcher.

On the whole I was pleased with the way this conversation had developed. As with the repertory grids I had done before starting the research project, it appeared that the learner, Allicia, had had aspects of herself confirmed, had gained insights and made decisions for action and change. I had reaffirmed that repertory grid Learning Conversations were productive, if not always in the way expected. Again a good relationship had been set up and Allicia was keen to have more observations and conversations if time allowed.

Responses to the Final Questionnaire

Allicia's responses to the final questionnaire revealed that the presence of the video camera had affected her a little. She said 'I thought I would be nervous but I soon forgot', and although she had been conscious of the observer's presence she had 'carried on as usual'. She felt the pupils had taken no notice at all, and I agreed with her. Although this had been the first class observed, the girls had not appeared perturbed by or interested in the camera or the observer.

Allicia only looked at the video with me, and from watching it she said, 'I learnt that I stand up nearly all the time. I seem taller than I realised, and I look interested. The atmosphere was very relaxed. I saw that the girls were working well and that they all seemed to know what to do with the quilting pieces but not the machines. I need to revise this. They work very well and there is some good work up. The bottom end was very untidy'.

From talking with me, she said she had learnt she was doing a better job than she thought. She realised she liked the informal atmosphere in her classes and tried to encourage it. She had learnt that she successfully used questions to help the girls solve their own problems and that the work they were doing seemed to be satisfying. She claimed to have fewer misgivings about how she got on with them. She said, 'I realised the work I set must have been right because they were working happily and producing work of good standard. They were very friendly and supported each other'.

She reported that her attitude to being appraised before she joined in the research project was that she didn't mind because as a beginner she felt she needed help and this project had sounded as though it would help her. Her attitude had changed because she now felt much more cheerful. Now, she claimed, she would know how to talk about her teaching and her good points.

Allicia's reply to the question Have you made any changes as a result of taking part in the research project? was 'I try to make them aware of the good things they do and praise them for their good ideas. I think I've got a better relationship with some classes and I feel surer about my work'.

I was pleased to read that Allicia had gained in confidence and was feeling better about her teaching but was surprised that there was no mention of the decisions she had made earlier until I realised that she had not yet made those changes. I knew she following up those decisions because she had brought in some of her own work and was still determined to leave.

C.S.H.L. GRID - Allicia

		RAW GRID WITH VERBAL LABELS									
		ELEMENTS									
CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3	
INSTIGATED BY ME	C1	1	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	C1	NO CONTROL OVER
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	C2	3	1	1	1	3	1	3	3	C2	VERBAL - MAKE THEM THINK
WEAK POINT	C3	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	C3	STRONG POINT
RESULT OF TEACHING	C4	1	3	1	1	1	3	3	1	C4	LIKE TO HAVE CLOSER CONTACT
EXCUSE TO USE FINGERS	C5	1	3	3	1	1	1	3	3	C5	UNCERTAINTY
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	* PACKING AWAY AT END	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	* SCISSORS INCIDENT	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	* HELPING PUT MACHINE AWAY	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	* ASKING WHAT THEY THINK	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	* PICKING OFF TRACING	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	* COOPERATIVE SELF-HELP	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	* CLAIRE HELPING HERSELF	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	* SEWING MACHINE DEMONSTRATION	

Harrald G1B

The Context

This busy Senior Teacher was also Head of Mathematics. He was particularly interested in computers and told me he continually found himself frustrated by the lack of up-to-date equipment in the school. When first approached at a Maths Department meeting he agreed to join in the project, but when he was later asked to arrange a time to be observed it was obvious that he was not really interested.

As well as being Head of the Maths Department, he also had responsibility for the timetable. He told me he had spent an enormous amount of time putting data into the school computer to enable him to access timetable information quickly but the computer was not really of sufficient capacity and often log-jammed. Unfortunately this meant that there were often delays in giving teachers details about changes in classes. There was much annoyance generated as a result, since apparently no-one else could access the information.

I knew that he had been unsuccessful at several head-ship interviews and that apparently he could not understand why. The other management staff had offered support, practice interviews and opportunities to discuss ways of preparing for promotion but he had refused all offers. Some members of staff avoided him because he had a rather brusque and patronising manner. His management activities appeared to be solitary since he was not present at many meetings, nor was he generally to be seen around the school, at lunchtime or in the staff room at breaks. His skills appeared to lie more in organisation and teaching than in the management of people. The headteacher had told me that he was pleased that Harrald had agreed to take part, as he normally kept himself to himself, and that he was hoping that, as someone from outside the school, I might be able to reach Harrald where they had not succeeded.

The First Lesson

The lesson I observed was an 'O' level revision session, where the class was working through a past GCSE Maths examination paper. The class was a fifth year class and willingly settled immediately to work although it was obvious that there had been a change to the expected lesson. The papers were ready and very soon the class was working silently. I felt the lesson had perhaps been specially designed to have little teacher input, where the class would be required to work quietly for most of the lesson. The atmosphere was business-like and the pupils were keen to apply themselves. I felt that normally there would have been more joking and less formality. This was confirmed later when Harrald, while watching the video-recording, remarked on the absence of his 'funny voices'.

Harrald paced slowly round the room and after a few minutes said 'You should have done two or three by now'. This was said quietly as a reminder that in an examination they can only allow a short time for each task. There were several interruptions and latecomers, all of which were dealt with calmly and decisively.

It was obvious that he was fully in control in the classroom. He knew the pupils well, encouraged their responses and accepted contributions from the class on methods of approaching the work. The atmosphere was purposeful and there was a sense of mutual respect and shared interest in the subject. The lesson had a calm, controlled pace. The pupils were engaged in the task throughout, they worked willingly and appeared to have gained a great deal from the exercise.

The Learning Conversation

After the lesson he said he could only spare a short time to have his repertory grid Learning Conversation, despite having earlier agreed to the usual arrangements. He answered the opening questions very briefly;

1. Why did you agree to join in the project?

'Why not? I thought that if I didn't, no-one in my department

would'.

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I'm a good teacher'.

3. How do you see yourself in the future?

'Head of my own school'.

** (As usual, asking these three questions set the atmosphere for the following conversation. In this case, Harrald's terse replies did not promise well for the kind of conversation I was hoping would develop.)*

I asked Harrald how he thought the lesson had gone. He said he considered that it was a dull lesson, but necessary just before exams. He preferred to teach exciting lessons such as the one before this when he had been working with teachers from the feeder middle school in a joint problem-solving session, discovering the qualities of 'fidgets'. He talked about the difficulties he had in motivating the members of the Maths Department whom, he claimed, could not or would not try new methods.

When we examined the video, given the kind of session just observed, with little formal input and long periods where the pupils worked alone in silence, each interaction with a pupil seemed significant in the video-recording. On the whole, Harrald selected these interactions with individual pupils to be the elements in his repertory grid. Twelve elements were chosen;

- E1 Dealing with Michael's entrance**
- E2 Discussion with Rachel**
- E3 Relationship with Lee**
- E4 Convincing Mike**
- E5 Talking about exam technique**
- E6 Walking around room**
- E7 Simon Morganti's worry about course**

- E8 Incident with Simon Hawkins**
- E9 Sharon needing questions**
- E10 Question to Carrie 'Going to sleep?'**
- E11 'Hang on! Homework!'**
- E12 Lawrence's contribution**

The first three elements were presented. Harrald decided that E2 and E3 were *concerned with day-to-day relationships* and that E1, dealing with Michael's entrance was *a control matter*. Michael had come in late, in a rather truculent manner and resisted explaining the reason for his tardiness. Harrald had dealt with him firmly, without forcing a confrontation. When I commented on how well I thought he had managed this interruption, Harrald said, 'I avoid formal discipline, no detention or imposition is set in my lessons'.

When we aligned the other elements on this construct it was apparent that keeping good working relationships with the pupils was a very important concern. The other control aspects occurred with E10, when he asked a pupil, Carrie, if she was going to sleep, as a way of gaining her attention, and E11, when he asked pupils to 'hang on' for homework instructions. Harrald said that he saw no distinction between his pastoral or pedagogic role but would hope he was fulfilling both his roles at all times in all his dealings with pupils.

For the second construct, the balance of the alignment was towards the right pole, *the awareness of the individual*. Harrald said that he consciously tailored his responses to individual pupils and their needs, so that he knew which ones to chivvy, which ones to help, and those he could tease. The construct on the emergent side of the repertory grid, *strategies to further the aim of the lesson*, delineated those interactions and activities which he saw as supporting his overall aim to facilitate the learning of the pupils, so that the following elements were all placed in accordance with this pole of the construct:

- E1 Dealing with Michael's entrance**
- E5 Talking about exam technique**
- E6 Walking round the room**

E11 **Setting homework**

E12 **Encouraging Lawrence to explain.**

The third construct in this short repertory grid was reached by looking at E7, Simon Morganti's worry about the course, E8, incident with Simon Hawkins, and E9, Sharon needing questions. The latter two elements were described as *working on individual pupils' strengths* and the emergent pole was termed *part of Head of Department's role*. E7, Simon Morganti's worry arose from what had happened to a friend of his at another school in the previous year's GCSE exams. Simon was concerned that because two teachers taught them Maths there might be overlaps and gaps where parts of the course would be missed, and the pupils would not be able to answer some of the questions. Harrald reassured Simon that, provided they revised, they should be able to tackle everything set.

Again the emphasis in this alignment was on treating pupils as individuals with lesser emphasis on his role as Head of Department. Despite suggestions that he might consider thinking of a different way of aligning the elements he was content with his decision.

The last construct was achieved from an examination of the last three elements, E10, asking Carrie if she was falling asleep, E11, asking the pupils to hang on for homework and, E12, encouraging Lawrence's contribution. The latter two elements were described as *deliberate questioning and answering of whole class*, and were the only two elements so described. Harrald designated E10 as *technique for management of individual pupils*, which he had stressed as being fundamental to his way of interacting with the pupils all through the conversation. When we aligned the remaining elements Harrald placed them all on the implicit pole.

Commentary

The initial repertory grid Learning Conversation was finished here as Harrald felt he could not spend any more time on his repertory grid as he had other priorities and was feeling pressured for time. It was obvious throughout the conversation that the process was not of any real interest to him, but he was being polite and accommodating by going through the

motions.

He said he had only agreed to take part to encourage the other members of his Department to join in. He hoped it might benefit them but he felt he had no need to examine his teaching because he knew himself well. He maintained a detached manner throughout our conversations and really only went through the motions of paying attention or sharing. The only time he showed any enthusiasm was when he was talking about a recent course of problem-solving activities for younger children which he had helped to run.

**(This was the first and only time that a teacher, or in fact anyone who had undertaken a repertory grid Learning Conversation with me, indicated that the process was not valued. His attitude unsettled me. I had misgivings about the value of entering into a conversation with someone who was demonstrating scepticism about the experience. I made the decision to try to conduct the conversation as normally and professionally as I could. Once the process was in train I expected that he would gradually become involved but, although he became more genial as our conversation progressed, he never demonstrated any real engagement of feeling or discrimination. He had said at the beginning that he knew he was a good teacher and the implication in his tone was that he had nothing to learn about teaching.)*

When we watched the video-recording he paid close attention but made very few comments, apart from choosing the elements. He rarely expanded on an incident, unless prompted, or described the pupils beyond what was strictly relevant, unlike most teachers who would extend their description of their relationship with a pupil or a class by mentioning other instances. I commented on how he had circulated all the time. He said, 'It makes me available. I can keep a check on what they are doing, and it gives me a chance to say things quietly'.

This was the longest response Harrald made. It seemed to me that he had determined beforehand that he was not going to be involved to any

worthwhile degree in any conversation requiring real exchange of views. If Harrald gained any increase in perception about his teaching from the conversation he did not indicate it.

However, it seemed that, without any discussion on the subject, he did learn something from the experience, something about his appearance. Harrald looked like the stereotypical male teacher in that he was slightly untidy, with bulging pockets and nondescript mid-grey or beige clothes. Since he had sallow skin and pale brown hair the overall effect was dull. The day after viewing the recording of his lesson he came to school smartly dressed, in a dark suit, and a white shirt and colourful tie. This was a such a very noticeable improvement that he was asked if he was going for another interview. It was interesting to notice over the following weeks that he never again looked as unprepossessing and untidy as he had appeared on the video-recording.

After a few attempts to arrange a follow-up meeting I finally managed to have a brief conversation with him about his repertory grid. He showed no interest in the printed versions, although the SPACEd FOCUSed repertory grid gave clear clusterings of the re-ordered elements. I was expecting that, as a computer user and a mathematician, he would have been curious about the program but he asked nothing. He said he would rather look at the printouts on his own, and contact me later with any comments.

Later, three times I made arrangements to carry on with the agreed programme of visits, but circumstances always prevented them happening. In the end I did not re-visit this teacher and never satisfactorily completed the initial conversation. Although I was dismayed by this experience I learnt from it. It reminded me that the purpose of doing a repertory grid Learning Conversation must be mutually agreed. I had imposed the purpose of doing the repertory grid Learning Conversation, and whereas the other teachers were interested in that purpose and could willingly share in appraising their performance, Harrald could not. Although I do not feel he would have agreed, I ought to have suggested that we undertook a repertory grid Learning Conversation for his purposes, perhaps one dealing with his frustrations with the computer and his colleagues.

Responses to the Final Questionnaire

In his responses to the final questionnaire Harrald said he had been a little affected by the presence of the camera, in that he had been less 'free and easy' and had not used silly voices as he usually did. Although he said he had not been affected at all by the presence of the observer, he believed that the pupils had been constrained. He was prepared to show the video of the lesson to anyone but had watched it only with me.

About himself, he said watching the video had made him see that he needed to lose weight and stand up straighter. He said he had learnt nothing specific about his teaching or his class either from watching the video or talking with me. He had had slight reservations about the value of being appraised before joining in and his attitude had not changed at all. He claimed he had made no changes as a result of his involvement.

C.S.H.L. GRID - Harrald

RAW GRID WITH VERBAL LABELS

ELEMENTS

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3

		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	E12		
WORKING RELATIONSHIP	C1	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	C1	CONTROL MATTER
STRATEGIES TO FURTHER AIM	C2	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	C2	AWARENESS OF INDIVIDUAL
WORKING ON STRENGTHS	C3	3	1	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	1	1	C3	PART OF TEACHER'S ROLE
DELIBERATE Q+A WHOLE CLASS	C4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	C4	INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENT TECHNIQUE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* LAWRENCE'S CONTRIBUTION
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* HANG ON
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* QUESTION TO CARRIE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* SHARON NEEDING QUESTIONS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* INCIDENT WITH SIMON HAWKINS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* SIMON MOREANTIS' WORRY
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* WALKING AROUND ROOM
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* TALKING EXAM TECHNIQUE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* CONVINCING NICK
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* RELATIONSHIP WITH LEE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* DISCUSSION WITH RACHEL
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* DEALING WITH MICHAEL'S ENTR

Figure 12b

C.S.H.L. GRID - HARRALD

SPACED FOCUSED GRID

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1 -		ELEMENTS							CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3 -		
E	E	EEEE	E	E	E	E	E	E			
1	1	0000	0	0	0	0	1				
1	2	94238	7	6	5	1	0				

WORKING ON STRENGTHS	C3	* 1	1	11111	3	3	3	3	3	* C3	PART OF TEACHER'S ROLE
WORKING RELATIONSHIP	C1	* 3	1	11111	1	1	2	3	3	* C1	CONTROL MATTER
AWARENESS OF INDIVIDUAL	RC2	* 3	3	11111	1	3	3	3	1	* RC2	STRATEGIES TO FURTHER AIM
INDIVIDUAL M'MENT TECHNIQUE	RC4	* 3	3	11111	1	1	1	1	1	* RC4	DELIBERATE Q+A WHOLE CLASS

*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		*QUESTION TO CARRIE
*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		*DEALING WITH MICHAEL'S ENTR
*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		*TALKING EXAM TECHNIQUE
*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		*WALKING AROUND ROOM
*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		*SIMON'S WORRY
*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			*****	*	*	*	*	*		*INCIDENT WITH SIMON
*	*			****	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			****	*	*	*	*	*		*RELATIONSHIP WITH LEE
*	*			***	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			***	*	*	*	*	*		*DISCUSSION WITH RACHEL
*	*			**	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			**	*	*	*	*	*		*CONVINCING NICK
*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*		*SHARON NEEDING QUESTIONS
*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*		*LAWRENCE'S CONTRIBUTION
*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*		
*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*		*HANG ON

The Context

This teacher was Head of the Modern Languages Department. She had been at the school for some years and was very well-liked and respected. She was extremely approachable and helpful, and was the only teacher to provide detailed lesson plans beforehand. She had a natural authority and a huge smile. It was obvious that she was expert in managing lessons and had a real enthusiasm for her work. All her Department had individually commented on how lucky they felt to be in her Department, and how they admired her ability to both teach well and administer her Department so successfully. In fact, one of them said she did not want to be a Head of Department because she felt she could never do it as well. Later conversations revealed that in order to achieve this level of professionalism she stayed very late after school each day, and liked to have everything prepared for the next day so as to be able to deal with anything that arose. Her husband did not arrive home from work until late in the evening so she chose to work late at school rather than have to take home marking, preparation, etc. She said she enjoyed the quiet time when the school emptied of staff and pupils and she could prepare for the next day's teaching and deal with any organisational matters for the Department.

The First Lesson

The class observed was of fourth year pupils of average to low ability who were aiming for GCSE examinations the following year. The emphasis of language teaching in the Department was more on listening, speaking and reading skills than on writing. The lesson was very well-planned and supported by resources developed by the teacher as well as purchased audio-tapes and video-equipment. The activities were changed often to maintain interest. The class appeared to be somewhat cramped in the annexe classroom, but were enthusiastic and involved in the lesson.

Apart from being very well-prepared for this lesson, it was noticeable that this teacher actually liked the pupils and smiled at them very often and

encouraged their responses. She worked very hard during the lesson, standing throughout, and circulating during the times the pupils were working in pairs. She gave them her total attention and was very supportive of their efforts, commending their attempts to speak French. The subject of the lesson was how to make arrangements to meet to go to a variety of activities. Ava made it relevant to the pupils' experience by suggesting that they would need to ask these questions if they met someone in France they wanted to ask out on a date. The pupils giggled and sat up and paid attention. Then Ava suggested that they might want to take someone to a disco, or to the cinema. She said it would also be a good idea if they practised how to accept or refuse ready for when they were asked out. (The school had exchange visits with schools in France so there was a real chance that many of these pupils would need these skills soon.)

This was an extremely professional, lively lesson and it was apparent that this was how she normally taught. It was not surprising that the number of pupils opting to take modern languages was rising every year, and the Department hoped that eventually all children would be able to make themselves understood at least in French and German.

The Learning Conversation

Immediately after the lesson we began our review session by my asking the usual three questions.

1. Why did you agree to take part in the project?

' I joined from professional motivation. We're looking at systems of profiling and pupil self-assessment so I hoped there would be a spin-off for the Department. On the personal level I'd like to talk about my teaching and see another's point of view.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

' I think I have changed. I am a committed teacher. I like work. I run a functioning, dynamic Department, all involved at county level – sometimes it's frenetic but stimulating. They are all

outgoing and I think I'm informed of new approaches, but I'm not enjoying teaching at the moment. (I've had a series of rows with the head which, although it's puerile, have changed my view of him. I've had support from the Deputy Head and H.M.I., but I want to escape, a new job.)'

3. How do you see yourself in the future?

'I see myself as a Deputy Head. I'm not a linguist so I don't think I can develop into an adviser. I'm not particularly interested in administration or pastoral work, so I don't know. I did send for an application form but then I was upset when the Head said he didn't feel I had sufficient skills to offer. I'm getting over it but I do feel at a crossroads.'

Ava explained why she felt at a crossroads. Her situation illustrates a dilemma which faces many career-minded women. At the same time as she was anxious for change and the challenge of promotion, she was also aware that she was reaching a time when she would seriously have to examine whether she was going to take time out of her career to have children before it was too late. She wanted children but she also wanted to continue to move up in her chosen profession. Another factor affecting her decision was the size of mortgage she and her husband were paying. She felt that as her contribution to the mortgage was substantial she would not be able to stay at home with any children they might have, but would be forced either to make other care arrangements so as to be absent from work for the minimum time, or to drastically alter their standard of living. 'What was the point of having children' she asked 'if someone else brought them up?' Her husband was struggling to establish himself in the business world, and would probably eventually earn enough to allow her to stay at home, but by then she would be too old or too well-established in her career .

Ava said she recognised that she ran her Department well and that she was a good teacher. She felt it was time to move on. She had very recently applied for a Deputy Headship, but when she had consulted the Headteacher he had said he thought she was not ready yet and he did not consider she had enough skills to offer. She had been devastated by his comments, since

she had always respected his judgement. However, she had not been called for interview but had not been too upset because she knew that people she considered much better qualified had not been considered either. Now she was wondering how to gain the necessary skills and experience, by looking for courses to attend and talking with inspectors.

The power of the head in this particular school culture was very strong and his dealings with Ava revealed both sides of this kind of centrally held influence. Ava had always admired the Head and consulted him regularly, so when things went smoothly she felt supported and close to the centre, but if there was any disagreement she felt betrayed and resentful. A recent example demonstrated this situation.

Ava had earlier proposed a policy of giving all pupils a chance to learn a foreign language, with an aural/oral emphasis, rather than written skills for only the more able. She had explained that exam results would probably not be of a very high level but that pupils who normally were not taught French would have the chance to be able to express themselves in a foreign language. The Head had agreed and the timetable was arranged to allow this scheme to take place. Her Department had worked tremendously hard to introduce the policy and had received praise from county advisers and inspectors. However, the Head had recently taken her to task about the low level of some of the recent examination results. Ava saw this as a betrayal of his earlier agreement and was unsettled and angry.

Another concern was how to support and develop the teachers in her Department so that they would be able to continue the good work they were already doing and be prepared to take on more responsibility. She realised that it was difficult for those who had young children to believe that they could possibly follow Ava when they could see how much time and effort she gave to the successful running of the Department. As a model, she was aware that she was possibly too dedicated and perhaps spent too much time at school. It was obvious that these issues were very important to Ava, since she referred to them throughout our conversation.

The elements of Ava's repertory grid Learning Conversation were selected from sequences in the observed lesson. We looked at the video-

recording together, and generally each change of activity was selected so as to provide a basis for comparing their relative effectiveness. Ava examined the various activities she had provided with the purpose of discussing her management of the lesson. She also wanted to include an interaction with one pupil that was typical of her relationship with that pupil. She felt that the activities and responses in this lesson were typical of much of her teaching.

The process of choosing the nine elements was a long one, since, as this teacher had already indicated, she was interested in education, she liked her work and welcomed an opportunity to talk about it. As we examined her lesson Ava raised many issues which affected her teaching, thus not just examining the lesson before us, but putting this lesson in a wider context. After much deliberation, Ava selected nine elements;

- E1 Video sequence
- E2 Flash cards
- E3 Grid of symbols
- E4 Listening
- E5 Pairs cards
- E6 Group work
- E7 Home adverts
- E8 Dealing with Kelly
- E9 Pace setting

When the first three elements were presented Ava chose to describe E2, the flash cards she used and E3, the grid of symbols she displayed as requiring a *more active involvement* by the pupils than E1, the video sequence which she thought was a static activity which left the students in a *passive state*. When she was asked to align the other elements she placed all of them on the *active involvement* side, apart from listening. Ava put great emphasis on changing activities frequently as a way of involving the pupils' interest.

The next construct was defined from elements E4, E5, and E6. Here Ava decided that E6, group work activities, and the work in pairs using cards, E5 demonstrated *greater pupil involvement* but that listening, E4 (in this case,

to sentences from a commercially produced tape on which exchanges between various French voices could be heard) was *less zappy, less successful in stimulating a response*. The alignment of the elements on this construct followed an identical pattern to the first and revealed to Ava how concerned she was to keep the pupils responding actively throughout the lesson.

Construct 3 was generated from the last three elements E7, E8 and E9. Here Ava described that the homework task, E7, designing home adverts as *reveals group concerns - gelling* whereas the setting of the pace of the lesson, E9 and the interaction with a pupil called Kelly, E8 were *determined by me*. It was interesting but not surprising to see that all the other elements were aligned on the emergent pole. In such a well-prepared and structured lesson little was left to chance, and the exchanges with Kelly, while not strictly connected with the academic content of the lesson, were part of Ava's overall concern for the lesson to go well.

From the elements E3, E6 and E9 Ava decided that she was *satisfied with the organisation* of the use of E3, the grid of symbols she had prepared, and with E6, the task set for group work, but she was *not satisfied with* the overall pace setting of the lesson, E9. This was something of which she was always concerned. Ava was aware of the amount of material she wanted to cover and needed to complete if the pupils were to stand a chance of passing an examination while, at the same time, giving plenty of repetition and reinforcement to this class who were not particularly able. 'I try hard', she said, 'to make learning interesting and fun by changing the activities often and by always trying to relate the content to situations where the pupils would really want to speak French'.

The next construct, C5, placed the elements either on the emergent pole side, *structured ways of getting them to use language* or on the implicit pole, *reading skill development* using elements E1, E5 and E7. Seven of the elements were considered as being *concerned with the structured use of language*, which in a formal language lesson is only to be expected, while only two were regarded as needing only *reading skill*; E1, the video sequence and E2, the flash cards.

The sixth construct was arrived at by discriminating between elements E2, E4, and E8. Ava described the flash cards, E2 and the listening activity, E4 as *tools used to further learning*, whereas talking to Kelly, E8 was termed *pace determined by an instinctive response*. When we placed the other elements Ava was surprised how the alignment of elements on this construct suggested that much of what she did was the result of an instinctive response, but what she meant was that these aspects of the lesson occurred to her without effort whereas the other elements, such as the use of the audio and visual aids, she regarded as equipment that she used.

Commentary

The conversation was interrupted at this point by the caretaker wishing to lock up the Modern Languages Block. Ava said that she had found the repertory grid Learning Conversation really useful and wanted to think about the issues raised and continue another time.

** (The raw repertory grid Learning Conversation was not very long and did not really represent the quality of the conversation. I felt we had covered so much ground. The conversation had been particularly close and relaxed because Ava was very keen to talk and warmly interested in her pupils. Her openness and desire to learn highlighted for me the responsibility required of me in role of researcher which, at times, seemed more like counsellor and friend.)*

When our conversation was resumed a few days later she remarked that she was still feeling 'buoyed up'. She reported that she had been very pleased by what she had learned about her lesson because she felt the discussion was 'real' in that it had reassured her that her own perceptions about what was taking place in her teaching were generally accurate. The repertory grid Learning Conversation, she felt, had confirmed for her that what she was trying to do was worthwhile and that she was providing good experiences and opportunities to learn French. This had restored some of her self-esteem just when she needed it.

When we examined her SPACEd FOCUSed repertory grid she

remarked on the clusterings, particularly of the three elements which were now wholly aligned to the emergent pole. This cluster Ava considered to be very positive. Indeed she declared that actually seeing that most of the numbers were 1 and therefore aligned to the 'positive' side of the repertory grid was most heartening. Although she chose to discuss every 3, those elements placed on the implicit pole, she was particularly intrigued by how the repertory grid highlighted the two areas, listening and watching the video-sequence, that she had been mulling over since we had had the repertory grid Learning Conversation. She had been 'brought up sharp' by the realisation that in her eagerness to get the children talking French she was perhaps not sufficiently valuing listening and watching as learning opportunities. She had been re-appraising the menu of activities she was offering to the children, and had been watching their responses more. She was undecided as yet what she would do, but was thinking of ways of allowing the slower learners more time to assimilate the proper pronunciation.

The Second Lesson

The next lesson I watched was about booking an hotel room. Again Ava had planned very carefully which skills she wanted to develop. This time the pupils were encouraged to see the activities as being vital to them when they wanted to have a holiday in France. She encouraged them to imagine they had seen a pleasant hotel and that they wanted to spend a few days there. She introduced the kinds of information they would need to obtain and provide, such as the number of people, kind of room, the cost, facilities, length of stay, etc. and provided appropriate forms of questions. The format was very similar to the first lesson with plenty of visual aids but there were fewer activity changes and the pace was slightly slower. The lesson was slightly noisier than the last because the pupils had more time to practice.

The Learning Conversation continued....

When we discussed this lesson Ava was pleased that I had noticed that there were differences. She explained that she had been trying to vary the length of time she gave to each activity depending on how she thought the

pupils were responding. Thinking about the changes she felt she needed to make had been quite challenging. She had had to abandon her usual tried-and-tested lesson planning where each activity had an allotted time. She said, 'It's made me stop and think. It's a bit strange in a way. I feel I've moved backwards to when I was first teaching and had to write an assessment of each lesson in terms of explaining any gaps between what I'd planned and what actually happened'. She went on to explain that she believed the programme of learning activities the Department used was excellent, as were the visual aids they made and shared, but she now realised that perhaps she had been resting on her laurels somewhat, and had been more focused on covering all the work than in ensuring that the pupils were being allowed to absorb it sufficiently. Ava reiterated that after our first conversation she had felt really good about her teaching. She had felt motivated and had started to re-think the few areas that she identified as needing improving, such as the balance of time for listening and watching. She had thought she would quickly come up with a different pattern of timings to adopt. In practice she had found herself feeling a little less confident and 'a bit uncertain and watchful'.

** (I was able to reassure Ava that this perceived drop in competence had been apparent in the performance of other teachers when they had started to try to introduce new behaviours, and that it was a positive indication that self-evaluation and learning was taking place.)*

She had talked about it with her husband and, as a result, they had watched the video together. He had been most impressed with how she managed the lesson and commented on how involved she was all the time. Ava remembered that I had said the same thing, and that I had also asked whether most lessons followed the same format. She confided that she had been turning these issues over in her mind and had started to talk about them with the members of her Department, as a way of them setting them all thinking about their teaching in the context of balance of teacher/pupil involvement.

As we discussed possible causes for Ava's feeling slightly less confident,

Ava said she realised that her own liking to be actively involved and to be orchestrating the activities from the front had, to an extent, dictated how long she allowed for paired work. She wondered whether her wanting to be in charge and 'performing' for most of the time stemmed from her idea of what made a successful teacher. She agreed that she planned each lesson well, and knew precisely how and where it fitted into the overall scheme of work. Nevertheless she tended to follow the same pattern of events in each lesson because it worked for her. This was not a comfortable realisation for her. We went on to re-examine the positive effects of her style of teaching, and a factor that emerged was that, in each week, Ava often delivered a lesson more than once, sometimes as many as three times, to parallel classes. We arrived at some interesting questions. Had Ava perhaps developed her highly-interactive, high-input teaching style as a way of keeping herself interested when repeating the same lesson? How could she find other means of sustaining her own interest? Was she differentiating sufficiently for the different ability levels within and between the classes?

Commentary

We agreed to continue our conversation when next we could arrange a time. Ava said she was encouraging the members of her Department to ask for feedback from me if they were not in Group 1 or 2. She had told them all to ask for a copy of their video, if they felt happy about sharing it, and had said she would provide the blank tapes from the Department's resources. She felt there would be lots of useful ideas for discussion and examples of good practice for sharing.

As a result of these conversations Ava continued to share her concerns about her management of the Department, her teaching and her relationship with the Head. I discovered that although she was held in such high esteem by her colleagues, and was very popular with pupils, Ava was quite lonely and often privately dispirited.

Response to Final Questionnaire

When I examined Ava's responses to the final questionnaire I found she felt she had been somewhat affected by the presence of the camera

because the room was small and felt cramped because she could see the camera all the time. She was aware of my presence because she looked towards me at times. She considered that the pupils were hardly affected at all, and behaved much the same as usual, apart from a little interest at the beginning.

She had watched the video more than once, alone, with me and with her husband. Ava wrote that 'It would be useful to share within the Department and for the school to show a style of teaching, and to show new teachers how we teach in the Department'.

From watching the video, Ava reported, she had learnt that she needed to lose a bit of weight, that she was encouraging and smiled a lot. She saw that she worked hard and perhaps should set aside more time for paired and group work. She had seen that the class had 'times of playing about' that she formerly had missed.

The learning about herself that she had gained from our conversation Ava described as 'I knew I had to make a decision'. About her teaching she had learned that she delivered varied, well-presented, lively lessons and that some of the pupils appeared to try harder in her lessons than they did in others where they were sometimes disruptive.

Before the research project her attitude to appraisal had been that it might be useful to her and the Department and preparation for the future. After the research project she said she thought it was a good thing if it was positive and detailed like this.

As a result of taking part in the research project Ava wrote, 'I have tried to make more activities that need active involvement, I've applied for a job!'

C.S.H.L. GRID - Ava

RAW GRID WITH VERBAL LABELS

ELEMENTS

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3

		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9		
MORE ACTIVE	C1	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	C1	PASSIVE STATE
GENERATES RESPONSE	C2	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	C2	DOES NOT STIMULATE
DETERMINED BY ME	C3	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	C3	GROUP CONCERNS
SATISFIED WITH ORGANISATION	C4	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	3	C4	NOT SATISFIED
STRUCTURED USE OF LANGUAGE	C5	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	C5	READING SKILL
TOOLS I USE	C6	1	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	C6	INSTINCTIVE RESPONSE

* * * * * PACE SETTING
 * * * * * KELLY
 * * * * * HOME ADVERTS
 * * * * * GROUP WORK
 * * * * * PAIRS CARDS
 * * * * * LISTENING
 * * * * * GRID OF SYMBOLS
 * * * * * FLASHCARDS
 * * * * * VIDEO SEQUENCE

SPACED FOCUSED GRID

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1 -		ELEMENTS							CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3 -	
		E	E	E	E	E	EEE	E		
		4	1	2	5	9	836	7		

DETERMINED BY ME	C3	* 1	1	1	1	1	111	3	* C3	GROUP CONCERNS

STRUCTURED USE OF LANGUAGE	C5	* 1	3	3	1	1	111	1	* C5	READING SKILL

MORE ACTIVE	C1	* 3	3	1	1	1	111	1	* C1	PASSIVE STATE
GENERATES RESPONSE	C2	* 3	3	1	1	1	111	1	* C2	DOES NOT STIMULATE

INSTINCTIVE RESPONSE	RC6	* 3	3	3	3	1	111	1	* RC6	TOOLS I USE

SATISFIED WITH ORGANISATION	C4	* 3	1	1	3	3	111	1	* C4	NOT SATISFIED

* * * * *										
* * * * *HOME ADVERTS										
* * * * *										
* * * * *GROUP WORK										
* * * * *										
* * * * *GRID OF SYMBOLS										
* * * * *										
* * * * *KELLY										
* * * * *										
* * * * *PACE SETTING										
* * * * *										
* * * * *PAIRS CARDS										
* * * * *										
* * * * *FLASHCARDS										
* * * * *										
* * * * *VIDEO SEQUENCE										
* * * * *										
* * * * *LISTENING										

Cerys G1D

The Context

Cerys was a lively, friendly, popular young Science teacher who had been at Woodside only a short time. She always appeared cheerful, energetic and pleased with life, but conversation revealed that while she was happy with her teaching and her relationships with pupils, she was angry and frustrated about several things in the department.

The First Lesson

This lesson took place in a laboratory and was part of a unit on different states of matter, in this case, water. The mixed class of pupils appeared to enjoy the lesson which was practically based, with several activity changes. There was a balanced structure of group, individual and whole class activities, with plenty of lively demonstrations involving the pupils. The changes in activity, which often involved moving stools and carrying apparatus, were managed skilfully. Cerys appeared confident in her subject and was eager to share her knowledge and interest. She appeared to like the pupils, knew all of them by name, and wanted them to learn and enjoy Science. She tried to make the activities relevant to the pupils' experience by the kinds of examples she mentioned.

The Learning Conversation

When I asked Cerys how she thought the lesson had gone, she said she thought that, like much of her teaching, she achieved quite a good result despite the difficulties with which she had to cope. She mentioned several areas where she felt aggrieved: insufficient and unreliable technical support; insufficient apparatus; too much responsibility too soon; lack of good departmental management of both curriculum and staff; lack of recognition for her support of a failing colleague; and an unwillingness by the Head of Department to tackle the problem of the resulting extra workload. After we

had registered and discussed these issues briefly I asked her the three questions;

1. Why did you agree to take part in the project?

'I have been videoed before and feel enthusiastic about my teaching.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I'm a good teacher. My college course didn't really prepare me for what it's really like. I was born a good teacher, probably from the contact with my large family and its stable values and also I did lots of work with kids before college.'

3. How do you see yourself in the future?

'I am ambitious and generally happy, but I feel frustrated because I work hard and have not received a point when someone else who doesn't do her job has got one. I want to be Head of Year or Head of Department.'

We examined the video-recording of the lesson, and Cerys quickly identified the following elements as representative of her teaching:

- E1 Talking about late arrival**
- E2 Writing down experiment**
- E3 Children arriving**
- E4 Mrs Doe's interruption**
- E5 Explaining misconception about cloud**
- E6 Re-cap on thermometers**
- E7 Angela showing soya bean**
- E8 Choosing helpers**
- E9 Helping Graham with writing**
- E10 Giving out worksheets**
- E11 Talking to Graham**

The first construct was generated by differentiating between the first

three elements. Cerys placed together E1, talking about late arrival and E3, children arriving, as *circumstances beyond my control*. She explained what this construct pole meant to her. While the pupils were often a few minutes late, on this particular day they straggled in twelve minutes late. They explained that they had been late getting out of Games. Cerys asked if the PE staff had sent her an apology and said she would discuss the matter with them later. She felt so frustrated with the pupils' late arrival that she had spent precious lesson time talking to them about it. Their tardiness and the lack of concern by other teachers was very irritating because, as usual, she had planned her lesson carefully, was well-prepared and waiting for the pupils to come in. 'Normally', Cerys said 'I like to start promptly by giving out the homework books as the pupils settle in their places. I briefly recap the last session and then immediately introduce the lesson topic'. On this occasion, she told me, she had felt particularly powerless and angry because the lesson was being video-recorded, and she wanted to demonstrate that she could teach well.

For the other pole of this first construct Cerys described E2, writing down the previous lesson's experiment, as *chose to do this*. When we had aligned all the elements only one incident, an unforeseen interruption, was added to the emergent pole so Cerys could see that very little in the lesson had not been under her control. She explained that it was very important to her to have everything well-ordered. She considered that her teacher training course had not really provided a good preparation for teaching so she had had to learn rapidly. She had found that thorough preparation enabled her to feel confident, so that she could appear relaxed and friendly.

We moved on to the next triad; E4, Mrs Doe's interruption, E5, explaining misconception about cloud and E6, re-cap on thermometers. Cerys decided that the first two of these incidents, while very different, had both been *spur of the moment* while the other, E6, had been *preplanned*. We then aligned the other elements. Cerys reported that watching the video had enabled her to see that she appeared to deal with unplanned incidents calmly and efficiently. In particular, the unexpected appearance of a parent, Mrs Doe, had startled her and made her anxious as she had no idea why she had come, or how she had managed to get up to the first floor during the school day, unaccompanied. She was surprised and pleased to see and hear

that her anxiety had not shown, that she had quickly and calmly set a task from the worksheet, dealt with the problem in the corridor and returned to the laboratory with no apparent disruption to the lesson.

* (*I was able to reassure Cerys that the pupils had not picked up her anxiety at all but had just got on with the task. This was a good example of an incident where the feelings and thoughts that a teacher reported he or she had been experiencing were very different from those presented.*)

Cerys explained what she meant by E5, the misconception about clouds. As she was walking round the class talking about the water cycle, she had suddenly remembered her own childhood misconception about clouds, and realised that she was assuming that the pupils understood about clouds whereas some of them probably had their own wrong ideas. She decided she would give a quick question and explanation session to make sure that there were no misconceptions. She told the class that, as a child, she had thought clouds were big water-filled plastic bags into which someone stuck a pin to make it rain. From the way they had responded, by not finding her idea particularly strange, she decided that they had not had a particularly clear understanding of water vapour and she was glad she had covered it.

Construct 3 was generated from E7, Angela showing soya bean, E8, choosing helpers and E9, helping Graham with writing. Cerys described E7 and E9 as *giving special attention*. These were times when she quietly talked to pupils to help or to show detailed interest. She explained that Angela had brought in an article on the soya bean. Cerys debated showing it to the whole class but decided it would break the continuity of the lesson. Graham needed help to focus his attention but hated to be singled out so Cerys felt she had to be very discreet in giving assistance.

E8, choosing helpers, was explained as *a strategy which gives quieter management*, which she used when she had pupils clustered round her for experiments and demonstrations. Cerys felt that, because the pupils knew there was a good chance of being chosen to be actively involved, their movement from desks to group was easier and quicker. They knew that she

was fair. She explained that she always thought carefully about how she could involve as many children as possible, even if only by holding things. The pupils stayed interested so she had far less trouble. When we aligned all the elements Cerys said she was reassured to see that there was a balance between strategies for quietly managing the whole class and giving individual attention in different ways.

The next triad to be examined was made up of E1, talking about late arrival, E10, giving out worksheets and E11, talking to Graham. Cerys quickly placed the last two together, defining them as *giving supportive help*. She had planned the worksheets as an aid to children's learning by summarising a similar experiment to the one they had done, providing a diagram of the water cycle and setting some tasks they would enjoy doing. She frequently checked that Graham was coping.

Although we had earlier talked about the pupils' late arrival in some detail Cerys now said she saw this incident as being a *disciplinary act*. Although she knew that it was not always their fault that they were late, as on this occasion, they did often dawdle and needed a reminder occasionally. We then discussed the incident more closely. I pointed out she had hardly raised her voice and had not really seemed angry at all, but had made her point quite briefly. Cerys said she tried to make her lessons friendly and busy and didn't want to be too heavy-handed but perhaps she was not being forceful enough. We looked again at the first few minutes and Cerys re-evaluated the response from the pupils to her reprimand. She decided that she did need to be a little more forceful when it was really important to convey her message. As we examined the other elements she placed most of them on the positive pole, and only termed three others, including Mrs Doe's interruption, as disciplinary acts. Cerys said she could understand how, by planning well, changing activities, involving pupils and using encouragement, she was trying to prevent difficult situations arising. She realised that she believed that a good lesson should not include any 'telling off', but run smoothly as the teacher had planned.

Construct 5 was defined by looking at E3, children arriving, E5, explaining misconception and E7, Angela showing soya bean. Cerys quickly placed E3 and E7 together *as dealing with materials*. She explained that as

the class arrived she dealt with issuing their books and checking missing homework. She had dealt with the soya bean material quietly, but had taken it from Angela and would use it later. E5 she described as *oral communication*. The video-recording showed that Cerys communicated very effectively with the pupils both individually and as a whole. She liked to have the attention of the whole class and, even when they were working, she walked round speaking to individuals very pleasantly. She had been very surprised when she saw how frequently she 'shushed' them before she spoke, but was pleased to see that her enthusiasm for her subject came across.

The next construct, C6, emerged from looking at E2, E6 and E9. Cerys was *satisfied with* E2, writing down experiment and E6, re-cap on thermometers but thought there was *room for improvement* with E9, helping Graham with writing, both on his part and on hers. Graham needed help constantly. She tried to keep him up with the others, but as she was talking she now realised that perhaps different measures were needed. She wondered how he fared in other lessons, where allowances might not be made for him. She would make enquiries and talk to Elizabeth Edmorton, the Special Needs teacher and the Head of Year about him.

When we had aligned all the elements Cerys agreed that she was satisfied with how she had dealt with almost all of the incidents but could see that Graham was causing her more concern than she realised. Another area of concern was the worksheets. She explained that she was not happy about the quality or the availability of the current worksheets so she tried to produce better ones. It was very difficult to produce new ones for this topic because: some existed; it was not supposed to be her job; and it was very difficult to get photocopying done as the new photocopier was only operable by the office staff. The Head of Department knew how she felt and agreed with her, but did not tackle the basic problem, which was that the Department was being let down by one member who did not deliver her agreed share of the workload. We discussed possible ways of getting worksheets reproduced and Cerys decided to follow these up.

In deciding Construct 7 Cerys examined E5, explaining misconception about clouds, E8, choosing helpers and E11, talking to Graham. Cerys

described E5 and E8 as *fun*, being the way she wanted her lessons to be jolly. She wanted pupils not to be put off science but to experience it in a lively way, by seeing things close up and handling materials, as to-day they had experimented with air and water-filled syringes. She tried to set practical homework tasks they could do safely at home. When we placed all the elements Cerys could see that there was quite a lot of lighthearted fun in the lesson, including encouraging Graham to write. The other elements were placed on the implicit side of Construct 7 and were deemed to be *normal routine*.

The next triad was E4, Mrs Doe's interruption, E7, Angela showing soya bean, and E10, giving out worksheets. Cerys decided that E4 and E10 were part of *the mainstream of the lesson* whereas Angela's bringing in of the soya bean material was a diversion. Cerys thought carefully before this decision but explained that she had seen that the interruption had not really diverted anyone from the main topic. When the elements were aligned Cerys examined them for some time and then referred to the first construct where she had looked at what she planned to do and what had not been under her control. By comparing these two constructs she said she felt there had not been many diversions and she had controlled those she could control.

The poles of the ninth construct were *new materials* and *reinforces past learning*. Cerys was interested to see how the elements were distributed on this axis, to gauge whether she had provided enough new material as well as linking it to the other lessons in this unit. She declared she was comfortable with the distribution of the elements.

Commentary

We had to halt our repertory grid Learning Conversation there but I felt we had examined all the elements in sufficient detail. We agreed to meet again and Cerys said she felt better about a lot of things. Her own image of herself as a competent class teacher had been confirmed, and she felt justified in her view that she was doing a good job in difficult circumstances. Areas that could be better would not be difficult to work on, she thought, and she had enjoyed talking about Science and the pupils. She

was looking forward to the next lesson to be observed as it would be in the next unit on a different topic, The Senses. She told me she had produced the scheme of work for this topic although it should have been done by someone else.

Cerys's lesson was well-organised and briskly delivered, but the most effective element was her enthusiasm for getting the material across in a lively way. She wanted the pupils to learn by experiencing, and thinking as well as by being told.

When we examined her SPACEd FOCUSed repertory grid Cerys was intrigued to see how the elements had clustered and particularly how one element E9, helping Graham's writing had shown up as 'all ones'. She looked closely at how E4, Mrs Doe's interruption was aligned but did not offer any comment. Cerys described the cluster E7, Angela showing soya bean, E5, explaining misconception about cloud and E9, helping Graham with writing as exemplifying the kinds of instinctive decisions she made as she went round the class. She said this cluster showed the free-flowing interactions that she could have if the whole class was occupied.

The Second Lesson

This lesson was part of a unit on The Senses. Cerys began by drawing attention to some excellent explorations done for homework. She quickly recapped on the work covered so far and then introduced activities designed to enquire into hearing, including sound waves and the physiology of the ear. The pupils were encouraged to make sounds in a variety of ways and to closely observe and listen. They attempted to play a tune on bottles of water, and competed to hold a note longest on a tuning fork. As with the first lesson observed, Cerys's enthusiasm was transmitted to the pupils. She set them group tasks and asked stimulating questions, as she circulated. She involved them in demonstrations and the lesson ended with quieter writing and labelling activities on a worksheet.

The Learning Conversation continued....

Cerys said she was pleased with how the lesson had gone. It had been

smooth and enjoyable and she had covered all the work she had planned. She felt one group of boys had been a bit silly, waving at the camera, but it was really only one showing off. I explained that because she moved around a lot and the lab was large I had to move the microphone at times and so the pupils became more aware of my presence than normal. It had been quite surprising since by this stage the pupils took no notice of the camera, but there had been a lot of movement from the front bench to the demonstrations at the side. It was a minor incident in an excellent lesson but Cerys was most apologetic and concerned.

We looked at the video together and discussed the pupils' positive reactions to the activities. Cerys was surprised to see that she was still saying 'Shush' a great deal when she thought she had not been saying it as much. We discussed whether the pupils did quieten, and Cerys agreed that they did, so that as a signal for attention it was working, although she had to say it a few times. Cerys decided it was a habit that would have to go, as she thought it would grow until she was saying it all the time. She decided to experiment with ways of getting attention quickly without always saying the same thing. I pointed out that she had no problem with getting their attention now, but could 'train' them to respond even more quickly, which was a good thing in a lab.

Although Cerys agreed that the lesson was a success she looked for, and brought up for examination, every instance where the pupils were not on task, such as the boy waving at the camera and two girls who were talking at one point when they should have been writing.

** (This tendency to choose negative aspects of a lesson is common. Very often, when asked how they think the lesson they have just delivered had gone, teachers itemise all the incidents that did not go according to plan. In this research project, because of this tendency to focus on negative aspects, I felt it was important not to provide a copy of a video unless we had together examined all the effective parts of a lesson.)*

I drew her attention to how often she smiled, and the degree of

attention she gave all through the lesson, and we talked again about the constructs on her repertory grid dealing with the balance of control. There had been no unforeseen incidents in this lesson, Cerys had already said it had gone smoothly yet she seemed less satisfied than she had with the previous lesson. When I pointed this out to her she said, 'Oh I know I can teach well but now I can see what works and where the gaps are, I want to make sure that there is no time wasted. We did not finish the syllabus last term. This term it's new units and I want to complete the work, so I'm looking for spaces and whether I could set more to be done, but really I think there isn't much time wasted'.

Talking about time-wasting reminded Cerys of the Departmental difficulties. She reported the progress she had made in dealing with some of her problems. After the repertory grid Learning Conversation, she had felt sure she was right about the quality of the contribution she was making to the running of the Department. She had taken my advice and had written down what she considered to be all the extras she had taken on. Instead of seething and being abrupt as was usual in Department meetings she had asked for a meeting with the Head of Department. They had had a long conversation when she had managed to tell him calmly about her frustrations, and to present her list. She said she knew he was already aware of her feelings because she 'banged about and moaned' but our discussion had helped her see that she had to formally register her dissatisfaction. He had listened and explained the constraints he was under and what he was trying to do about the situation. He told her of proposed changes and that her considerable efforts had been noted and reported to the Head. She felt much happier in some ways but knew that some classes were still not being taught Science well and that upset her. We agreed to continue conversations so Cerys could report her progress on the speeding up of getting attention in class.

** (Cerys's resolve in going to see the Head of Science was an example of decision-making and action which occurred after a repertory grid Learning Conversation. Although the main focus had been Cerys's teaching, we had discussed her concerns, and explored solutions, some of which Cerys had acted upon.)*

C.S.H.L. GRID - CerysRAW GRID WITH VERBAL LABELS
ELEMENTS

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3

		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11		
BEYOND MY CONTROL	C1	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	C1	CHOSE TO DO THIS
SPUR OF THE MOMENT	C2	1	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	3	C2	PRE-PLANNER
GIVING SPECIAL ATTENTION	C3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	C3	GIVES QUIETER MANAGEMENT
SUPPORTIVE HELP	C4	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	C4	DISCIPLINARY ACT
DEALING WITH MATERIALS	C5	3	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	C5	ORAL COMMUNICATION
SATISFIED WITH	C6	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	C6	ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT
FUN	C7	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	C7	NORMAL ROUTINE
MAINSTREAM OF LESSON	C8	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	1	C8	DIVERSIONS
NEW MATERIAL	C9	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	3	C9	NEW MATERIAL
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		TALKING TO GRAHAM
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		GIVING OUT WORKSHEETS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		HELPING GRAHAM'S WRITING
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		CHOOSING HELPERS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		ANGELA SHOWING SOYA BEAN
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		RE-CAP ON THERMOMETERS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		EXPLAINING MISCONCEPTION
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		MRS DOE'S INTERRUPTION
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		CHILDREN ARRIVING
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		WRITING UP EXPERIMENT
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		TALKING ABOUT LATE ARRIVAL

SPACED FOCUSSED GRID

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1 -		ELEMENTS									CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3 -	
		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E		
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	
		4	1	3	2	8	6	7	5	9	01	

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT	RC6	* 3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	11	* RC6 SATISFIED WITH
ORAL COMMUNICATION	RC5	* 1	1	3	3	3	1	3	1	1	11	* RC5 DEALING WITH MATERIALS
GIVING SPECIAL ATTENTION	C3	* 1	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	11	* C3 GIVES QUIETER MANAGEMENT
SUPPORTIVE HELP	C4	* 3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	11	* C4 DISCIPLINARY ACT
CHOSE TO DO THIS	RC1	* 3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	* RC1 BEYOND MY CONTROL
FUN	C7	* 3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	33	* C7 NORMAL ROUTINE
REINFORCES PAST LEARNING	C9	* 1	1	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	33	* C9 NEW MATERIAL
SPUR OF THE MOMENT	C2	* 1	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	33	* C2 PRE-PLANNED
DIVERSIONS	RC8	* 3	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	1	33	* RC8 MAINSTREAM OF LESSON

		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**	**TALKING TO GRAHAM
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*GIVING OUT WORKSHEETS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*HELPING GRAHAM'S WRITING
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*EXPLAINING MISCONCEPTION
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*ANGELA SHOWING SOYA BEAN
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*RE-CAP ON THERMOMETERS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*CHOOSING HELPERS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*WRITING EXPERIMENT
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*CHILDREN ARRIVIVNG
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*TALKING ABOUT LATE ARRIVAL
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*MRS DOE'S INTERRUPTION

Sian G1E

The Context

Sian was regarded as a popular and successful member of staff - a valuable member of the English Department and newly-appointed as a Head of Year. She appeared confident, efficient, cheerful and competent, very interested in trying new things and ambitious. The English Department's philosophy was to teach English Language through the medium of Literature. All the English lessons I observed were lively and stimulating, and Sian was just one of a dedicated group. Sian said she enjoyed the English Department's teaching philosophy and felt her teaching had changed for the better since they had introduced this way of working.

The First Lesson

The pupils, a mixed class of third years, were studying 'Far from the Madding Crowd'. There was work prepared on the board in the form of a set of questions. The emphasis was on putting themselves in other people's places. The questions encouraged the pupils to consider several aspects of the novel. They were asked to find facts about characters and then enlarge on them. Then they were asked to consider how Hardy had written a particular chapter, and then to imagine what might happen next. In this way they had looked at characterisation, style and plot.

Sian had a jolly, humorous approach. She was encouraging, interested and appeared to have high expectations that the pupils could do the tasks and would do them well. The classroom showed evidence of lively displays with display boards allocated to work from each year. The presentation was good and showed a range of interesting topics.

Sian went from group to group, sitting down among them, listening and making suggestions. Most of the groups talked freely to her and animated discussions took place. In other groups, she spent more time explaining what was required of them and offering ways of thinking about the task. She was very relaxed, positive and smiled and teased gently. Sian

transmitted her confidence that they could do the work. She spent a long time talking to one girl who did not appear to be responding.

For homework, they were set the task of researching about Victorian Valentines and making one.

The Learning Conversation

After the lesson I asked Sian how she thought it had gone. She said she was pleased on the whole because the pupils had not 'played up' and some good work had been achieved. I congratulated her on the good working atmosphere she had maintained. I mentioned to Sian my thoughts about the Valentines. I said, 'It is interesting that your only instruction to the class was to make a Valentine. When I was teaching, I would have felt it necessary to describe one or show one or discuss what a Victorian valentine was like in greater detail. Can you just leave it to them like that?' She said, 'Yes, they have a good design background and are accustomed to making things. Oh, they will do it okay, no bother'.

** (I had been startled when Sian set this task with what seemed to me to be so very little explanation. When I thought about it, I remembered that earlier another teacher, Allicia, GLA, had suggested, almost casually, that her pupils could frame their pieces of quilting. I was realising that the pupils in this school were given a good grounding in design, and could tackle such tasks confidently. When I wondered why I found these examples of cross-curricular practice so surprising, I realised that this had not been noticeable in the last two secondary schools where I had taught. On the contrary, curriculum areas had been much more strictly demarcated and focused. As an English teacher, I would have not felt able to set such a task without prior negotiation with the Art Department.)*

Before we watched the video of the lesson I asked her the usual opening questions:

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'Teachers are isolated. You never see yourself. It is a long time since teaching practice (19 years). No-one has looked at my teaching since then. I'd like some feedback and in-service training. Also I think research is important in helping others'.

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I don't think 'teacher' is right. I think of myself as an educator rather than a teacher. Between 8.30 and the end of the school day I see my role as a mediator between the language they have and the language of their heritage. I aim to help them come to terms with their cultural heritage – to help them enjoy this area and put it into their own work. I see English not as an isolated subject but in a much wider context'.

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I did want to be a head and use my own philosophy of education but in view of progress and promotion being limited, goals may have to be modified. I was academic - in charge of a library but now I'm a newly appointed pastoral head. Perhaps I could go into advisory work, but really I enjoy working with children'.

In starting this repertory grid Learning Conversation I adopted a different procedure in that I discussed with Sian the purpose of the conversation. Usually the purpose, decided by me, was to examine the incidents in a lesson with the aim of encouraging the teacher to identify, clarify and reflect on perceptions of their teaching performance. This purpose I believed to be implicit in the initial negotiations I had held with the volunteer teachers and to be apparent in their responses to the first questions. Having recently held interesting repertory grid Learning Conversations on other topics where the purpose had been negotiated by the teacher, I thought it would be better to make sure that the purpose was made explicit and was Sian's rather than mine. Sian decided the purpose of the conversation was to consider the question she asked herself frequently,

'How do I know I am improving this child's/children's learning?' We watched the video of the lesson together and Sian remarked how relaxed she looked and how often she smiled. She finally selected nine elements:

- E1 Sitting in on group discussions**
- E2 Hands going up**
- E3 Contact with Mia**
- E4 Group arrangements**
- E5 Mrs Davies' entry**
- E6 Question: What are you up to?**
- E7 Smiling approach**
- E8 Kick to get them going**
- E9 Dealing with Caroline**

The first three elements presented were E1, E2, and E3. E1, sitting in on group discussions, was chosen because Sian saw this as being fundamental to how she managed the learning. E2, hands going up, Sian said she often asked the pupils to put up their hands if they knew what they had to do, rather than asking those who did not. It was her way of checking and she noted who had not put up their hand or had done so slowly and made sure she went to them. Although she knew who was likely to be hesitant, she liked to check as a way of gauging whether she had pitched the tasks at the right level.

When explaining E3, contact with Mia, Sian explained that the video had revealed to her just how long a time she had spent with one group, talking largely to this girl. Mia had recently come from New Zealand, and Sian told me that she was making a conscious effort to help her integrate. She looked on Mia as a challenge. Mia had come with fearful anticipation of a rigid education system and Sian said she wanted to change her views so she would leave with positive educational experiences. There was another reason, Sian related, for trying to ensure that Mia's experience of an English school was welcoming and developmental. She recounted she had felt ashamed that she had not paid sufficient attention to a former pupil, now returned to France, who had been unhappy during her stay. In fact, she felt that the school as a whole did not do enough to help visiting pupils settle and to benefit fully from their stay. She explained that there were usually a

few of these pupils each year whose parents were over here on short-term contracts with British Aerospace. After the initial arrangements had been made to put them in appropriate groups, they were largely left to fend for themselves. Everyone was notified of their presence but there were no guidelines laid down. It was not anyone's specific responsibility to oversee their adjustment and progress. At present, she considered the situation was casual and hit-and-miss. It needed to be more formalised and perhaps it could be arranged that someone was given overall responsibility for all of them, or that the Head of the Year they were in could be responsible in a more defined way.

As a new Head of Year, Sian said she had the opportunity to introduce discussion about the best way forward for any pupil who joined the third year and intended to do so. She also decided to bring it up at Heads of Year meeting, although she had to be careful not to seem too pushy.

** (I have included Sian's response to her selection of E3, contact with Mia, in detail because it is an example of how seeing and explaining an incident relating to one child provided the opportunity to articulate the immediate significance of that incident, and also to put it in a wider context of personal and school issues, even sometimes, as in this case, to instigate action for change.)*

After discussing these three elements Sian placed E1, sitting in on group discussions and E3, contact with Mia together as the explicit pole. She said, 'I have high expectations that they will work well, but *they need me to ease the way and encourage them.*' E2, hands going up, the other pole of the construct was *checking pupils' confidence with the task in hand.* The alignment of elements along the construct was quickly done until we came to E9, dealing with Caroline. This did not fit in, according to Sian, so we termed it 'not applicable'.

For the second construct, C2, we examined E4, group arrangements, E5, Mrs Davies' entry, and E6, question: What are you up to? Sian quickly put E4, group arrangements on one side and said it related to *methodology, a*

way of achieving learning atmosphere. When talking about E5, Mrs Davies' entry, Sian reported that this rude interruption had really unsettled her at the time, but seeing it again had given her the chance to review it.

* (Mrs Davies - the school administrator - was a very temperamental person. Pupils and teachers approached her with trepidation. On this occasion she had come in very abruptly. She had hardly acknowledged Sian's presence but demanded some information from the pupils. She was obviously very cross and flustered. Sian had dealt with the situation very calmly and humorously but Mrs Davies had not taken the cue, and had, as Sian described it, 'flown off the handle'.)

Sian felt her management of the situation had perhaps been too tame, but I pointed out that the good working atmosphere, disturbed by Mrs Davies' interruption, had soon been restored because Sian had not reacted angrily. Sian said she realised that she was almost instinctively creating the proper atmosphere for learning. It was part of her philosophy as an educator.

E6, question: What are you up to? was an incident where Sian had called across the classroom to a group, who were disputing, to check which part of the list of tasks they had reached. She asked the question in a very friendly way, without any censure, but it was very effective in re-focusing their attention on their work. Sian placed this element next to E5, Mrs Davies' entry and after some thought described them as *reflects my teaching philosophy*. When we aligned the other elements Sian placed all of them on this pole. She remarked that it was pleasing to see that there was consistency in her approach.

The third construct was derived from E7, smiling approach, E8, kick to get them going and E9, dealing with Caroline. Again, Sian immediately chose one element as being different from the two others and easy to define. Sian said at first that E9, dealing with Caroline did not fit into the conversation. Then she decided to call it *an isolated disciplinary act*. She explained that she felt she had to keep a conscious check on Caroline as she was apt to be off in a day-dream. She would quietly do what she wanted to

do, which was usually to read, often not the book they were studying. On this occasion, Caroline had been reading chapters far ahead of the rest of the class, instead of completing the task. Sian explained that she was pleased that Caroline loved reading, but she wanted her to have the necessary understanding to be able to analyse structures and techniques so that, for all her life, her reading would be at a more critical and appreciative level.

On reflection, Sian said, she had not been aware of just how strongly she felt about Caroline. She tried to bring her back on task without being too forceful but Sian said she knew that Caroline was producing the minimum amount of work to get by. Sian stated, 'I have developed ways of dealing with things without being confrontational but perhaps I am too casual and too laid back about this'. She explained that Caroline was isolated and tolerated by the pupils, but not really integrated. She had been teased a lot when she had first joined the school. The other pupils regarded her as old-fashioned in dress and attitude, but they were sometimes willing to have her in a group because she had always read the books. Sian found her annoying and intriguing and told me that Caroline read between 6-10 books a week. Caroline's mother was aware of her difficulties in school and was very supportive. She and Sian met regularly with a view to improving Caroline's attitude to work, and her mother was trying to get her to mix with her peers more outside school. Sian decided she needed to think about different strategies for dealing with Caroline. We agreed that Sian would jot down a record of Caroline's level of activity in later lessons, check how she behaved in other subjects and then have a discussion about her in a couple of weeks.

The other two elements E8, kick start to get them going and E7, smiling approach, Sian placed together and after thinking them through described them both as ways in which she was *encouraging them to learn, mediating between them and the task or the text*. When we had finished the process of aligning the elements along this construct line on the repertory grid, Sian said she could see that 'all of it is positive, E5, Mrs Davies' entry and E9, dealing with Caroline are not really normal for this class, or anytime really'.

The fourth construct, C4, was decided from examination of E2, hands going up, E4, group arrangements and E6, question: What are you up to?

Sian decided they were all connected with giving. She put E2 and E6 together and described these as examples of when she was *giving – in return she expected them to do well*. She placed E4, group arrangements on the other side and said this was a situation where she was *giving to the whole class*. After we had aligned the other elements Sian looked at the overall pattern and said she could see that she was giving of herself and trying to help them to learn all the time, as she had thought she was, but seeing it written in front of her helped her to understand how high her expectations were. She said, because she was giving in expectation of a return, she was so disappointed when they did not work for her. She had a personal investment which explained why she tried even harder to win over pupils like Caroline and Mia.

We then looked at E1, sitting in on group discussions, E3, contact with Mia, and E5, Mrs Davies' entry. Sian placed E3 on one side and said this was *largely pastoral support*. E1 and E5 were examples where she was *producing a relaxed learning situation*. When we had placed all the other elements on the dominant pole Sian explained how she felt this was really important to her. She had been teaching a long time and had developed her techniques through the years. She was happy with the way her lessons went on the whole. She had been 'sailing along', feeling confident of her approach, but she had not seen before just how 'set' she was in wanting a certain atmosphere, and how she worked at getting it almost without thinking about it. She decided to add to the construct and changed it to *determinedly producing a relaxed learning situation*.

C6 was determined by discussing E3, contact with Mia, E6, question: What are you up to? and E9, dealing with Caroline. Sian quickly put E3 and E9 together and said these were when she was *relating to pupils on a one-to-one basis*, when she had particular messages she wanted to convey. E6 was when she was *relating to a whole group* and was intending to stimulate progress. The alignment of the elements along this construct indicated that the elements Sian had selected as important in the lesson were focused on her predominant teaching method, group work. The amount of one-to-one interaction was much less and related either to disciplinary or pastoral matters.

The next triad was E2, hands going up, E5, Mrs Davies' entry and E7, smiling approach. E2 and E7 were placed together as relating to *group dynamics*. Sian declared she had been very interested in looking at the video and watching how pupils worked when she was with another group. She saw that although she moved round and spoke to every group more than once, she did become very involved in some discussions, and expected that every other group was working. She said the video had shown her that sometimes she was almost invisible to many of the pupils. While she realised that sitting down at their level had advantages and she had cultivated a climate where the pupils were accustomed to her joining and contributing to their groups, she wondered whether in her eagerness to keep things moving she was contributing too much to some groups and not keeping enough of a weather eye on the concentration of some of the others. She wondered whether, because she usually worked with the pupils in groups and it was generally successful, she had become a little complacent and rigid in her techniques.

E5, the other element in the triad, Sian called *dealing with outside influence*. We discussed Mrs Davies' impact on visitors, including parents, and agreed that her irascibility was increasing. When Sian aligned the other elements on this construct she could see that the other two instances of *dealing with an outside influence* were less traumatic than coping with Mrs Davies' visit, and more within her control.

The last construct, C8, was generated from E1, sitting in on group discussions, E4, group arrangements and E7, smiling approach. Sian described E4 as *group choice*, although she thought all three elements were related. *Group choice* referred to how Sian allowed pupils to choose work partners. She explained that they always sat in groups, chosen by themselves, and that they valued this freedom. She tried to work with the groups they opted for, although sometimes she wished she could rearrange them. She changed the size of the groups depending on the tasks but it was generally multiples of pairs or threes.

In return she expected them to work well and gain pleasure and gratification from achieving good standards. She explained that many of the pupils were from affluent families and were, in her view, materialistic. Her

aim was to encourage them to work for the pleasure in the process and in their achievement. She wanted them to learn to share and be supportive of each other's ideas and efforts, but she felt this was against the prevailing materialistic spirit of the area, if not the age.

E1, sitting in on group discussions and E7, smiling approach, were described by Sian as fundamental to her teaching. She had been pleased to see how often she smiled and how 'easy' the whole lesson had appeared. It was just the effect she wanted to create and so she called this pole of the construct the *created ethos*. All the other elements were placed on this pole. We looked at the completed repertory grid and commented on the similarity of the alignments on some of the other constructs.

Commentary

This repertory grid Learning Conversation had flowed easily and quite quickly. Sian said she had enjoyed talking about her teaching and had particularly valued our exchange about giving and receiving. She felt it had helped to put Mrs Davies' interruption into perspective. She said she had plenty to think about, particularly about her group management, as well as her relationship with Caroline and Mia.

The Second Lesson

The first part of this lesson was taken up by displaying and discussing the Valentines that the class had made. They were excellent and had obviously taken a great deal of time. The girls, particularly, had been inventive. Sian was very proud of the results and decided she would ask the Head if they could be displayed in the foyer, even though it was not the appropriate time of year.

For the rest of the lesson the pupils, in pairs, were asked to adopt a character in the book they were reading. They were to read a chapter where their chosen character played a substantial part and note down what he or she said or did. They were to agree on what kind of person they had chosen and then write an incident which could fit into the book. This should show their character behaving and speaking in an appropriate way. The task

needed to be explained more than once, and there was some disagreement about whom to choose but the pupils soon settled down and tackled the assignment. It was quite a noisy lesson, and difficult for those who needed to read quietly to do so.

Commentary

After discussing the lesson we briefly examined the raw repertory grid to remind us of the repertory grid Learning Conversation. I reminded Sian of her purpose, stated at the beginning, and asked her if the repertory grid Learning Conversation had helped her to answer her question 'How do I know I am improving this child's learning?' She said that she thought that there were two aspects to her answer. She was succeeding in encouraging and improving learning and that had been very cheering and reassuring. She was pleased with what the video had shown on the whole and could see that she had no problems with motivating nearly all the pupils. She had seen how confident and smiling she appeared and said that it was no effort to be like that most of the time. It was how she thought of herself.

However, the repertory grid Learning Conversation had made her think more about her methods and responses and her own motivation. She realised that she had gradually acquired her teaching philosophy over the last nineteen years, but particularly during the ten years she had taught at a prestigious private school. There every child had been expected to do her best. Although Sian acknowledged that she had had small classes and excellent resources, and that things were very different now, she felt that that was where she had developed her philosophy of believing in each child and striving to help him or her achieve the best possible. She felt she had been teaching for such a long time in the same way that it had become a reflex action and, while it did produce results, there were gaps she could close and areas she was thinking about, such as the balance of group and individual work, and the degree of her input.

Then we examined the SPACEd FOCUSed repertory grid. Sian's first comments were centred on how E3, contact with Mia was displayed. We moved down the elements checking the alignments. Sian said she was happy with the way it had come out and was surprised how the divisions

summed up the things we had discussed. Sian said she felt she had moved on in her efforts with Mia. She looked across the repertory grid to E5, Mrs Davies' entry and said that was the worst part of the lesson, but not of her making.

We examined the cluster in the centre that had come out aligned totally on the emergent pole. Sian remarked that all these were related to how she worked and were active and positive. She said it was interesting that the areas she wanted to do something about were isolated, and the areas she thought were successful were grouped together.

She wanted to alter the explicit pole description of C4 from *giving – in return she expected them to do well* to *giving – in return she expected each child to do well*. As we examined this change Sian said again that many of the pupils in this affluent area were very materialistic. It explained partly how she could expect them to do something like make a Valentine. They would have or would get the materials to do it without any problem, normally with parental support, if only in the form of money. Although comfortably off, many of the children were deprived in other ways, as had been the very rich children in the private school, some of whom saw their parents once a year.

In her teaching she was hoping to encourage them to gain satisfaction from what they had worked for and achieved. Some of the pupils thought you could buy anything. She wanted to counterbalance that attitude by giving them a love of literature as a way of experiencing other values. After a final scrutiny Sian said, 'The grid is as right as it's going to be'.

Sian told me she had been so pleased with our repertory grid Learning Conversation that she had spoken to two of the people who had not joined in the research project to urge them to take part, but she could not budge them. They felt too raw and disaffected. She said 'Doing this repertory grid has made me realise I have got to make it a basis for going on again. It is too easy to slide down into the state they are in. In this school lots of things go on in a casual way and there is very little recognition and not enough praise and credit. I want a bit of credit'.

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Sian reported, that she was a little affected by the presence of the camera in that she became more self-conscious, but she was not at all affected by my presence. The pupils were not affected by the video camera and behaved the same as usual on both occasions. She looked at the video on her own and with her class. Sian wrote, 'The pupils pointed out when someone was misbehaving! Overall they seemed to think that they had performed well!' She was prepared show the video to anyone at all.

From watching the video Sian replied that she had learnt that although she thought she gave everyone equal attention, she did not. She learnt that she got very involved with a group or individual and expected everyone else to behave. Sian had realised she was, 'A natural show-off!'

She had discovered that she still enjoyed teaching and that her class, 'With one or two exceptions, accepted the responsibility for group work and even enjoyed it!'

From talking with the researcher, Sian wrote she had learnt, 'I seem to have strong views on teaching methods without consciously thinking about them,' and, 'I'm quite rigid with regard to education practice.' She had also learnt about group dynamics and her relationship with individuals.

Before she joined in the research project Sian had believed that appraisal should be a positive aid to development and that belief had not changed. As a result of taking part in the research project, Sian stated that she had set more open-ended tasks and given more time for discussion in small groups.

C.S.H.L. GRID - SianRAW GRID WITH VERBAL LABELS
ELEMENTS

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9			
THEY NEED ME	C1	1	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	2	C1	CHECKING CONFIDENCE
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY	C2	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	C2	METHODOLOGY
ENCOURAGING LEARNING	C3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	C3	ISOLATED DISCIPLINARY ACT
EXPECTATIONS	C4	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	C4	GIVING TO WHOLE CLASS
DETERMINEDLY PRODUCING RELAXED LEARNING SITUATIONS	C5	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	C5	MAINLY PASTORAL SUPPORT
RELATING ONE-TO-ONE	C6	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	C6	RELATING TO GROUP
GROUP DYNAMICS	C7	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	1	3	C7	OUTSIDE INFLUENCE
CREATED ETHOS	C8	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	C8	GROUP CHOICE
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* DEALING WITH CAROLINE
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* KICK TO GET THEM GOING
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* SMILING APPROACH
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* Q. WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* MRS DAVIES' ENTRY
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* GROUP ARRANGEMENTS
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* CONTACT WITH MIA
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* HANDS GOING UP
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* SITTING IN ON DISCUSSIONS

Figure 15b

C.S.H.L. GRID -- Sian

SPACED FOCUSED GRID

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1 -		ELEMENTS							CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3 -	
		E	E	EEE	E	E	E	E		
		3	4	816	7	2	9	5		

THEY NEED ME	C1	* 1	1	111	3	3	2	3	* C1	CHECKING PUPIL CONFIDENCE

ISOLATED DISCIPLINARY ACT	C3	* 1	1	111	1	1	3	3	* C3	ENCOURAGING LEARNING

EXPECTATIONS	C4	* 1	3	111	1	1	3	1	* C4	GIVING TO WHOLE CLASS

GROUP CHOICE	C8	* 1	3	111	1	1	1	1	* C8	CREATED ETHOS

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY	C2	* 3	3	111	1	1	1	1	* C2	METHODOLOGY

PASTORAL SUPPORT	C5	* 3	1	111	1	1	1	1	* C5	RELAXED LEARNING SITUATION

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE	C7	* 3	1	111	1	1	1	3	* C7	GROUP DYNAMICS

ONE TO ONE	RC6	* 3	1	111	1	3	3	1	* RC6	RELATING TO GROUP

* * * * *										
* * * * * *MRS DAVIES' ENTRY										
* * * * * *DEALING WITH CAROLINE										
* * * * * *HANDS GOING UP										
* * * * * *SMILING APPROACH										
* * * * * *QUESTION-WHAT ARE YOU UP TO										
* * * * * **SITTING IN DISCUSSION										
* * * * * *KICK TO GET THEM GOING										
* * * * * *GROUP ARRANGEMENTS										
* * * * * *CONTACT WITH MIA										

Esther G1F

The Context

This teacher was a probationary teacher with a degree in statistics who had undertaken a one-year post graduate teacher training course at the Roehampton Institute. At the start of her probationary year she had suffered a serious eye infection which had caused concern, since it would not respond to treatment. She had had to make numerous visits to specialists which meant she had lost time with her classes, which worried both her and the school, since if it was felt she had missed too much teaching time her probationary period would have to be extended. At the time of the research interview she was optimistic that the new drops she had recently been given would clear up the infection. She was also living away from home and learning to cope with independent living for the first time. Despite all the difficulties, the deputy head said she appeared to be making good progress.

In the staff room she appeared to be rather tentative and quiet, but there was no sign of hesitation in her dealings with pupils. The subject she taught was Maths but she also taught some PE lessons. She presented a determined, serious, if not severe, demeanour. The following record of the first observed lesson illustrates her teaching style.

The First Lesson

At the beginning of the lesson the pupils strolled in, chatting quite noisily and settled themselves in the desks in what were obviously their accustomed places, in fours, facing inwards. Esther began,

'Right, get your things out!'

The class immediately quietened. Many pupils had already taken out their books, and there was a prepared sheet with examples on which they had previously been working. The teacher introduced the lesson's topic right away, by taking up the worksheet and saying,

' Right! It says, "The textbook states that for any right-angled triangle you can label it in a certain way". Can anyone suggest what you can label the hypotenuse? How do you think we decide which is the opposite side? What does adjacent mean?'

She drew a triangle on the board as an example, and demonstrated the answers she received from the pupils. They appeared to understand the questions and answered quite readily.

' First thing, we need to be able to label our triangle. Open your exercise book, page 302, exercise 4 a,b,c,..'

The instructions were given in a strong, clear voice, to which all the class appeared to respond. She checked that they all understood the task, and then set a time limit of three to four minutes for completion. The pupils settled to the task and it appeared there was hardly any conversation that was not connected with the work. Esther then said,

' While you're doing that I'll mark some of your books.'

She sat at her desk and called out names to come up with their books to be marked. She marked three books, and then looked round the class. When she saw that one boy was not concentrating, she asked him if he had finished. Then she directed the class to begin the next exercise if they had finished. Next, she got up and began to circulate round the groups of pupils, looking at their work, but making no comment.

'Right, we'll stop there.'

The pupils were then asked for the answers to the first exercise. Esther spread her attention to all parts of the class, and chose boys and girls to answer equally. She asked,

'Everybody got them right? Nobody made any terrible mistakes? No? Okay'.

The next part of the lesson was concerned with the next part of the worksheet. She read out,

‘ “A textbook states that for any right-angled triangle the tangent of the angle A is equal to the ratio length of the opposite side over the length of the adjacent side. Draw three right-angled triangles, where $A = 30$ degrees. Investigate this statement”. So what are we going to do?’

Ways of going about the task were drawn from the class, not by telling but by asking questions. The only direct instruction was to make the triangles ‘nice and big’ to make working on them easier. Calculators were distributed, some from another class, and some books of tables given out. This caused some commotion but when all the pupils were eventually equipped the class settled to work on the problems on the worksheet. Esther marked two more books and then started to walk round the class. She helped one pupil to use tables, checked the progress generally and then marked another book. While doing this she called to a girl at the back of the class, while hardly appearing to look up. There was by now more talk among the pupils about their own concerns as their concentration seemed to wane, but the noise level did not rise unduly.

Esther then asked the pupils about their access to a calculator, and urged those without their own to try to borrow one while this topic was being studied. The pupils were then asked what conclusion they had reached as a result of working on the problems. She called all the class to order by telling them to stop writing and pay attention. They became quiet instantly. She restated the initial thesis and asked them to write their conclusion. Homework was set, and the topic for the next lesson indicated. The calculators and books were collected quickly, and the numbers checked.

All through the lesson Esther had appeared anxious to control the children and had taken a very stern, authoritarian line with them. However, Esther was just about to bring the lesson to a close when a pupil handed her a press cutting about one of the girls in the class who had been chosen for a county team. The girl concerned was very bashful and pleaded for the article not to be read aloud, but Esther teased her and read it to the

class. The class were all very interested in the teacher's response and it was obvious that in her pastoral role as class tutor she had a far less formal relationship than the one she had demonstrated in the lesson. There was a good deal of friendly banter and Esther asked if she could keep the cutting to show the Head of Year. She then brought the pupils to order and let them go, group by group, as they were ready.

The Learning Conversation

Esther's replies to the three initial questions were:

1. Why did you agree to take part in the project?

'It seemed a worthwhile thing to do. I've no objection to being videoed.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I'm not very ambitious. I'll teach until I get married and have children. I'm not interested in becoming a head of Department.'

3. How do you see yourself in the future?

'Maybe a Special Responsibility Post within the Department.'

We then watched the video of the lesson and Esther chose many incidents to comment on. She finally selected twelve, which she wanted to examine further, to be the elements in her repertory grid:

- E1 Initial settling of class**
- E2 Introduction of topic**
- E3 Setting the exercise**
- E4 Giving time allowances**
- E5 Using children's names for control and giving information**
- E6 Giving clear instructions**
- E7 Questioning pupils**
- E8 Change of voice**

- E9** **Circulating round room**
- E10** **Talking on a one-to-one basis**
- E11** **Reading about Lee**
- E12** **Controlling the orderly end of the lesson.**

The incidents spanned the whole of the lesson; from the initial settling of the class, and the introduction of the topic, to a consideration of aspects of her management of the lesson, such as allowing time limits for activities, setting of exercises, her use of voice, both when talking to the whole class and to individuals and lastly, the manner in which she ended the lesson.

The first three elements were presented on cards and Esther was asked to say how she thought or felt that two of these three elements were similar to each other, and the other different. She decided that E2, introduction of topic and E3, setting the exercise were similar in that she felt these were *satisfactory parts of the lesson*, whilst E1, initial settling of class was *an area needing stronger organisation*. She was then asked to examine the nine other elements she had chosen and to align them according to this construct. Esther said she found this very useful as she discovered that although generally she could place the elements on the *satisfactory* side she considered that E6, giving clear instructions and E4, giving time allowances should be placed with E1 as *needing stronger organisation*. She said that doing this one construct had made her realise where her vague dissatisfaction with some lessons arose, and that examining the way she had aligned the elements had enabled her to appreciate more specifically which aspects she felt were in need of improvement.

Esther was then presented with three more elements;

- E4** **Giving time allowances**
- E5** **Using children's names for control and giving information**
- E6** **Giving clear instructions**

and asked to differentiate them in the same way. Her second construct was generated by placing E4 and E6 together as *giving guidance*, while E5 was termed *checking response*. As she went on to align the other elements she could see that she appeared to give guidance more often than she checked

the pupils' response.

For her next construct, C3, Esther placed E8, change of voice and E9, circulating round room, together on one side of her repertory grid, defining them as *ways of eliciting behaviour/sharing information*. She placed E7, questioning pupils on the other side and classified this element as an *unconsciously skilled response*. She said that until she had seen herself in action she had not realised how skilfully she used questioning. The only other element she placed with E7 was E1, initial settling of class, which she had earlier defined as *needing stronger organisation*. When this was pointed out to her she said that she could see that, although the settling of the class had taken too long in her view, and often did, her initial instruction and pausing to wait for order and her use of quiet signals had been effective, although she had not consciously realised how effective they were.

The next three elements to be examined were;

- E10 Talking on a one-to-one basis
- E11 Reading about Lee
- E12 Controlling the orderly end of the lesson.

Esther decided that E11 and E12 could be paired as *gives satisfaction* and E10 she defined as *naturally good - could be developed*. The aspects that this probationary teacher decided were naturally good included her occasional varying of the tone of her voice, her use of children's names, both as a control mechanism and to gain information, her giving of instructions, her settling them down at the beginning and giving time allowances for tasks set. She said that she had not realised the degree of skill she was using in these areas but she now realised that she was, in fact, controlling the class very well and now that she was more aware of what worked, she would try to improve and develop these skills more consciously.

The fifth construct was generated from the elements E1, initial settling, E3, setting the exercise and E6, giving clear instructions. The polarities were defined as *strategies for ensuring attention* on the emergent pole and *ways*

of giving information on the implicit pole. As she aligned the elements Esther could see that she had several ways of gaining and keeping attention, and that the pupils responded well to them. She said that seeing examples of what she did in a lesson itemised across the repertory grid in this way made her appreciate more easily what she was doing to make the lesson work. She said she now saw that the smooth running of the lesson was facilitated when the pupils knew exactly what was required of them. She identified parts of the lesson where precise requirements had been given, such as the time limits and the worksheets, and those times where unrest had been noticeable, such as when there was disruption because she had not provided enough calculators or books of tables, and had had to rush to another class to borrow some.

For the next construct, C6, the elements were:

- E2 Introduction of the topic
- E4 Giving time limits
- E12 Controlling orderly end of lesson.

The elements E4 and E12 were construed as *defining limits and expectations* and the other pole was termed *stimulus for lesson*. As she aligned the other elements Esther said that she now realised how much she was controlling the structure of the lesson and that she had a very strong image of what she wanted the pupils to do. Esther felt that she was perhaps too formal and controlling, and remarked that the pupils often tried to lighten lessons and break away from what she had planned, which usually followed the same format because she felt safe and in control when she kept them working from prepared sheets. She explained that when she had first come to the school she had tried to be more open and friendly, but had had some discipline problems so she had become much more authoritarian and had subdued pupils by demonstrations of anger and punishment. Thinking about the incidents in the lesson had made her see that she was in control, she was managing them very well. She had not been fully aware that they did obey her quickly, that they appeared to respect and to want her good opinion, and they were willing to work for her.

In Construct 7, using the triad E7, E9 and E11, Esther sorted the elements

into those occasions where she was *giving individual attention* and where she was *involved with the whole class*. She felt that there were opportunities in the lesson, such as when she was marking books with the pupil by her side, when she could be more positive and personal in her response instead of just simply marking and returning. She realised how effective her circulating round the class was, since just moving towards a group made them get on better, but, whereas she used it as a check to see where they were up to and help those in difficulty, she was missing chances to comment favourably on their efforts and this would be an area she could develop.

The eighth construct was *skills to be developed* on the emergent pole, and *established good practice* on the implicit pole. The construct was achieved by examination of three elements:

- E5 Using pupils' names for control and giving information
- E6 Giving clear instructions, and
- E10 Talking on a one-to-one basis,

and placing the first two, E5 and E6 on one side and E10 on the other. It appeared to be very enlightening for Esther to assimilate that she did have many aspects of good ground rules in place and to look at where she felt she could work on the skills she had.

The final construct, C9, was arrived at by Esther's placing of E3, setting exercise and E6, giving clear instructions under the heading *input from me* and E9, circulating round the room as *making communication/access easier*. The elements divided equally between the two poles, with the structural aspects of the lesson on the emergent pole and the more personal interactions falling to the implicit pole. Esther remarked on how serious she had looked throughout the lesson and how different the atmosphere had been in the last few minutes, when she had been looking at the press cutting. After we had discussed how she had felt at those times, and also when she realised that there were not enough calculators to go round, we discussed the pupils' attitude to her in lessons and in tutor periods. Esther commented that she thought that she was probably too remote in class but it meant that work was done. She remembered a very strict teacher who had

always kept all the class hard at work, and how surprised the class had been when they had gone on a trip and the teacher had joked and sung with them. As a way of reaching a middle ground, we considered opportunities for being more relaxed without losing the control Esther had achieved.

We ended the initial repertory grid Learning Conversation here, and it was agreed that we would meet again to look at the FOCUSed repertory grid. Esther stated she had found the process of completing the repertory grid very interesting but tiring, as she had not thought about her teaching in such detail before, even when she was being trained. She said she was pleased with our conversation about her teaching. She felt relieved to hear that she was doing so well since she had only her own view so far. Although the worksheets she used had been produced by the members of her Department, she did not appear to be receiving much other help from the Maths. Department.

Commentary

Although Esther said she had valued the experience of completing a repertory grid it did not appear to be an easy undertaking for her. This was a repertory grid undertaken early in the project and, therefore, while I had only a few others on the same theme with which to compare, it seemed to require a great deal of time for this teacher to be able to articulate her decisions. She appeared to be able to align the elements quite quickly but then had much difficulty in making clear her reasoning.

When the repertory grid was FOCUSed further conversation revealed that she had been thinking about the areas of teaching that had been examined during the repertory grid Learning Conversation. She thought that the SPACEed FOCUSed repertory grid defined her teaching clearly and revealed to her her innate strengths and abilities as well as helping her to pin-point those areas which she could see needed improvement. Esther did not want to make any changes to her repertory grid but reported that, as a result of the repertory grid Learning Conversation, she had been concentrating on three things:-

- 1) trying to increase the amount of variety and enthusiasm she

put into her voice,

- 2) being ready at the door as pupils came in, and
- 3) being more positive about showing the pupils that they were making progress and letting them know when she was pleased with their work.

The Second Lesson

The second lesson which was video-recorded and observed was a very low-key lesson. It was a very sultry day and Esther and the pupils were generally tired and hot. The class came in quietly and began working on a worksheet of problems about geometrical progression, based on flower beds and garden paths. This was work continued from a previous lesson and the only instruction they were given was to carry on with the work they had been doing.

In this second lesson Esther appeared to be working automatically. The pupils were quietly and mechanically going through the worksheet. They appeared fairly well-motivated, despite the heat, although there were more private conversations than in the previous lesson. Esther did not appear as interested as before, and sat at her table most of the time. A queue formed round her table, with questions and marking, and when she had cleared this she circulated round the room, mainly just looking at work without comment and dealing with queries. She was still using the technique of answering questions with another question, encouraging the pupils to think about how to find the answer rather than simply giving them the answer. Esther appeared dispirited and far less involved than in the previous lesson, but the pupils continued to work quite quietly, if slowly, from the worksheets.

Commentary

Conversation after the lesson revealed that she was really worried on two counts; her eye condition had deteriorated and she had been referred to another specialist, and she knew that imminently she was to have a visit

from an inspector to see whether she was completing her probationary year satisfactorily. Esther reported that she had been working on the areas she had decided to develop and had seen improvement. She had felt more in control, more relaxed and she had liked the change in herself. However, she revealed that, although she knew that implementing the actions she had decided on during the repertory grid Learning Conversation definitely made management of her pupils easier, it required a little more effort and energy than she had just then. When her eye condition had grown worse she had lost ground and had reverted to her safer former pattern. She said she was sorry she had not done all she intended but would try again when she felt better.

She told me she had had a good report from Harrald, her Head of Department, although he had not actually watched her teach. (*How could he know how she taught?*) He had asked her to help with the organisation of a year group activity. While she was pleased to be trusted with the task, and did not want to refuse, she already felt very tired and dreaded extra commitment. It appeared that Esther, while not a committed career teacher, did have skills and strategies worth building on but that little was being done to support and develop her professional competence in the classroom by the school.

** (Her plight was similar to that of many probationary teachers, who are often overburdened in their first year. It is common for probationers, in their initial zeal, to take on extra duties as well as coping with a full timetable. Frequently they become 'burnt out' and disheartened (Morris 1984).)*

However, a later conversation with Esther revealed a much more heartening aspect. As she had feared, her probationary year had been extended for a term because of the time she had missed, but she had finally completed it successfully. The viral infection in her eyes was now controlled by daily medication, which was a tremendous relief. Esther now appeared much more cheerful, confident and lively in the staff room. She was much more interested in her future as a teacher. By chance there was an opportunity for her to take over the responsibility for the business

information studies, and she welcomed this change of direction, and was looking forward to following a course designed to help teachers taking over this expanding area of the curriculum. Looking back, she said her probationary year had been awful in general, but she had survived it and had learnt a great deal. Having her repertory grid Learning Conversation had helped her at a time when she was feeling down. She said she had learnt a lot about her teaching self by doing it and had registered the 'learning' in her mind but had not then been able to put it into action when she had been so worried. However, Esther said she had taken up the strategies for improvement later when her eye condition was less of a worry and was still finding them helpful. She invited me to visit her again, if there was time.

C.S.H.L. GRID - EstherRAW GRID WITH VERBAL LABELS
ELEMENTS

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3

		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	E12		
SATISFACTORY PART OF LESSON	C1	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	C1	STRONGER ORGANISATION NEED
GIVING GUIDANCE	C2	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	C2	CHECKING RESPONSE
SHARING WAYS OF INFORMATION	C3	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	C3	UNCONSCIOUS SKILLED RESPONSE
GIVES SATISFACTION	C4	3	1	3	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	1	C4	NATURALLY GOOD
ENSURING ATTENTION	C5	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	C5	GIVING INFORMATION
DEFINING LIMITS	C6	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	1	3	1	C6	STIMULUS FOR LESSON
WHOLE CLASS INVOLVEMENT	C7	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	C7	INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION
SKILLS TO DEVELOPED	C8	1	3	3	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	C8	ESTABLISHED GOOD PRACTICE
INPUT FROM ME	C9	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	C9	MAKING COMMUNICATION
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* ORDERLY END OF LESSON
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* READING ABOUT LEE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* TALKING ONE TO ONE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* CIRCULATING
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* CHANGE OF VOICE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* QUESTIONING PUPILS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* NAMING
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* GIVING TIME
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* SETTING EXERCISE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* INTRO OF TOPIC
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* INITIAL SETTLING

Figure 16b.

C.S.H.L. GRID --- Esther

SPACED FOCUSED GRID

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1 -		ELEMENTS										CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3 -		
		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E		
		1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
		0	8	1	6	4	3	2	1	5	9	7	2	

SKILLS DEVELOPED	C8	* 1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	* C8 ESTABLISHED GOOD PRACTICE
NATURALLY GOOD	RC4	* 1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	* RC4 GIVES SATISFACTION
GIVING GUIDANCE	C2	* 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	* C2 CHECKING RESPONSE
INPUT FROM ME	C9	* 3	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	* C9 MAKING ACCESS EASIER
DEFINING LIMITS	C6	* 3	3	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	* C6 STIMULUS FOR LESSON
STRONGER ORGANISATION NEED	RC1	* 3	3	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	* RC1 SATISFACTORY PART OF LESSON
UNCONSCIOUS SKILL	RC3	* 3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	* RC3 SHARING WAYS OF INFORMATION
ENSURING ATTENTION	C5	* 3	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	* C5 GIVING INFORMATION
WHOLE CLASS INVOLVEMENT	C7	* 3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	* C7 INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION

		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*ORDERLY END OF LESSON
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*QUESTIONING PUPILS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*CIRCULATING
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*NAMING
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*READING ABOUT LEE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*INTRO OF TOPIC
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*SETTING EXERCISE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*GIVING TIME
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*INITIAL SETTLING
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*CHANGE OF VOICE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*TALKING ONE TO ONE

Chris G1G

Context

In the staff room Chris appeared to be rather tense, anxious to seem cheerful and efficient, over-bright in fact. She was a member of the Science Department. She made a strong visual impact because she was very tall, over six feet, very slim and had waist-long hair. When I approached her to make arrangements to observe a lesson, she said she was eager to take part, and looking forward to the experience.

The First Lesson

This was a Science lesson with mixed-ability second year pupils. The lesson was part of a unit of work investigating changes in the state of matter. I had already seen another lesson from this unit given by another member of the Science Department. It was not taking place in the laboratory where Chris normally worked. Equipment for the demonstration of an experiment had already been set up by the technician. The children came in quite noisily and went to their places at the benches. Chris immediately called for quiet but did not make sure she had their attention. She reminded them there was a task from the text book to complete from the previous lesson. As they got on with the task Chris walked round and answered any questions. She told them very frequently where they should be up to and how long each part should take. When the time was up for the written task, Chris shouted for them to listen, and then explained how she wanted them to carry out an experiment to demonstrate the changes in water, by melting an ice-cube and heating the resulting water to produce steam.

The pupils were already grouped in twos and threes and got on with setting up the experiment with very little playing about. They appeared to be used to organising themselves. There were some initial difficulties because the equipment was not stored in the same places as in the usual lab and there was not enough of it, but the pupils accepted the delays. They collected ice-cubes, melted them in a jar and then boiled the water. Worksheets were provided and, as the experiments proceeded, the pupils were reminded to

observe closely, and note down the different kinds of bubbles which were apparent at different stages as the water came to the boil. Chris circulated and dealt with questions as they arose. She reminded the pupils about wearing goggles several times. At one stage, she told them the story of the discovery of steam power by James Watt but she told it when the pupils were busy doing the experiment so the point was largely lost.

When the experiments had been completed the pupils were called together for an explanation of an experiment with iodine that they were going to watch while Chris demonstrated. Unfortunately, the demonstration of the experiment did not work because the fume cupboard gas tap was not operative. Chris quickly arranged to show the experiment behind a safety screen but the pupils could not see the intended colour changes very well because the screen was green. The pupils were very tolerant and seemed resigned to not really seeing or understanding what was going on.

The bell went for the end of the lesson and all the apparatus and text books were still on the desks. There was a chaotic few minutes as pupils scurried to put things away, then they rushed off.

** (For the first time at Woodside I felt uneasy at the end of a lesson. In my opinion there was a disturbing lack of connection between pupils and teacher that was hard to pinpoint. Chris's behaviour was histrionic and not tuned to the pupils' responses. It seemed as though the pupils had low expectations of the lesson and were uncritically accepting of whatever was provided. The ingredients of a good lesson were there but they had not been well-organised or developed. The work did not appear to be stretching and no stimulating questions had been asked of the pupils. The significance of the experiments had not been placed in a meaningful, wider context. The work could have been achieved in half the time, despite the regular time limits. I was unsure that much of value had been taught or learnt. I felt that Chris had 'got away with it' and found myself wondering how Chris would have managed with less docile pupils. It was the first lesson I had seen*

at this school that gave grave cause for concern.)

We were unable to hold our repertory grid Learning Conversation immediately after the lesson, so we arranged to meet later in the afternoon when Chris was free. As usual I thanked Chris for allowing me to observe her, and asked how she thought the lesson had gone. She told me she thought it had gone well, apart from the iodine experiment, because she had planned it so carefully.

** (I was startled because Cerys, G1D, another member of the Science Department, had already claimed to have planned this unit in every detail. She had explained to me that the Science Department had only recently introduced a new system. It consisted of detailed units of work which, if followed in sequence, covered the whole syllabus. All of these had been issued to everyone in the Department so that, as well as knowing what to teach, everyone knew what had already been taught and what would follow. It was also designed to facilitate continuance in case of absence.)*

Commentary

Before I met Chris for our repertory grid Learning Conversation, the Deputy Head, Nerys James, called me into her room. She explained that she had waited to speak to me about Chris until after I had observed her teaching. Nerys explained that there was a difficult situation she had been trying to deal with for some time but it had not improved and now the Head wanted to start dismissal proceedings.

Nerys told me that Chris was in her second year at Woodside and her all-round poor performance was causing concern. She had joined Woodside after a successful interview in which she had claimed to be competent and willing to be responsible for implementing an important curriculum development, information technology (IT), throughout the school. Her references were excellent and she had been awarded a special responsibility allowance on the understanding that she would provide materials and training to enable staff to develop IT within their subject areas. Nerys

explained that since Chris had produced neither training nor information so far, and was not even teaching competently, this allowance was deeply resented by colleagues who felt that they were 'carrying her', and, in some cases, that they could have done a better job, given the opportunity.

As well as not fulfilling that obligation, other areas were causing concern. Every member of the Science Department had been asked, by a certain date, to re-design part of the curriculum as part of a revision of the whole Science curriculum. Everyone had completed their unit on time, except Chris. This had prevented the presentation of the revised curriculum to the Head by the deadline date. Another teacher had been asked to plan Chris's unit in a hurry. This meant that Chris had received all the units of work and had contributed nothing. Some members of staff were so cross about the situation that they were avoiding her in the staff room.

It was also claimed that her day-to-day management was disorganised, her lessons were unstimulating and she could not control the older pupils. Members of the Senior Management Team, including Nerys, the Deputy Head, and the Head of the Science Department, had been trying to support her discreetly. They had made positive suggestions, lightened her workload and had observed her in the classroom. These efforts to help had had little success. Her failure to improve was causing increasing ill-feeling among her colleagues in the Science and Maths Departments who resented having to do her work. They were also concerned about the poor quality Science teaching that her classes were experiencing.

The difficulty appeared to be that Chris thought she was managing well. I was told that twice, by tactful discussion, Chris had accepted that she needed to make improvements and targets had been agreed, only for her to say within a few days that she was not at fault, any difficulties were not of her making. Nerys said she had tried to help and had seen some progress, but it had not been sustained. I was surprised to hear that Nerys had been unsuccessful in helping Chris. Nerys was an experienced counsellor and had been trained in classroom observation as part of her involvement in the earlier Kingston Polytechnic pilot study run by Diane Montgomery.

Nerys told me she had been hoping from the first that Chris would

agree to take part in the research project. She was relieved that Chris had happened to be in **Group 1**. Nerys was trusting that the detailed analysis of her teaching with someone not from the school would help Chris, at least in one area of her failings. Nerys thought I ought to know how serious matters were for Chris.

** (I had previously overheard some grumbles about Chris in the staff room and, in another repertory grid Learning Conversation, mention had been made of someone who was not pulling their weight, but I had not realised the seriousness of the situation. As I went to meet Chris, I was uncertain how to proceed. I felt I had two options. I could proceed with a repertory grid Learning Conversation as normal (and stay within the established confines of the research project) as Chris was expecting, or I could offer the kind of remedial intervention I was used to providing to teachers in difficulty. I decided to carry on with holding the repertory grid Learning Conversation and see what happened. I felt very relieved that the video-recording would provide reliable information on which to base our discussion.)*

The Learning Conversation

I explained to Chris that I always started by asking the following questions,

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'I'm a helpful little soul. I will give raw data - you can do what you like with it.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I feel that I have gone backwards. I am a career teacher, but I have been seriously affected by the action (work to rule). I have changed schools and control is difficult when you start again. I think I assumed a higher level of intelligence in the pupils. The staff attitudes here are different too. At my last school we used to have a

good social life out of school hours but there's not much here. Four terms I have been here. I lost my confidence in the summer and became quite depressed.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I've no idea. Head of Science perhaps in a bigger school.'

** (I was surprised that Chris said she was willing to let me do anything I liked with her 'raw data'. I assured her that what teachers told me was confidential, although many of them were happy to talk openly about their conversations. Again, I was startled by her remark that she had over-estimated the level of intelligence in the pupils, after observing a lesson which I considered had been pitched too low. I also picked up that she was unhappy and had been depressed in the summer, but did not ask about that at this time because Chris's tone was very matter-of-fact.)*

We watched the video of the lesson together. Chris was really interested in watching every incident and explaining what she thought was taking place and why she had done things. She proved to be very articulate, enthusiastically justifying almost everything in positive terms. It took a long time for Chris to select twenty-four incidents and then choose twelve as representative of her teaching. The twelve elements were;

- E1 Directing boys to chart**
- E2 Setting time limits**
- E3 Standing at side of room**
- E4 Moving around class**
- E5 Explaining the intention of experiment**
- E6 Reprimand to Robert**
- E7 Iodine experiment**
- E8 Changing to bench experiment**
- E9 Changed voice**
- E10 Moving arms**

E11 Bending down

E12 Telling story of James Watt.

By the time we had selected these elements we had come to the end of our arranged time. We made another appointment for later in the week. When we started again we watched the video for a while to recapture the feel of the lesson. Chris brought a large block of chocolate with her to 'keep her energy up'. I wondered if she thought a repertory grid Learning Conversation was an entertainment, like going to the cinema, or thought it might be threatening, so that she needed comfort.

The first triad was E1, E2 and E3. E1, directing boys to the chart was an incident where two boys had asked a question. Chris had simply pointed to a chart on the wall and told them to look at it. Her interpretation of this action was, 'This is extra work. It gives some variety, it's a little treat, something different'. E2, setting time limits was something that I considered Chris had over emphasised. Chris described this as 'helping mixed-ability classes. It gives them an idea of what to aim for, it helps with their organisation'. E3, standing at the side of the room Chris explained as showing that 'I don't want to be on a dais. I don't want to appear even taller and make a barrier. I want to be in there with them. I can see they are looking at me and not fidgeting'. She went on to say that normally she would use both sides of the lab but the camera had been on one side and she did not want to go too near to it.

Chris aligned E2 and E3 together as being concerned with the *general management of the class* while the implicit pole was defined as *helping each child to achieve potential*. Most of the elements were placed on the emergent *general class management* pole, with only three on the other side. Chris said she considered that the distribution reflected how she managed her class - good general management with individual attention being given as needed.

The second construct was arrived at by discriminating between E4, E5 and E6. Chris's explanation of E4, moving around class was, 'This helps me see how they are getting on. It shows I am dedicated, I care and help with problems. I can give hints. I am also considering the safety angles'. Chris said

about E5, explaining the intention of experiment that it was important for the pupils to know the aim of the experiment and what to observe. She said this was also encouraging questioning. E6, reprimand to Robert was shown on the video as an incident where she had said a boy's name and frowned at him to bring him back on task. Chris said she meant, 'I'm not stopping the flow, I'm just 'naming' him and giving him a 'stink look', not having a go at him'.

* (I understood as Chris said this sentence that she had absorbed a specific way of talking about classroom interactions from the support she had received from Nerys, who had been trained in The Montgomery Method of Observation and Support)

Chris said E4 and E5 were representative of her *communication with the class* whereas E6 was an example of her *dealing with an individual*. I suggested that we could look at these three elements again and perhaps generate a more useful construct, but Chris said she was interested in seeing what would be shown on the repertory grid.

The next construct, C3, was *intellectual origin - emotional origin*. The two elements Chris placed together as the emergent pole, *intellectual origin*, were E7 and E8. E7, iodine experiment Chris defined as 'bringing together information, trying to follow on questions, to consolidate and re-cap previous lesson'. When discussing E8, changing to bench experiment Chris said 'This was my fault. There was no gas in the fume cupboard. I am accustomed to dealing with such situations. I know if I panic, the children will panic or start mucking about so I can usually stand there and talk and say absolutely nothing, in a nice comfortable voice while I'm thinking "What the hell am I going to do next?" Hopefully, I'll gravitate towards a solution and the children will think it's wonderful. It was awkward, but you hope the children stay with you while you check for things like good air flow. You need to show to them good working procedures and thinking-on-your-feet'.

* (I was intrigued to see how Chris, in placing this element under *intellectual origin*, moved from admitting responsibility for

the failure of the experiment to explaining that she was demonstrating good working practice. I was not sure of Chris's perspective. Did she believe that hers was a realistic interpretation of the classroom incidents, or did she think she was presenting a positive explanation to convince me?)

When explaining why E9, changed voice had an *emotional origin*, Chris described how she changed the kind of voice she used according to the response she wanted. She said she had three main voices: her 'nice voice', which was low and soft, low enough for the pupils to hear unless they were talking; her 'middle voice', with louder and higher pitch; and her attention-gaining, 'stop-them-dead-in-their-tracks voice'.

Construct 4 was decided by looking at the last three elements E10, E11 and E12. Chris placed E10, moving arms and E12, telling story of James Watt together as the emergent pole and decided these were instances when she was *doing two things at once*. In explaining E10, moving arms Chris said that moving her arms up and down was intended to be lighthearted and amusing and enabled her to signal that she was paying attention, 'while the eyes were whizzing round the room - allows me to have a conversation and watch who's got hands up'. E12, telling story of James Watt was defined as 'This is interesting for the children. I've a vast store of useless information. I want them to see real scientists as human beings, and I'm giving them the historical aspect. They like listening to stories'. E11, bending down was *doing one thing at once*. Chris said that when she bent down to the pupils' level she was making them feel less threatened so it was easier for them to talk. She made a conscious effort to do one thing at once. After the initial deliberations to decide the construct Chris aligned all the other elements quite quickly, mostly on the implicit pole.

* (I found myself in a dilemma. Up to now, in a repertory grid Learning Conversation with a teacher, I had assumed a process offering potential for learning was being repeated in the selection and analysis of each element. The process began with stage one - the identification of a significant incident. In stage two, this incident was then discussed to ascertain what was actually going

on. During the discussion, in stage three, a joint understanding of the underlying intention developed or, frequently, was implicit. In the fourth stage the teacher evaluated the effectiveness of his or her action during the incident. The fifth, and final stage, was for the teacher, in the light of recognition of what had or had not worked, to make a decision to consolidate, to develop or to remedy. This process took place even before the learning opportunity that was offered by further examination of an element when it was juxtaposed to others.

To give an example, an incident selected by a teacher to be an element was children arriving late (stage 1). We first watched the pupils come in, then we discussed how they had entered the classroom, why they were late, how she had felt (stage 2), what she had done and said (stage 3), how effective that had been (stage 4) and, finally, (stage 5) what action she would take next and in future. This process, which normally seemed to flow quite naturally, was not happening with Chris. Despite my questioning, and the evidence of the video, she did not seem able to move beyond stage three. Instead of assuming, as teachers generally did, that I understood why she did things, Chris seemed to need to convince me that all her actions were well-intentioned and much more effective than we had both seen they were. It seemed she did not or could not look at the results of her action, but could only explain the positive intention. Remembering that this was Chris's repertory grid and the construing was hers, I could only continue.)

For Construct 5, the next triad presented was E1, directing boys to chart, E5, explaining the intention of experiment and E7, iodine experiment. Chris initially defined the construct as *affecting all children* on the emergent pole and *different children doing different things* on the implicit pole by placing E1 as the singleton. However, as we examined the other elements, Chris decided to change the construct to *affecting all children the same way - affecting different children in different ways*. This was to take account of all

the different timings and intentions behind her actions. The other elements placed with *affecting different children in different ways* were E4, moving around classroom, E6, reprimand to Robert, E10, moving arms and E11, bending down. All the others were aligned with *affecting all children the same way*.

The intentionality of Chris's actions was the focus for the next construct. The three elements presented were E2, setting time limits, E6, reprimand to Robert and E8, changing to bench experiment. Immediately Chris placed E8 to one side and described it as something she had not intended to happen, whereas the other two had been, so she divided the elements along the construct *intentional - unintentional*. Only one other element E12, telling story of James Watt was placed on the implicit pole. Chris said she was aware of what she was doing during her lessons and normally everything was intended because she had planned beforehand. The failure of the experiment was something she could have avoided if she had remembered the lack of a gas supply, or the technician had reminded her when she asked him to set it up. Telling the story about James Watt and the kettle had not been planned. Chris said, 'It just came to me as a nice thing to do. A lot of children are turned off by Science. It was not really a digression. I enjoy telling stories and it's nice for them to see the historical aspect'.

* (I had to agree, up to a point, with Chris's assertion that what she was doing in her lessons was intentional, in the sense that her actions were deliberate and she did do all she said she was doing, but I could not agree that the intentions behind her words and actions were being realised. There was a lack of connection between the intention and the effect. I was not sure I could help Chris make that connection, or that it was possible, given her current state of perception.)

For Construct 7 Chris examined E3, standing at side of room, E4, moving around class and E9, changed voice. Chris placed E3 and E4 together and described them as relating to her *use of her body and actions* whereas E9 was related to her *use of voice*. Since we had already discussed these factors

earlier, the alignment of the elements was very straightforward. Chris said, 'It's helpful to see how effective using my voice is, and how I use it to manage children on their own, such as the two boys, as well keeping the whole class happy'.

The eighth construct followed on from the last one in that Chris began to talk about the positive psychological effects her actions and voice had on her pupils. We placed the triad E2, setting time limits, E8, changing to bench experiment and E10, moving arms together. The first one was described by Chris as having a *positive psychological effect on the pupils*. Again I thought there were echoes of Nerys' voice in Chris's use of these words. E8, however, Chris explained as a situation where she was not her normal self but was acting a part, 'putting on an act to keep things going'. In describing the necessity to change to a bench experiment Chris declared, 'I knew it was shaky but at the time I just dealt with it and carried on. I did not think about it. I shut my mind to the panic and acted as though everything was normal and in the end it wasn't too bad. It's as if I'm watching myself do things for an effect. It feels larger and slower than life. It's a kind of deception'. Chris also placed E10, moving arms with E8 and called this emergent pole of the construct *psychological self deceit*. These occasions, which Chris described as being 'on show' included E6, reprimand to Robert and E7, iodine experiment. We looked back at how Chris had described these elements earlier in the repertory grid to see if these were clustered in any other way but there was no pattern to be discerned.

* (Chris talked about this construct, which I found quite disturbing, in the same matter-of-fact, almost light-hearted way that she had explained all the others. It was as interesting to examine those elements Chris included on this pole as those she did not.)

From the next triad E3, standing at side of room, E7, iodine experiment and E12, telling story of James Watt, Chris selected E3 and E7 to be the emergent pole of the ninth construct, describing both these as *consolidating what I wanted to do in the lesson*. E12 was not intended as consolidation but as *motivating the pupils to take an interest in Science*. When she placed all

the other elements on this construct Chris chose to put them largely on the *motivating* pole. Science was not really a popular subject, Chris explained, and she wanted the pupils to enjoy it, particularly the girls.

Construct 10 was generated from E6, reprimand to Robert, E10, moving arms and E11, bending down. E10 was singled out as being related to the *general aura* whereas the other two elements were defined as *used to pinpoint specifics*. The majority of the elements were grouped on the emergent pole as being related to drawing attention to important points of teaching or discipline Chris had wanted to make.

Commentary

We had to finish the repertory grid Learning Conversation here because Chris was required for cover. Chris said she had really enjoyed the conversations we had had and looked forward to my visiting her again. I arranged to meet again to show Chris the FOCUSed repertory grid.

** (I was left wondering whether the conversation had been any use to Chris. Unlike the other conversations, after this one I was perplexed and uncertain. I went back over what Chris had said about each element to question whether my interpretation was based on fact. The lesson had not been satisfactory, although the experiment had allowed the children to do something active. Generally they had appeared to be a very tolerant, undemanding group, but I wondered how Chris would manage a livelier, older class. The difficulty lay in the difference between Chris's perception of what was going on and the reality. The difference in our perceptions of the same incidents was large enough to be unsettling. Nearly all of the many teachers I had talked to about their performance during the proceeding two years had had a realistic appreciation of their performance, with a tendency, if anything, to be modest. I could understand why there had been difficulty in achieving any improvement in Chris's performance.)*

Before the next arranged meeting Chris brought some photographs of her home for me to see. In her usual down-to-earth manner, with hardly a pause for breath, she told me of the considerable personal and financial difficulties that had caused her earlier depression and the stresses she was still suffering.

Chris continued by confiding she was unhappy at school as well. She said, 'I've always wanted a career rather than a job. I am thirty two and won't have any children. I am a career person. I loved doing research. I loved Science rather than children so I don't want to do pastoral work. I'm feeling cynical and I've got a seven year itch but I have no idea what to do next. I have gone backwards. I am not as effective in getting things across. I will probably stay with the subject but perhaps move to a bigger school. I had a five year plan but I achieved it all in three years. I was helped by a succession of flukes, and was promoted. I buried myself in work for eighteen months and got a Scale 3. Then I came here. I think it's a dead-end job. I've made a few slight mistakes. I've lost a lot of progress. The children are very streetwise and materialistic. Communication is much more difficult. In my last school I could walk into the hall and tell five hundred kids to shut up and they would. I miss the sixth-form teaching and the staff are very different here. I feel like packing up and starting a school on my own'.

** (This conversation with Chris raised many issues that often arise when teachers reveal details of the factors that are affecting their performance. The questions were; How could I help her? What could Chris do to help herself? Who should help her? How could the school help her if they did not know all these circumstances? How far can or should a school offer support in private matters? How far should personal matters impinge on one's professional performance? I knew there were teachers at Woodside who were in equally trying circumstances but whose professional performance was not seriously affected. It seemed that Chris had been over-promoted. Whose responsibility was the next step? As an outside researcher I felt that my role was problematic.)*

At the end of this conversation, I explained to Chris that I could offer

assistance similar to that she had already received and asked her how she wanted to proceed. She said, although she would be teaching a different class at that time we had arranged, she wanted to continue with the arrangements for a second visit.

The Second Lesson

The second lesson visited was with different children. The activity was setting up an electrical circuit on a board to make a small bulb light up when a pad was pressed or a lever moved. The purpose was to simulate a burglar alarm in miniature.

When the children came in they were very excited, having just come from an election forum. They could not stop talking about the contest. It would have been easier to allow them to talk about the election for a few minutes instead of trying to suppress the excitement but Chris tried to get them started. There were not enough boards for the pupils to have one each. Other equipment was not ready and there were only a few worksheets. Parts were missing or faulty. There was a lot of movement as pupils tried to locate the necessary cables and frequent squabbles as some pupils grabbed parts from others. One girl knew what to do from experiments at home and was helping the others. Chris seemed unaware of the general disorder but rushed around the room, talking animatedly to individual pupils and praising anyone who was getting on.

The Learning Conversation continued...

When we came to discuss the lesson Chris immediately said it had been terrible, but it was not her fault. Her interpretation of the lesson was that she had bravely managed to do what she could despite being angry and threatened. She told me that just before the lesson she had had an interview with the Head of Department. He had informed her that her timetable had been altered so she would teach fewer classes. She had been demoted in that her special responsibility post had been taken off her. She said she was 'supposed to be receiving help' from the Head of Department but she considered he was 'on the attack'. She agreed that she needed help and that we would work together on her classroom management.

Chris examined her SPACEd FOCUSed grid for some time quite quietly which was unusual as she normally talked very volubly. She asked about the process and why some constructs were reversed. As we talked through it she concentrated closely but did not require any changes to be noted. She said, 'It shows me in a good light'.

Commentary

Up to this point Chris's difficulties had been handled very discreetly but, now that more teachers were involved in the resulting timetable changes, her situation became common knowledge. It was a very upsetting period for her. It was complicated for those trying to help her because she fluctuated from accepting the help that she needed to declaring she was being victimised. Chris could very quickly absorb the principles of any strategy for lesson planning or management of pupils and talk convincing about them, which was initially very reassuring for those trying to help her. The stumbling block was that she could not gauge how effective her efforts had been, but seemed to believe that if she had delivered a lesson then the pupils must have learnt. After a tremendous amount of collaboration, Chris did improve. However, the school was very relieved when she was successful in obtaining a post at a girls' private school which had a sixth-form.

** (This was the most challenging relationship I had with a teacher at Woodside because my role was ambiguous, as were my feelings about what could and should be done. My skills as a facilitator and supporter were challenged too, when Chris's improvement progressed so erratically. I did not feel that the situation was ever resolved satisfactorily.)*

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Chris reported that the presence of the video-camera had not affected her at all, and the presence of the researcher had not affected her once she had got started. She considered that, while most of the pupils had been better

behaved, a few had been worse than usual. The second visit had been to a different class which Chris reported had been affected by various factors so it was not easy for her to judge whether the second visit had had the same effect.

She had looked at the video more than once with someone other than the researcher. The observer, a non-teacher, had made positive comments. She was prepared for the video to be shown to anyone.

Chris wrote that she had not learned anything about herself from watching the video but about her teaching she had learned that she was 'not all that bad, although I am not very good at assessing whether or not I am succeeding'.

From talking to me about herself Chris reported that she had learnt that she was 'fed up'. About her teaching, she wrote she had learnt 'All sorts!' She indicated that she had not learnt anything about her class, either from watching the video or from talking to the researcher. Chris's statement about being appraised was, 'I have always felt it was a good idea but concerned about who is to do it. This has not changed but the latter part has been reinforced after discussion with researcher (not her fault)'. Chris did not indicate that she had made any changes as a result of taking part in the research project.

** (As I had spend a lot of extra time with Chris I was rather taken aback at first by her statement that she had learned that she was 'fed up' by talking to me, but pleased that she thought she had learned a lot about her teaching, I hoped that recognising that she was not happy and being able to talk about it had helped her.)*

C.S.H.L. GRID - Chris

RAW GRID WITH VERBAL LABELS															
ELEMENTS															
CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1							CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3								
		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	E12		
GENERAL MANAGEMENT	C1	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	C1	HELPING EACH CHILD
COMMUNICATION WITH CLASS	C2	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	C2	DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL
INTELLECTUAL ORIGIN	C3	3	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	C3	EMOTIONAL ORIGIN
TWO THINGS AT ONCE	C4	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	C4	DOING ONE THING AT ONCE
AFFECTING ALL CHILDREN	C5	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	1	3	3	1	C5	DIFFERENT EFFECTS
INTENTIONAL	C6	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	1	3	C6	UNINTENTIONAL
USE OF BODY/ACTIONS	C7	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	3	C7	USE OF VOICE
SELF-DECEIT	C8	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	3	1	3	3	C8	PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT
CONSOLIDATING	C9	3	3	1	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	C9	MOTIVATING
PINPOINT SPECIFICS	C10	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	3	3	1	3	1	C10	GENERAL AURA
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* TELLING STORY OF JAMES WATT
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* BENDING DOWN
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* MOVING ARMS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* CHANGED VOICE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* CHANGE TO BENCH DEMONSTRATION
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* IODINE EXPERIMENT
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* REPRIMAND TO ROBERT
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* INTENTION OF EXPERIMENT
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* MOVING AROUND CLASSROOM
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* STANDING AT SIDE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* SETTING TIME LIMITS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* DIRECTING BOYS TO CHART

Figure 17b

C.S.H.L. GRID -- Chris

SPACED FOCUSED GRID

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1 -			ELEMENTS										CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3 -			
			E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E			
			1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0			
			0	3	1	4	8	7	2	5	9	2	1	6		
SELF-DECEIT	C8	* 1	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	* C8	PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT	
UNINTENTIONAL	C6	* 3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	* C6	INTENTIONAL	
HELPING EACH CHILD	RC1	* 3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	* RC1	GENERAL MANAGEMENT	
DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL	RC2	* 3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	* RC2	COMMUNICATION WITH CLASS	
CONSOLIDATING	C9	* 3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	* C9	MOTIVATING	
GENERAL AURA	C10	* 3	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	* C10	PINPOINTS SPECIFICS	
USE OF BODY/ACTIONS	C7	* 1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	* C7	USE OF VOICE	
DIFFERENT EFFECTS	RC5	* 1	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	* RC5	AFFECTING ALL CHILDREN	
EMOTIONAL ORIGIN	RC3	* 1	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	* RC3	INTELLECTUAL ORIGIN	
DOING ONE THING AT ONCE	RC4	* 1	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	* RC4	TWO THINGS AT ONCE	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*REPRIMAND TO ROBERT	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*DIRECTING BOYS TO CHART	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*TELLING STORY OF JAMES WATT	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*CHANGED VOICE	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*INTENTION OF EXPERIMENT	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*SETTING TIME LIMITS	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*IODINE EXPERIMENT	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*CHANGING TO BENCH DEMONSTRATION	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*MOVING AROUND CLASSROOM	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*BENDING DOWN	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*STANDING AT SIDE	
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*MOVING ARMS	

Nerys G1H

The Context

This teacher, who was also a Deputy Head, had recently been instrumental in introducing a whole-school, structured Personal and Social Education course (PSE). The course was designed to promote interpersonal skills and dealt with topics relevant to the pupils' age and experiences inside and outside school. Nerys was keen for the course to be successful. She had been apprehensive about introducing the course as she knew that not all the teachers were in favour of it for a variety of reasons. Some objected to lesson time being diverted from subject teaching and, while some did not wish to interact with pupils in a much more personal way, not seeing that as their role, others felt they did not have sufficient skills or information to deal with the kinds of issues tackled, such as drugs and sex education.

The First Lesson

The lesson I observed was part of that course. Teaching on this course was the only teaching Nerys did. She was eager to have the lesson observed and was looking forward to being able to have a discussion about the lesson she had planned, particularly about her strategies for encouraging all pupils to participate in the discussions. Naturally she was enthusiastic and optimistic about the potential benefits of the PSE course, and anxious that my visit should provide a measure of evaluation, not just of her skills but of the activities.

In several ways the lesson was different from most of the lessons observed at Woodside. It was not held in a normal classroom but in a large bare space. The chairs were placed in a circle to facilitate discussion. The wherewithal for making drinks had been provided, and this was obviously very much appreciated by the pupils, being regarded as a treat and a privilege. One girl was arranging the drinks and organising the collection of the money. It was obvious that this activity was regarded very seriously.

The pupils were a mixed class of fourth-year pupils. They settled readily and then Nerys quickly outlined a scenario and a task to them. On a printed sheet the characteristics, such as age, health, abilities, etc, of six people were detailed. These six people were trapped in a cave and only five could be rescued. The task required the pupils to go into small groups, and decide which person would have to be left out and why. They moved their chairs without fuss and started the discussion immediately. They were obviously used to this format and enjoyed it. Nerys circulated and encouraged the groups. The boys all sat together and fooled around a little. Many pupils made their minds up quickly and refused to listen to others' points of view. Some of the arguments became very intense.

Nerys then called the groups to bring their chairs back together in the circle and asked for a report. She explained that she was trying to achieve a group consensus as to which one of the six people should be left in the cave. This part of the lesson was particularly well-managed. The pupils were encouraged to present their views to the whole class, group by group, and to listen to each other. Although Nerys kept her intervention to a minimum, the process was directed and controlled, largely by the skilful use of her voice. She managed to convey that she was in command but willing to listen to everyone and everything. She conveyed interest, enthusiasm and acceptance and allowed individuals time to express their point of view. The lesson ended with the pupils quickly re-arranging the chairs, and tidying the room. They went off still animatedly talking about the issues.

There was obviously a history of successful group and class discussion, evidenced by the way the pupils moved easily from one to the other. It was interesting to note not only that these pupils were involved in and stimulated by this lesson to a greater extent than any other in which I had observed them, but also that for some pupils it was the first time I had seen them look interested in anything.

The Learning Conversation

Although I had seen group techniques used in other lessons, mainly in English lessons, this was the most successful occasion. The pupils actively took part both when in the small groups and in the whole class group. There

was much to discuss as we watched the recording of the lesson, after I had asked the usual three questions.

1. Why did you agree to take part in the project?

'I joined for many reasons;

- i) I am interested because of the research work I did with Diane.
- ii) I am interested because the school is involved.
- iii) I'm interested in the broader sense - research as development.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I think I am relaxed, and fairly open in my style of dealing with pupils. I can be firm when required. I weave in and out of different roles. I have changed. I used to be authoritarian but I have shifted and changed with special responsibility posts. I went on a six month counselling course at Reading University. It had great impact, in fact, it changed my life. The Social Education work had given me a way of enhancing and developing work in the classroom. I enjoy group work and have become more relaxed. I hope the children see me in the same way, like a good parent.'

3. How do you see yourself in the future?

'I'm not sure that I have the skills to play the system. My recent talk with Ron Letch, the inspector, was disappointing. I am looking for a space - a course or a sabbatical. I was offered a degree course. I think I'm running away from a headship. I felt I didn't have the confidence. Eighteen months ago there was a proposal for secondment which I didn't get. I was very disappointed, but I feel I mustn't give up on my job, although I've been doing it for eight years. I am immersed in developing social education and I enjoy that - making the introductory presentation to the staff was a challenge. It gave me confidence and opened up new horizons, such as in-service work with teachers and individual support work. I am thinking a bit clearer how to engineer it and I'm

making connections with an inspector.'

As we watched the video-recording Nerys placed the lesson in the context of the changes in the styles of teaching in the school that she had noticed over the last seven years. She felt that teaching at Woodside was gradually becoming less rigid and formal, with more emphasis on getting children involved and the PSE course was fostering that development. She believed, and her colleagues on the PSE course had reported similar experiences, that the introduction of the more open, relaxed methods used on the course had enhanced and helped to develop other areas of work, such as being a Year Head or dealing with parents. We discussed how the opportunities provided by the course for sharing views and negotiating had led to a 'less dogmatic right-and-wrong attitude'. These transferable skills had helped her a great deal in her role as Deputy Head, when dealing with parents, colleagues and with individual pupils.

Nerys was very interested in watching the behaviour of pupils and talked openly about what she was thinking. As we explored and discussed incidents in the lesson in detail, I jotted down the main points to serve as elements for her repertory grid. Nerys was able to see the pupils from a very different perspective, and I was able to describe how I had seen them behave very differently in many other lessons. We looked at the body language of the pupils, some of the boys especially, and noted how everyone was sitting back on their chairs, looking relaxed but interested and alert. The video-recording enabled us to replay some of the incidents to check what exactly had happened, such as when Nerys had missed a joke. This facility was particularly important and informative because Nerys was eager to analyse the reactions and interactions in this group as a means of gauging their progress in relation to each other. We discussed the point at which one intervenes in a group discussion, and this led to an explanation of what she was looking for in the pupils' behaviour, as a measure of progress. We observed particular pupils in action, commenting on whether they were dominant, or not, who contributed ideas, who did not, and we shared views of their behaviour, mine gained from watching these pupils in other subjects and activities and Nerys' from earlier lessons and situations.

Nerys commented on how she tried to give pupils 'space to speak'

because some could not think as quickly as others. She remarked on individual children: on one child who 'stuck in terribly well, was very quiet but didn't play about, who said things but was never heard', and another whom she described as 'really laid back but really coming through in the last two or three weeks.'

I asked Nerys how she recorded that kind of progress. She explained that she did not write it down but that there was a formal evaluation process, used with the pupils, twice during the course. The form it took was first, a talk reviewing the areas they had covered, then, the pupils were encouraged to write an evaluation of themselves and also to evaluate each other. These were collected in and Nerys then wrote a report which she shared with them. They were encouraged to share their reports with the group, and to discuss them with Nerys, who was open to negotiation about the contents. Nerys said she had changed reports when the pupil thought the remarks were unfair. The area of recording and evaluation was something that the PSE team recognised needed a lot of work. She told me she had had the idea of suggesting to the PSE team that I visited a session led by each of them, with a view to giving individual and group feedback, but when she had mentioned this to one member of the group she had said she didn't mind being observed in ordinary lessons but not in PSE. She was dealing with sex education and finding it really trying, and was anxious not to be observed.

This teacher's response reminded Nerys that five or six years ago she herself would not have had the ease that she had now in dealing with any part of the course. We talked more about how Nerys taught, and what she was trying to encourage, and how this lesson linked to the overall course.

Arising from our discussion of the lesson Nerys narrowed her choice of elements to nine areas that she felt she would like to explore further;

- E1** Pupil participation
- E2** Group dynamics
- E3** My style
- E4** Dominant personalities
- E5** Less dominant personalities

- E6 Claire's involvement**
- E7 Boys in the group**
- E8 Link between lesson and course**
- E9 Development of skills.**

Nerys was presented with the first three elements, **E1, pupil participation, E2, group dynamics and E3, my style**. Nerys thought very carefully about what each meant to her, and there were very long gaps where she reflected and sought to define precisely. As she mused aloud she explained how 'these three important elements' were interconnected and overlapped. She saw her style as a determining factor in how much she could enable her pupils to progress in the personal and social education process. Initially she described her role as a dual one; as a group member she was a catalyst, and she was also the leader. Nerys stressed the importance of the process, she declared it to be 'the vehicle through which we try to achieve the declared aims we set ourselves at the beginning of the course, and the messages we send one another'.

Nerys then explained each of the three elements in turn. About the first element, **E1, pupil participation**, Nerys stated that she encouraged pupil participation to allow them to practise their social and communication skills, such as listening to viewpoints different to their own, sorting out fact from fiction, and showing tolerance to each other. 'I seek to encourage pupil participation, although that is not to say that they are not learning when they are quiet'.

We then considered her heading **E2, group dynamics**. Nerys said this was about group identity, how this was established, how group relationships developed. It represented a view of 'how they regard each other, how they respect each other and from that how much trust they can build up through two years of the course. Trust is very important'. She believed that the pupils had to learn to respond and to convey interest. Nerys went on to say that enjoyment in the group was also very important as was the ability to relax. She stated 'I can learn as much from them as they can from me'.

When we examined **E3, my style**, Nerys explained that she saw her style as managing different roles at different times. She increased the

number of roles she had first mentioned to include catalyst, group leader, listener and enabler. She said she was willing to share and there was a lot of trust on her part. She valued all the members of the group in different ways. In all of her groups she felt there was a good feeling, with pupils saying they enjoyed these sessions. I asked Nerys if we could sum up this discussion of these areas, and she decided that E1, pupil participation, and E2, group dynamics, required her *to be sensitive, open-minded, not to be rigid, to be versatile*. This became the explicit pole of her first construct.

When we considered the other side of this construct Nerys talked about the children as the vital resource for the course, stressed that the process was important and decided that *children as the heartbeat of this course* was the implicit pole.

We then looked at E4, dominant personalities, E5, less dominant personalities and E6, Claire's involvement. Nerys said she found that some pupils were much more confident than others and therefore, on occasion, would dominate more. She felt that the dominance had not polarised in this group and was not a concern, but it had in some groups. The PSE team recognised that in some groups it was important to move the dominance and open it up.

Nerys explained that the less dominant personalities in this group were not a problem either. She said 'It is like a see-saw; I try desperately hard to think about pupils who want to say things but can't, for whatever reason'. Nerys recalled when she first was a member of group counselling. For the first three weeks, she had been tense because of the subject and the identification with her own feelings. She remembered wanting to say things and not being able to. By the time she'd practised what to say, the group had moved on and she'd missed her chance to say it. It had really surprised her that this had happened to her, but it had given her a valuable insight into how some pupils may be feeling in relation to the group. Therefore, she believed that the way the teacher or group leader set up the group was crucial. What the teacher expected set the scene. Nerys said again, 'I am very aware of what the less dominant might be feeling. For example, Simon had not said anything. I said: "You've been quiet today". I wanted him to know I had noticed, not in any critical way, but so that he would feel valued. So

even though the less dominant are not saying anything, the value to the group doesn't just come from dominant contributions'.

Claire's involvement, E6, Nerys described as an example of how a pupil had grown in confidence, self-esteem, assertiveness and the ability to talk to the group. She recounted how, when Claire had first started PSE, she had looked shy and uncomfortable, with a look of dread on her face, as if to say, 'Oh God, I hope she doesn't choose me, doesn't ask me a question'. Nerys compared the many negative non-verbal signs there used to be from Claire with how she had appeared in the observed lesson here, when she had been so active and eager to contribute.

At the end of her explanation of these three elements, Nerys placed the elements E5 and E6 together and described them as examples of *how pupils had grown* and E4, *dominant personalities*, as demonstrating how these personalities were *growing in understanding of others*.

After examining the next three elements, E7, *boys in the group*, E8, *link between lesson and course* and E9, *development of skills* Nerys placed the latter two on the emergent pole side of her third construct and said they represented her *insight into the roles in the group* and how these roles were shared and changed over time and even within a session. E7, *boys in the group* represented how the *process of the course was closely linked to its aims*.

By this point in our conversation we had not only discussed in detail how each element represented the interactions in the one observed session but, by placing it in the wider context of the whole course, had stimulated an evaluative process which was encompassing both the progress of the course and its aims. The generation of constructs went much more quickly from this point.

Construct 4 was arrived at by placing E1, *pupil participation* and E5, *less dominant personalities* together as *learning as part of my style*. Nerys recognised that she was very keen on giving everyone in the group a chance to take part and hoped that by being seen to be fair and welcoming of all opinions she was offering the pupils the chance to learn. Nerys described E3,

my style as *part of a growth process*. She said, 'if you're going to grow, it has to touch you'. She explained that she felt her style was evolving and developing. This growth she attributed to influences and experiences both in and out of school that had touched her. Nerys cited an example of how a recent incident had had a profound effect on her. She believed that it had improved her understanding of bereavement and made her better able to deal with related incidents in school and on the PSE course. She related how last year a refugee pupil had come to the school. Nerys, by being very involved in settling her in and monitoring her progress at school, had come to be very fond of this little girl. The pupil had died and the whole school had been devastated. Nerys had found herself unable to get over it. She said she grieved as though it had been her own child. She had been helped by a bereavement counsellor, and from that relationship had developed the idea of Nerys' helping others. She had undertaken a Cruse bereavement counselling training course and now worked voluntarily for that organisation. She had encouraged another member of staff to take the course as well. Nerys felt that undertaking counselling training was very valuable learning experience which could benefit teachers by improving their ability to listen to colleagues and pupils.

For the next construct, Construct 5, Nerys thought about E2, group dynamics, E4, dominant personalities and E6, Claire's involvement. She talked about how all three elements gave rise to similar images which she wanted to describe in terms of change. She then decided that she would place E4 and E6 together as the emergent construct pole and define them as *changes, evolves, has different effects*. E2 she decided was *an example of someone who has grown, and is growing*. I thought this was an unexpected definition but Nerys explained she was thinking particularly of the pupil whose improved behaviour had significantly altered the dynamics of the group. Although Shelley was often a nuisance and a trouble to many teachers, she was very popular with the girls in the group and had quite a following in the school, being seen as a rebel. Nerys reported that Shelley had gradually 'come over to my side.' I was able to tell Nerys how I had observed Shelley in other situations, when she had been in trouble for truanting and refusing to wear school uniform, and how she usually sat morosely in lessons doing the minimum of work. I agreed that in this observed lesson she had been lively, articulate and busy, organising 'her'

group and obviously enjoying the lesson. I also told Nerys that I had overheard Shelley say she only came on Thursdays so she could go to this lesson, but came late so she would miss maths. We examined possible factors in Shelley's improved level of involvement, before moving on to the next triad.

Nerys' sixth construct was *successful example of efficacy of aims - role of leader implicit in the aims of the course*. This was elicited from the three elements E3, my style, E6, Claire's involvement and E9, development of skills. Nerys placed E6 on the implicit pole. She explained that this exemplified her awareness of her own large investment in the success of the course. It was as important, she owned, to recognise her commitment as it was to examine the process. She hoped through the examination and evaluation of the process to see examples of how far pupils had grown and in what way. The emergent pole was linked to the same examination of the process but included the recognition of her own growth as well as the satisfaction of seeing pupils developing in so many ways.

For Construct 7, Nerys deliberated on the similarities and differences of E2, group dynamics, E5, less dominant personalities and E8, link between lesson and course. She declared there were so many overlaps in this kind of intuitive activity and she was aware of so many stages of development, including her own, that she found it hard to separate these elements. She felt that 'the process, the experience of the lesson, of the course is as important as the work that is in hand. I don't see it as rigid, nor separate'. Nerys decided to place E2 and E5 together as the emergent pole, *dovetailing of aims and process* while E8 was described as *development of autonomy*.

For Construct 8 we examined E1, pupil participation, E4, dominant personalities and E7, boys in the group. Nerys placed E1 and E7 together as the dominant pole *aim to build on confidence*. She remarked that her consideration of the boys in the group was very closely linked to the development of skills. In her opinion the level of boys' thinking, participation, interest and involvement was different to that of the girls. She said, 'Boys are involved in the work but it is just that I don't recognise as much growth as I do in the girls. They are not as autonomous, although they come with genuine feeling'.

Nerys thought that the girls were much more self determining and came to the group with expectations of sharing and talking. She felt the boys 'just turned up'. She thought that boys were not traditionally expected to share their feelings to the same extent that girls seemed to find natural. She said, 'I think this might be changing with the 5th year boys. I think it is difficult for them, as it is more acceptable for girls to share confidences. I am not quite sure the boys have got to the same level. Some of the boys have talked about their feelings, such as going to dances and being too embarrassed to ask girls to dance, or getting drunk and not being able to cope, so they have revealed similar feelings and thoughts as the girls but it is a different sharing'.

Nerys explained she was sensitive to the boys' difficulties in revealing their concerns. She aimed to build on their confidence, to try to improve the quality of boys' participation and their approach and she felt she had made some progress, but knew there was a long way to go. I asked Nerys if it was because there were fewer boys than girls in this group. She said the balance between boys and girls was not a problem in this group but it was a factor the PSE team could look at, because, where a group was predominantly boys, they were 'very vocal and the girls were totally lost'.

She explained that the groups were randomly selected by going down a list in order, and, as a result, in some groups the balance was unequal. We considered whether the pupils in such groups were able to do themselves justice. Nerys decided she would look at this method of selection again and bring it up for discussion at the next PSE meeting.

E4, dominant personalities, generated the implicit pole which was *different levels of thinking*. Nerys explained this by saying that the dominant personalities in the group were not all at the same level of thinking, and did not necessarily dominate in the same way or even every time. As she expounded on this thought Nerys said PSE lessons made her more aware of the different levels of thinking, interest, and skills that pupils had than she had been when she taught a subject. She said she had tended to look for knowledge and skills related specifically to the subject whereas she now looked at the pupils more as developing adults, because she was trying

to encourage and evaluate that development. When we placed the other elements on this construct nearly all of them were aligned to this pole. Nerys felt that this was fundamental to her thinking of herself as the facilitator in the pupils' social and personal development.

At this point we had to stop, but I felt we had explored the elements quite thoroughly. Nerys appeared to be still thinking about the issues we had talked about. She said she had not quite known what to expect but would recommend 'doing a grid' for the insight it provided, even though she was tired.

Commentary

I felt that this repertory grid Learning Conversation was particularly satisfying in that as well as providing close examination of the particular observed lesson we also evaluated the role of the PSE course in the curriculum. As a result of this conversation Nerys decided she wanted to share her experience of thinking and talking about her PSE lesson. She would consider how it could be of benefit to all the PSE group. She thought she would offer to show them her repertory grid and asked me to attend the next PSE meeting. She also asked to have another repertory grid Learning Conversation about her current job options as she thought it would help her clarify her thinking.

I was pleased that Nerys had enjoyed her repertory grid Learning Conversation and had valued and wanted to share the experience. The conversation had taken a very long time and I felt the conversation had been a rich, detailed and precise negotiation but when I listened to the tape recording I discovered that there were many more long silences, where Nerys was thinking and searching for meaning, than I had been aware of during the conversation. This was an indication, I considered, that I had been actively listening and had learnt to be quiet, to allow silence when required.

** (Circumstances prevented me from following up this visit, although we had one arranged. However, we had frequent conversations about Nerys' teaching and we also had a second*

repertory grid Learning Conversation about Nerys' need to make a decision regarding moving on from her post at Woodside (Appendix 10).

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Nerys reported she was 'a little' disturbed by the presence of the video-camera because she was 'wondering where it would be and would it get all the group in'. She wrote that she was just slightly nervous about my presence because, although she knew she would have positive feedback, the group was volatile and the PSE work fairly new. She thought they behaved as usual and added 'I think they've come to ignore the camera'.

She watched the recording of the lesson more than once, alone and with someone else. After watching the video comments were made about, 'How certain pupils behaved differently in the circle than in groups. How Shelley joined in when she can often be disruptive'. Nerys was prepared to show her video to anyone. Nerys noted that from watching the video she learnt about herself, 'I enjoy the sessions and it shows. The counselling course has helped. I try to include all the group and I'm more jokey than I realised'.

About her teaching, she wrote, 'It made me think about the timing of activities and how to mix-up the seating, where the pupils sit, when I want to encourage sharing'. About her class she noted, 'They are gelling as a group and the boys are becoming more open'. Talking to the researcher about herself, Nerys reported, 'had helped to put things in perspective particularly about the course and the future. I felt reassured that I was doing a good job'. About her teaching, Nerys learnt, 'I make it seem easy and smooth and spontaneous although I have planned it carefully'. About her class, she learnt that, 'the pupils appear much more involved than they are in some other lessons'.

Her attitude to being appraised before she joined the research project had been 'a positive one' and that had not changed. As a result of taking part in the project she reported, 'I am more determined to develop the PSE programme and I'm surer about what I want to do for a job'.

C.S.H.L. GRID - Nerys

RAW GRID WITH VERBAL LABELS

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1	ELEMENTS									CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3		
	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9			
VERSATILE	C1	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	C1	CHILDREN AS HEARTBEAT
EXAMPLE OF HOW GROWN	C2	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	C2	UNDERSTANDING OTHERS
INSIGHT-LINKED TO ROLES	C3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	C3	PROCESS LINKED TO AIMS
LEARNING AS PART OF MY STYLE	C4	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	C4	PART OF GROWTH PROCESS
CHANGES	C5	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	3	3	C5	SOMEONE WHO HAS GROWN
SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE	C6	3	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	C6	ROLE IMPLICIT
DOVETAILING OF AIMS PROCESS	C7	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	3	3	C7	DEVELOPMENT OF AUTONOMY
BUILD ON CONFIDENCE	C8	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	C8	DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THINKING
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* LINK-LESSON AND COURSE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* BOYS IN THE GROUP
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* CLAIRE'S INVOLVEMENT
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* LESS DOMINANT PERSONALITIES
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* DOMINANT PERSONALITIES
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* MY STYLE
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* GROUP DYNAMICS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* PUPIL PARTICIPATION

Figure 18b

C.S.H.L. GRID --NERY--

SPACED FOCUSED GRID

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1 -		ELEMENTS									CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3 -	
		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E		
		6	4	3	5	7	1	2	8	9		

DEVELOPMENT OF AUTONOMY	RC7	* 3	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	* RC7	DOVETAILING AF AIMS PROCESS
PART OF GROWTH PROCESS	RC4	* 3	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	* RC4	L'NING AS PART OF MY STYLE
INSIGHT-LINKED TO ROLES	C3	* 3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	* C3	PROCESS LINKED TO AIMS
VERSATILE	C1	* 1	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	* C1	CHILDREN AS HEARTBEAT
EXAMPLE OF HOW GROWN	C2	* 1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	* C2	UNDERSTANDING OTHERS
SOMEONE WHO HAS GROWN	RC5	* 3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	* RC5	CHANGES
BUILD ON CONFIDENCE	C8	* 3	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	1	* C8	DIFF'ENT LEVELS OF THINKING
SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE	C6	* 3	3	1	1	1	3	3	3	1	* C6	ROLE IMPLICIT

* * * * *												
* * * * * *DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS												
* * * * * *LINK-LESSON & COURSE												
* * * * * *GROUP DYNAMICS												
* * * * * *PUPIL PARTICIPATION												
* * * * * *BOYS IN THE GROUP												
* * * * * *LESS DOMINANT PERSONALITIES												
* * * * * *MY STYLE												
* * * * * *DOMINANT PERSONALITIES												
* * * * * *CLAIRE'S INVOLVEMENT												

Tom G1J

The Context

Tom was a New Zealander who had been teaching in Britain for six years. He was eager and energetic and rarely seemed to relax. He appeared to volunteer for everything, so often worked late. As a recently-appointed Head of Year he was concerned about his relationships with the tutors in the Year Group, and his perceived 'inability to enthuse' them. He stated that he was much more interested in the relationships with people he worked with than in his teaching.

The First Lesson

The lesson was part of a Science unit on 'Our Bodies'. The topic was 'Physical Changes in Puberty'. The mixed class consisted of nineteen mixed-ability second years. The class settled quickly. Tom successfully gained their attention and created an informal setting by sitting on a stool. He congratulated them on the standard of the projects they had completed and drew attention to those already on display. He suggested that they could look at them at any odd moment.

The class had brought in photographs of themselves and their family. (Not all children had brought enough and some had none). They were asked to sort them first in order of close relationship and then according to similarity of looks, and note the changes they made, and then explain them to a partner. Tom smiled very often and was encouraging, interested and helpful. He praised their efforts as he circulated round the groups. Some boys did not have enough to do and wandered around at times but generally the pupils were interested and discussed their families' looks and relationships in a pleasant manner.

Tom called all the class together and discussed each group's findings. He went on to discuss the importance of family likeness in the past by asking

the children to consider when/how it would have been useful to be able to recognise your own tribe/family. He thanked the class and praised their efforts before dismissing them in an orderly way.

Tom worked extremely hard throughout and the lesson was generally successful because of his intensity and enthusiasm. The idea was good, but it needed more preparation and more illustrations. Tom could perhaps have used photographs of famous families or of his own.

The Learning Conversation

Tom said that he felt the lesson was quite successful, but he realised that there wasn't enough preparation. He knew he should have had extra photographs for those who hadn't brought any or provided some similar task. He explained that he felt angry about the syllabus he had to teach and was trying to bring about change. He told me that he felt frustrated and considered that he is a worse teacher than he was five or six years ago. He complained that the pressure of being a Year Head meant there was a lack of time to do his teaching job properly. We started off by dealing with the three usual questions;

1. Why did you join in the research project?

- 'i) You asked me. I'm an obliging person
- ii) I'm curious to find out more about myself
- iii) It might improve my teaching.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I have mixed feelings. I enjoy and feel confident about some things I do. I don't think I'm as good as I was six years ago. I find it difficult to be part of a team (any team). I have a cavalier attitude to exams and syllabuses. I haven't got the skills to get the best out of people; I feel disillusioned sometimes.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I'm going to buy a shop! (That's a flippant answer !) I am not sure. I don't know. I feel disillusioned with myself. I feel I'm not as successful as I was. I realise that where I felt successful I was in a more suitable environment. In New Zealand I worked with people who thought the same way and I found it difficult to adjust to the English system. I haven't got the ability to enthuse other people and I am not good at working with other adults. I have less time, less money, fewer resources than I had.'

We began to look at the video-recording of the lesson but when I asked Tom to select incidents to be elements for a repertory grid Learning Conversation he said he was not particularly worried about his teaching with this age range and he asked if our conversation could be about the concern that was paramount in his mind - his relationships with those teachers with whom he came into daily contact and his management of the teachers in his year group. Tom explained that he felt he was not leading his Year Team well enough for his own satisfaction. As a fairly new Head of Year, he felt responsible for some of the younger teachers, especially the probationers, who were coping with teaching as well as being a class tutor, but he felt he could not motivate the others particularly well. As we talked about the people he met frequently Tom explained that there were certain people with whom he wanted to be on better terms. He claimed not to be 'comfortable' with all the members of the Science Department either, or some members of the Senior Management Team, including some of the other Year Heads.

**(I was intrigued by Tom's perspective on his relationships, because he appeared to me to be popular and respected, and considered to be efficient and willing. The only negative comment I had heard anyone make was that he tried too hard. As I had conversed with almost all of the teachers he selected and felt I knew some of them quite well, I was interested to learn more about them from a different viewpoint, in their roles as tutors and colleagues.*

I had to make a rapid adjustment to this request. I had

recognised that repertory grid Learning Conversations appeared to have more significance when the purpose was defined by the teacher so, on one hand, it was useful that Tom had such a defined purpose, but my own agenda had been to hold a repertory grid Learning Conversation about the lesson I had just observed. I had noted many excellent aspects of Tom's teaching which I wanted to point out and I felt reluctant to forego that positive exchange. I felt confident about holding a repertory grid Learning Conversation about teaching but rather more hesitant about undertaking this conversation, because it was away from the original research topic and on possibly delicate ground, and because Tom was a particularly sensitive person. While Tom was very open and honest and eager to learn, I felt he was anxious and vulnerable and that it was important that the experience did not increase these feelings. I felt it was a challenging undertaking, but I agreed, trusting to the repertory grid elicitation process to provide the foundation for our conversation.)

At first Tom selected eleven people to be elements in his repertory grid. As we talked of the adults with whom he spent most time, he joked that he felt he spent more time with some of these people than he did with his wife. I suggested that he might like to include her as a useful catalyst, particularly since she had, until recently, worked at Woodside and I had met her a few times. The final list was;

- E1 Marnie, a PE teacher**
- E2 Rula, a young teacher who taught Geography and PE**
- E3 Sarah, a mature teacher who taught Science**
- E4 Cerys, a young teacher who taught Science**
- E5 Esther, a probationary Maths teacher**
- E6 Bill, a probationary Maths teacher**
- E7 Mr Crauley, the Headteacher**
- E8 Viv, the Senior Mistress**
- E9 Eileen, who taught Geography**
- E10 Jack Barclet, Head of History**

E11 Nerys, a Deputy Head

E12 Laura, Tom's wife.

* (*Jack Barclet, who was always given his full name to distinguish him from Jack West in the Maths Department, was one of the teachers who had been strongly opposed to joining in the research project at the initial meeting. He said that, on political grounds, he did not wish to do anything extra to his agreed job description. He had been quite belligerent on that occasion, and was generally abrasive with colleagues in the staff room so I was interested to see what kind of a relationship Tom, a very different kind of person, who worked hard at being popular, would have with him.*)

In reporting this repertory grid Learning Conversation I have identified the elements/teachers in bold throughout, without always using the element numbers, to facilitate reading.)

The first three elements were presented - **E1, Marnie, E2, Rula and E3, Sarah**. For his first construct, after a long time in thought, Tom placed **E2, Rula, and E3, Sarah** together as the emergent pole because, he said, he *envied their naturalness with people*. Tom explained 'naturalness' as just being able to reflect what you were feeling without apologising or feeling guilty, or feeling obliged to be polite or pleasant, a kind of 'take it or leave it attitude'. He thought **E1, Marnie** had *generally directional relationships* where she was more likely to be trying to affect the other person by how she behaved. We then examined the other elements along this construct. He decided that two more people, **Mr Crauley and Jack Barclet** had the kind of naturalness he envied while **Cerys, Esther, Eileen, Nerys, and Laura** were placed with Marnie on the *generally directional relationships* pole of the construct. Tom decided that two people, **Bill and Viv**, could not be placed consistently on either pole of this construct so they were put down as Not Applicable (N/A).

* (*Bill and Viv were very different people so I was interested*

to find them placed together. I had observed Bill twice, once, very flustered and disorganised in a Maths lesson and the second time, efficiently controlling large numbers of pupils on the playing field. Viv was responsible for managing many aspects of school life, including a great deal of the disciplining of pupils, so I would have expected her to have been placed on the implicit pole, *directional relationships*. This was one of those many occasions when I found I really wanted to question the teacher's construing and perhaps suggest my construing of the elements. Throughout this repertory grid, I had to remember that we were dealing with Tom's experience and interpretations, not mine. I had to remind myself that he was basing his decisions about people on frequent contact and often long-term working relationships, rather than on one or two observations and conversations.)

The second construct, **C2**, was generated from **E4, Cerys, E5, Esther, and E6, Bill**. When asked to define how two of these elements were alike and how they differed from the third, Tom said his relationship with Cerys was *lighthearted* but with Esther and Bill the relationship was *more serious*. We then placed the other elements along this construct. Tom felt he had a *more serious relationship* with Marnie, Mr Crauley, Jack and Laura, whereas all the others were *lighthearted*. He decided his relationship with Sarah did not fit on this construct, since this was not *lighthearted* but neither was it what he would term *more serious*. He felt he and Sarah got on quite well together but were so different in so many ways that they would never really relate to each other.

Next we examined **E7, Mr Crauley, E8, Viv and E9, Eileen**. Very quickly Tom separated these elements on Construct 3, *supportive and not supportive*. He did not find Mr Crauley to be *supportive* but Viv and Eileen were. Tom then took quite some time thinking carefully where to place his colleagues on this construct. Tom found that nearly all his colleagues were on the emergent *supportive* side of the construct but he said he found that two of his colleagues Marnie and Jack Barclet, and also Laura, his wife, were *not supportive*. The process of applying this construct to the other colleagues

Tom reported as 'making me re-think things'. He said he felt now that some situations were not as bad as he had been feeling about them. He realised that he could be 'pushy' and had very strong, often contentious, ideas both about the syllabus and the pastoral work, but now that he gone through his list he realised that, generally, he received a lot of support. He said that he knew that those whom he had classed as *not supportive* did not share his ideas. I asked Tom to look at the repertory grid and notice how his earlier construing of relationships with certain people were emerging as the same or very similar.

For the fourth construct, C4, Tom considered the last three elements E10, Jack Barclet, E11, Nerys and E12, Laura. Tom first put Nerys on one side and said he had a *confident relationship* with her, but he would have to describe his relationship with Jack and Laura as *wary*. He described a confident relationship as one where he could say what he wanted freely, where he felt he would be understood although not necessarily agreed with, where there was a degree of easy familiarity and teasing in some cases. He was *wary* when he felt he had to watch his words, or was unsure of a person's response. When we aligned all the other elements Tom again found that, generally, things were better than he thought because he appreciated that he had a confident relationship with most of his colleagues. However, he did not pay much attention to this positive aspect but was much more interested in talking about the *wary relationships*. As well as Jack Barclet and Laura, the other relationships he placed on the *wary* pole of the construct were those with Rula, Sarah, and Mr Crauley. He said he was uneasy with Jack Barclet because he was difficult to persuade to do anything that was not strictly academic, so Jack did not support year activities beyond the minimum. Tom felt that Jack and the other member of the History Department were disgruntled and isolated and fed each other's disaffection. Jack was miserable and depressing to approach because he was not committed to using tutor time for anything but basic administration.

He described his relationship with Laura as *wary* because he knew she resented the hours he put into school work. Although she was very supportive in many ways, such as running the home, and looking after their two children, she was volatile and he was never sure when she might 'blow her top'. He said he knew that he was not always fair but found it hard not to

get involved with activities at school because that is how he had always been as a teacher.

Tom said he had a *wary relationship* with Rula because she was so moody. She was sometimes keen and full of ideas but often became involved in petty quarrels and imagined slights, so you never knew how she was going to react from one day to the next. Sarah, he felt he could not reach because her reactions were so passive. Tom said he was most *wary* with Mr Crauley. He believed that the Headmaster did not always approve of his ideas and did not particularly respect him. He found himself being defensive or too effusive in Mr Crauley's presence. He was hesitant in approaching him but made himself overcome this. It was always easier than he expected but the feeling of wariness persisted. We discussed a recent incident, which I had observed, when Mr Crauley had consulted Tom about the appropriate action to take to deal with a serious behaviour problem with a pupil in Tom's year. Mr Crauley had approved of Tom's suggestions and then left him to deal with it. I pointed out that Mr Crauley would not have left Tom to deal with the parents and the police about such a sensitive matter if he had not had total confidence in his ability. Tom agreed that was true, but he did not seem really convinced.

For the fifth construct, C5, the three elements selected were E1, Marnie, E4, Cerys, and E5, Esther. Tom placed Marnie and Esther together and said these were colleagues for whom he *would want to make opportunities to get to know them better*. The opposite to that was his relationship with Cerys. He said *I feel I have made enough opportunities*. He assigned Bill, Viv, Eileen and Nerys to this pole of the construct and placed everyone else on the emergent pole. Tom did not offer any further explanation on this construct, but he did look back over the repertory grid and note similarities and differences.

* (Tom looked at the repertory grid very carefully throughout. Quite often he would trace an element back through the earlier constructs. Sometimes he did not say anything and, while I would have liked to know what he had thought, I did not ask. Sometimes I thought his constructs were contradictory, but I hesitated to point

this out. A valuable skill encouraged by holding repertory grid Learning Conversation was learning to be still and silent, something I did not always find easy.)

The sixth construct, C6, was *slightly threatening* - not threatening. This was developed from Tom's examination of E2, Rula, E6, Bill and E8, Viv. Tom found Bill was not intimidating but Rula and Viv sometimes were. He also placed Marnie, Cerys and Mr Crauley on the emergent pole. Tom explained that he found this group of people *slightly threatening* because they were quite forceful in giving their opinions at meetings and could be stubborn, especially when they joined together. He suspected that sometimes Rula would take an opposing view to another member of the group just because she was 'that side out'. We had a discussion here about how Tom could prepare the ground more carefully before introducing a possible controversial item on the agenda of Year Group meetings, but agreed that someone like Rula would always be unpredictable.

* (All the people, including the Headteacher, identified by Tom as being *slightly threatening* were noticeably lively, ambitious and rather impatient for change. Marnie and Cerys were particularly keen for promotion within their subject while Rula wanted to drop the few lessons of PE she taught and specialise in pastoral work. Mr Crauley, while introducing changes in the management structure and keeping the school as up-to-date as his staff would allow, was looking for new challenges outside the school. It was very tempting to point out this factor about those *slightly threatening* colleagues but my information about his colleagues' ambitions had been gathered in confidential conversations.)

The seventh construct was decided from the triad E3, Sarah, E7, Mr Crauley and E9, Eileen. Tom arrived at this construct by thinking about his relationship with Eileen. He jokingly said that the first thing that came into his mind was that he found her *sexually attractive* but he could not say the same for the other colleagues. We discussed whether this was an important factor in his relationships with his female colleagues and Tom said it was.

C7 was thus defined as *sexually attractive* - *not sexually attractive*. Tom decided that the other colleagues he found *sexually attractive* were Marnie, Rula, Esther, and Laura. Tom found it very easy to make decisions on this construct.

The next three elements selected were E1, Marnie, E4, Cerys and E8, Viv. Tom placed Marnie and Viv together and said that *their demands can cause resentment* whereas the demands made by Cerys were *less onerous*. As an example, Tom explained that whenever Viv and Marnie wanted information processed, whether it was to, from, or about pupils, they expected it to happen quickly, even when the request was made at the last minute. Tom tried to ensure that all the teachers in his Year Team complied wholeheartedly and quickly with these requests but this did not always follow and some teachers resented being pushed. Tom said he sometimes felt resentful too because he did try to make sure information passed to and fro. When we examined all the other elements only one other element, Eileen, was placed on the emergent pole, *their demands can cause resentment*. The demands made by all other colleagues were described as *less onerous*.

For the ninth construct, C9, Tom decided that from the three constructs E3, Sarah, E5, Esther and E11, Nerys he would place the first two together as the emergent pole and leave Nerys as the singleton. He said he would describe his relationship with Sarah and Esther as *more to do with issues than feelings* whereas he would describe his relationship with Nerys as *an open, deep, trusting one*. Tom aligned two more elements on this implicit pole of the construct, Viv and Eileen. He acknowledged that he was lucky to have such support in school, particularly at Senior Management level. Tom described his relationship with all his other colleagues, and his wife, as *more to do with issues than feelings*.

The tenth construct was elicited from the triad E2, Rula, E9, Eileen and E10, Jack Barclet. Tom classed Rula and Jack Barclet as *having an independent approach to their relationship* with Tom, while, on the implicit pole, he placed Eileen and described her as *having a dependent approach*. When he had completed his placing of the elements we saw that Tom had placed Marnie, Sarah, Cerys, Bill, Mr Crauley and Viv alongside

Rula and Jack Barclet on the emergent pole, *having an independent approach to their relationship* while Nerys, Esther and Laura were placed with Eileen on the implicit pole, *having a dependent approach*.

* (I had never thought of Nerys, who was a mature, supportive, caring person as *having a dependent approach* to any of her relationships at school so I was somewhat taken aback at this alignment, as I was with some of his others. There were more surprises in the placing of elements on constructs in this repertory grid than in any other. If we had been discussing an incident in a lesson, which we had both seen, and could watch again, if necessary, I might have offered my point of view, because there was a degree of objectivity, but when discussing relationships, my instincts were to accept without question Tom's construing, particularly when he was concentrating on arriving at precise placings.)

The next three elements that Tom pondered over were E8, Viv, E10, Jack Barclet and E12, Laura to produce the eleventh construct, C11. Tom described his relationship with Viv and Laura as *emotionally vibrant* but described his relationship with Jack Barclet as *flat*. When Tom examined the rest of the element cards he placed each one on the implicit pole, *flat* until we came to Eileen and he placed that with Viv and Laura.

This repertory grid had taken two hours, because we had gone backwards and forwards over the repertory grid looking at connections and I felt we were both rather tired so I decided that this would be the last construct. Tom examined E1, Marnie, E4, Cerys and E11, Nerys. He found he could place the first two together as the emergent pole of the twelfth construct *don't make me feel I know what I'm doing - makes me feel I know what I'm doing*. Tom's placement of the elements on this construct displayed to him on the repertory grid that the number of people who did make him feel that he knew what he was doing was the majority. The other two who did not were Rula and Eileen. Tom looked back up the repertory grid, tracing the lines of construing of those who did not make him feel confident. He remarked that his head was buzzing, he felt dazed yet excited

and he had a lot to consider. He asked for a copy of the repertory grid and I said I would present him with a neatly printed version, and would have another conversation when I had put it through a computer program to FOCUS the groupings. He said he would appreciate a photocopy of the original even if it was untidily hand written and altered.

** (When I came to type up the repertory grid I had sometimes to abbreviate or paraphrase the constructs to make them fit into the spacing .e.g don't make me feel I know what I'm doing - makes me feel I know what I'm doing became don't make me feel confident - makes me feel confident.)*

Commentary

While all the repertory grids undertaken with the teachers at Woodside were dealing with sensitive and personal concerns, usually their teaching performance, this repertory grid Learning Conversation was particularly delicate. The repertory grid Learning Conversation had been very powerful, in my view, and searching but I felt a degree of relief when it was completed possibly because of my initial hesitation. I found that facilitating a repertory grid Learning Conversation about relationships brought a different kind of responsibility especially when the teacher was so candid.

I asked Tom to watch the video-recording of the lesson and suggested that we tried to find time to discuss it before the second visit.

For some time Tom did not approach me, either about our repertory grid Learning Conversation or his lesson, which was unusual since most teachers continued our conversations albeit at various levels, nor did he appear to be talking about it to anyone else. I wondered if he regretted being so open, or whether the repertory grid Learning Conversation had upset him. I decided to wait to approach him until I had the printed repertory grids.

However, Tom asked for a meeting one lunchtime. He returned the

video and reported that he had watched it. While watching the video, he recounted, he had noticed parallels in his dealings with his pupils and with his colleagues which had reinforced what he had been thinking about himself and his relationships. He had seen how he tried to be 'Mr Nice Guy' in the lesson and could see how well it worked with the younger children but he also knew he was less effective with the fifth years, who thought he was soft. He needed to find different ways of motivating the older pupils, as he needed to reconsider how he tried to motivate some of the Year Tutors.

He reported that he had thought about the repertory grid Learning Conversation a great deal. He had felt 'cheered up but a bit fazed' at first. It had taken some time to take it in and every now and again, he said, parts of the repertory grid Learning Conversation would come back to him and he would 'go off on another tack'. Never had he spent so much time thinking about the people round about him or what he really wanted! He had talked to his wife about the repertory grid Learning Conversation but he had not shown the repertory grid to her, which, he said, had made him think 'Why not?'

He said the repertory grid Learning Conversation had helped him put things in perspective. It had shown him, he explained, that he had less need to be worried about his relationships, as they were better than he had thought and also he had more support than he had realised. While his concerns about his relationships with a certain few people had lessened, they had not gone away, he just held them in a different perspective and felt he could work on them, or accept that they might not be able to change. He wondered if he had been trying to win everybody over when mostly they were already converted. The repertory grid Learning Conversation had crystallised some areas; for instance, he had always known he wanted to be a headteacher but now he knew just how much. Some areas were uncomfortable to think about, and he shied away, but they would just come up again. He said he sometimes found that he was 'watching himself' when he was talking to colleagues or pupils, which was a rather strange feeling.

The Second Lesson

This was a lesson with the same class of second years. It was another

part of the unit of work on 'Our Bodies' and was concerned with the importance of teeth, their different functions and composition. There was a very well-managed beginning to the lesson when Tom asked the pupils to put themselves in line according to quality and number of teeth. The pupils really enjoyed talking about their teeth, and finding the correct position in line. Tom managed the questioning very tactfully. The task set was to mark down missing teeth and fillings. Mirrors were provided and the pupils were really interested. One girl who had a large orthodontic device became the centre of attraction. Again Tom treated the situation very tactfully. The girl was comfortable with the attention and explained the reasons and details of her treatment.

After gathering in the information Tom set another task from a text book. It was a close procedure exercise. Tom circulated, checking each group, and keeping the conversation focused on teeth. He checked the number who had finished and issued a word search exercise on digestion. In the last few minutes of the lesson he asked for volunteers to chew disclosing tablets which turned the pupils' teeth bright pink. This very startling effect impressed the pupils. Tom asked the other pupils to act as dentists and to give advice to those with red teeth.

The Learning Conversation continued

I complimented Tom on how tactfully he had dealt with the topic and with individual pupils. He said he thought that probably the pupils were less bothered about the state of their teeth than we were. After the lesson we examined the video. Tom told me that, until he had watched the first video, he had not realised just how much milling around had gone on by one or two children. As we watched Tom drew attention to things he had improved as a result of watching the first lesson. He had made sure that there was plenty of extra work ready; he had thought of an activity that all could do, since everyone had teeth; he had kept an eye on those he thought might slack.

We thoroughly enjoyed watching the pupils acting at being dentists, which was fun and useful learning. Tom said he tried hard to make these lessons work although he preferred to devise individual work programmes.

He had found that Bub, the Head of Science, was not interested in individualising the syllabus but Tom said he tried to plan for individual children rather than for the class wherever he could. His vision was for pupils to work on topics they found interesting, in a modular system. He would also like this kind of studying to be allied to The Students' Record of Achievement (SRA) initiative which he wholeheartedly supported.

We next examined the SPACEd FOCUSed repertory grid. The printout was not aligned properly but this turned out to be no detriment because, as we traced each element down through the repertory grid, we quickly read out the appropriate pole of each construct. This reminded us what Tom had decided initially and emphasised some of the connections we had made in our repertory grid Learning Conversation. Tom was intrigued by the reversals and commented about the elements at the extremes, Laura and Viv, and also discussed the clusterings generally. I asked him if he wanted to change any element or construct but he said it was probably still largely representative of what he felt about his relationships although he was sure these would change over time, as he kept trying to improve his effectiveness as a year leader.

We continued to hold informal conversations about his teaching or his management of his team throughout the rest of my time at Woodside. I was pleased that I had decided to accept Tom's purpose for our initial repertory grid Learning Conversation because I believe our conversations provided valuable learning for both of us.

C.S.H.L. GRID - TomRAW GRID WITH VERBAL LABELS
ELEMENTS

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3

		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	E12		
ENVY NATURALNESS	C1	1	3	1	3	3	2	1	2	3	1	3	3	C1	DIRECTIVE RELATIONSHIP
MORE SERIOUS	C2	1	3	2	3	1	1	1	3	3	1	3	1	C2	LIGHTHEARTED RELATIONSHIP
SUPPORTIVE	C3	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	3	C3	NOT SUPPORTIVE
CONFIDENT RELATIONSHIP	C4	1	3	3	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	3	C4	WARY RELATIONSHIP
WANT TO KNOW THEM BETTER	C5	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	3	1	3	1	C5	MADE ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES
SLIGHTLY THREATENING	C6	1	1	3	1	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	C6	NOT THREATENING
SEXUALLY NOT ATTRACTIVE	C7	3	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	C7	SEXUALLY ATTRACTIVE
DEMANDING	C8	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	C8	DEMANDS LESS ONEROUS
ISSUES NOT FEELINGS	C9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	3	1	C9	OPEN DEEP RELATIONSHIP
INDEPENDENT APPROACH	C10	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	1	3	3	C10	DEPENDENT APPROACH
VIBRANT RELATIONSHIP	C11	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	1	C11	FLAT RELATIONSHIP
DON'T MAKE ME FEEL CONFIDENT	C12	1	1	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	C12	MAKE ME FEEL CONFIDENT
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* LAURA
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* NERYS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* JACK BARCLET
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* EILEEN
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* VIV
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* MR CRAULEY
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* BILL
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* ESTHER
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* CERYS
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* SARAH
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* RULA
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* MARNIE

Figure 19b

C.S.H.L. GRID --Tom

SPACED FOCUSED GRID

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1 -										ELEMENTS			CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3 -		
	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E			
	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0			
	2	5	2	4	6	3	0	7	1	9	1	8			

DEMANDS LESS ONEROUS	RC8	* 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	* RC8	DEMANDING
SEXUALLY NOT ATTRACTIVE	C7	* 3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	* C7	SEXUALLY ATTRACTIVE
FLAT RELATIONSHIP	RC11	* 3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	* RC11	VIBRANT RELATIONSHIP
ISSUES NOT FEELINGS	C9	* 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	* C9	OPEN DEEP RELATIONSHIP
WANT TO KNOW THEM BETTER	C5	* 1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	* C5	MADE ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES
WARY RELATIONSHIP	RC4	* 1	3	1	3	3	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	* RC4	CONFIDENT RELATIONSHIP
MORE SERIOUS	C2	* 1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	3	3	3	* C2	LIGHTHEARTED RELATIONSHIP
NOT SUPPORTIVE	RC3	* 1	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	3	3	3	* RC3	SUPPORTIVE
ENVY NATURALNESS	C1	* 3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	2	* C1	DIRECTIVE RELATIONSHIP
INDEPENDANT APPROACH	C10	* 3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	* C10	DEPENDANT APPROACH
SLIGHTLY THREATENING	C6	* 3	3	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	1	* C6	NOT THREATENING
DONT MAKE ME FEEL CONFIDENT	C12	* 3	3	1	1	3	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	* C12	MAKE ME FEEL CONFIDENT

	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* VIV
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* NERYS
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* EILEEN
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* MARNIE
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* MR CRAULEY
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* JACK BARCLET
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* SARAH
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* BILL
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* CERYS
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* RULA
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* ESTHER
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		* LAURA

The Context

This repertory grid was elicited when this research project was well-established and is concerned with school management issues, rather than classroom teaching. We discussed the lesson in some detail, particularly the behaviour of one boy who had recently been proving difficult to manage but had behaved well during this lesson. Instead of discussing her teaching, Viv asked if we could examine her various and changing roles in school with a view to helping her organise her time more efficiently as she was very concerned about her ability to manage successfully her growing number of responsibilities.

Viv, a senior teacher, had been at Woodside for quite a few years. She was friendly and very sociable, attending all the school functions, as well as giving end of term parties. Her husband was a publisher and they maintained a very busy social life. Financially she did not need to work, which was somewhat resented by some struggling members of staff, but she did her job wholeheartedly and energetically. As well as all her social activities, after recent training as a bereavement counsellor, she was voluntarily supporting clients in the evenings. As a Head of Year, she was a member of the senior management team, and had recently been asked to be responsible for staff development, including the issuing of a staff newsletter. Her responsibilities were increasing, including management of a Heads of Year group and membership of the newly-introduced Personal and Social Education (PSE) Course management group. With all these concurrent, ever-increasing demands on her time, she was worried about making a good job of her new roles, as well as maintaining her other management roles on top of her teaching commitment.

Viv was excited about the opportunities for school development that recent initiatives, such as this research project, the PSE course and the need to 'market' the school offered. The school was moving forward, she believed, although with many challenges and changes to both its structures and curricula. She was eager to play her part in the management of many of

these changes, but was anxious about her ability to manage her time well in coping with her new roles. Viv declared she needed to be better organised, as she had recently made a few mistakes. She recounted some of these mistakes: she had made errors in assigning supply teachers to lessons so that one had not been paid; she had not prepared the minutes of an important meeting in time; and she had had some difficulties with producing accurate information for staff and pupils on the examination options board; all of which were serious, in her view, not only for the inconvenience and upset to individuals and the smooth running of the life of the school, but for her own self-esteem, and her credibility in the school.

The Learning Conversation

We began with the usual three questions;

1. Why did you agree to take part in the project?

'Well, I'm an inveterate joiner-in. I wanted to see how I could improve, I thought it was an interesting idea, and also to help you out - all sorts of reasons really.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I think I'm quite a good teacher. I enjoy it, and I try to keep up with new ideas. I work with some good colleagues and I also enjoy my other roles in the school. I feel established and involved, and I think this is a good, caring school.'

3. How do you see yourself in the future?

'I am quite happy where I am. I don't have to work but I would be bored at home. I don't think I want to be deputy head although I enjoy the responsibilities I have now. I think I just want to go on as things are.'

We agreed to concentrate on those areas of her school responsibilities which were causing the most concern. We started by discussing all her roles

and the activities associated with them, and tried to establish how much time each required. The first activity mentioned was marking books. As an English teacher Viv often had extended pieces of writing to mark, particularly for examination classes. She explained that she sometimes set written work for her classes when she was called away to deal with emergencies. In her pastoral role as Head of Year she was often called away to deal with problems, and had to think quickly of work to keep her class busy in her absence. She usually set extra written work, as setting reading was not successful as the classes tended to talk instead. This meant that, as well as trying to deal with the problem that had called her away, on her return she was faced with the burden of even more marking.

Another area of concern was keeping up with lesson preparation and organisation of materials for lessons. The members of the English Department were all hard-working and well-established teachers; most of them had extra responsibilities, too. There was an element of competition between the English teachers, which meant Viv wanted not only to sustain a good level of preparation and delivery, but also to be able to contribute comments and useful ideas at the curriculum planning meetings. The members of the English Department were involved in re-designing their schemes of work requiring extra meetings which Viv was finding stimulating but time-consuming.

Organising cover to ensure the smooth running of the day-to-day changes in staffing and meeting arrangements was another large, time-consuming responsibility. Viv found this job stressful, particularly when she could not find teachers to cover for lessons at the last minute. As well as planning ahead to match the number of supply teachers to the activities in the school diary, it was her task to try to find supply teachers for unexpected absences. She called these last minute searches 'a fire brigade situation'. Viv needed to keep track of all lessons covered, both internally and by supply teachers, so as to ensure fair distribution and accurate payments. Teachers became very cross if they turned up to cover a lesson and there was someone already there; equally they resented having to quieten a class left without a teacher. Viv often faced frustration and anger from the teachers, and recognised she needed to improve the organisation of cover in several ways, not least as accurate returns were required weekly by the school

administrator.

Leading out of the discussion about cover, we examined all the types of talking with staff in which she engaged. Viv chose two headings to describe the types of talking that were most important to her. The first which she simply called talking to staff, described those times when staff consulted her informally, about issues and problems, school-related and private. This was described as a priority. Staff development interviews were the discussions she was beginning to undertake in her new role as the staff development co-ordinator. She was finding it hard to find the time for these but wanted to develop the process. These two activities were so important that she elected to use them as elements in her repertory grid.

Another form of communication, the staff newsletter, was the next choice as an element, as being a task that took time and, again, needed to be accurate and issued on time. The next element which emerged from our discussion was Viv's role as a member of the PSE management team. This was a very recent venture in which Viv was thrilled to be involved, putting this activity high on her list of priorities.

The PSE course was an amalgam of a published course and ideas devised by the members of the PSE management team. There was staff resistance to changes in the pastoral system - a very mixed response. Some teachers wanted more tutor time but less direction as to what to do in it. Some teachers wanted less non-teaching time with pupils, but better administration procedures, others welcomed a more structured approach to personal and social education but wanted to be assured of the value of spending time away from subject teaching. So it was crucial that all aspects of the presentation of the course were very well-thought out and offered structured, relevant and stimulating activities and topics that even the most reluctant staff could use and value. All the team members were convinced of the benefits of introducing such a course. The lively planning meetings were focused and stimulating and, for Viv, the danger was that she found herself eagerly volunteering to produce a unit of work when she knew she really did not have the time.

The next area Viv decided to examine was her responsibility for

managing the Heads of Year group, and this tied in to some extent with whole school assemblies as Viv now had overall responsibility for these, although they were usually presented in turn by the Heads of Year. Her concern was to improve the quality of these assemblies, as she felt important messages could be transmitted in a more dynamic way than at present.

At this point in our conversation Viv returned to her concerns about one of her recent failings, when she had not produced the minutes and agenda on time. She opted to examine her role in the senior management group in her repertory grid. She also wanted to consider her dealings with children in her senior management role, concentrating on her role as counsellor rather than disciplinarian.

In her new management roles she now had increased contact with members of the senior management team so for the last element she selected the liaison with the Deputy Head, Glen, and the Headteacher.

From our very wide ranging discussion of all Viv's roles and responsibilities we now had chosen those areas to which she had given priority. The general discussion had already been very useful to us both. Viv had achieved an overview of her many activities and said she was amazed just how much she achieved and now felt better about herself. She had a clearer understanding of what was expected of her and was beginning to appreciate more clearly what she needed to do. I had learnt much about the running of the school, Viv's part in it and her aspirations. We agreed to keep in mind the purpose of doing the repertory grid. This was to help Viv adjust to her new management tasks and to help her to manage her time more profitably, so we decided not to include elements concerned with teaching.

From the eventual selection of elements -

- E1** Talking to staff
- E2** Staff development interviews
- E3** Staff newsletter
- E4** Role as a member of the PSE management team
- E5** Responsibility for managing the Heads of Year group

- E6** **Whole school assemblies**
- E7** **Role in the senior management group**
- E8** **Role as counsellor of children**
- E9** **Liaison with Glen, and Head**

the first three were presented. Viv placed the first two on the emergent pole of the construct and decided these should be defined as examples of *my ability to help people to help themselves*, whereas producing the newsletter was the *organisational side of events, making things happen*. When she placed the other elements on this construct she said she could see that her managerial activities were fairly equally divided along this construct and this was satisfying. She could see more clearly how what she believed in, her philosophy, affected how she was in school. In her new roles Viv recognised she would have challenging but welcome opportunities to affect the life of the school.

The next construct, **C2**, was generated from elements E4, Viv's role as a member of the PSE management team, E5, her responsibility for managing the Heads of Year group, and E6, the management of whole school assemblies. Viv aligned E4 and E5 together, decided that in both these spheres she was *pulling together a lot of similar philosophies*. The management of school assemblies was described as *how I see things should be, my image*. When we aligned the other elements, Viv placed two others on this pole, E3, the staff newsletter, and E8, role as counsellor of children. She explained that she saw many children about their lack of official school uniform and realised that the 'look of the school' was important to her. She was very conscious that, because of the falling pupil numbers, local schools were in competition and thus needed to present a successful and attractive image. Presentable pupils were part of that image, so she tried to encourage pupils to conform.

Viv extended this discussion about the 'look of the school' to other areas. As we talked she became aware that while she made daily efforts about uniform, and tried to produce a lively, well-presented newsletter, there were many other areas of the school which needed attention. She thought the grounds and entrance were unattractive, the foyer dismal and many areas of the school needed decorating. In her opinion some of the

younger staff did not always dress appropriately but was not sure she could do anything about it. She acknowledged that her own appearance mattered a great deal to her, as did that of her house, but at school she had not really paid much attention to the overall look of the building, or even her own classroom. Viv made a decision to put the appearance of the school as an item on the management team agenda, and began looking at the room where we were sitting. This was 'her' room where she did much of her telephoning and talking to parents, staff and pupils. It was long and narrow and unattractive. Viv immediately decided to improve its ambience by tidying the papers, bringing some plants and a light from home, and arranging for some pupils' art work to be displayed. She said she was now starting to think more about the school from an outsider's point of view, and perhaps the whole staff needed to consider all aspects that might affect how the school was perceived in the community, not just ways of attracting parents.

At this point Viv introduced another responsibility she undertook. This was the liaison with the feeder middle schools. In the past, she explained, there had been no problem in enrolling sufficient pupils, but now the school needed to develop its links with these schools and give Woodside a higher profile. At this point I was concerned that instead of Viv discovering ways of lightening her load we were adding to it. I suggested that we listed any ideas or issues and came back to them later with a view to ordering them in some way.

Construct 3 was the outcome of placing the last three elements together. E9, liaison with Glen and the Head and E7, senior management agenda were placed together as *my role in the philosophical management of the school*, while counselling children, E8 was simply described as *dealing with children's various problems*. These problems were changing in nature and becoming more difficult to resolve. Viv believed that the new PSE course would give pupils a chance to discuss openly some of their pressures and problems. She had already seen connections between the various strands of her tasks, but talking about them and explaining the connections to me had re-emphasised for her both the need and the value of the efforts the school was making to improve facets of its educational provision.

Construct 4 was arrived at by placing together E4, role as a member of the PSE management team and E8, role as counsellor of children. These were both seen by Viv as *developing children's positive image* something she was convinced was essential but difficult to achieve at times, especially when children were often sent to her because of bad behaviour. Staff were expecting support and an appropriate level of pupil punishment from her. Viv found this aspect of her role wearisome but recognised that it was necessary. Never the less, on the more positive side, she believed she had helped many children. She was learning how to deal with some of the most difficult situations by working with the educational psychologist.

The staff development interviews, E2, were described as *inset and appraisal concerns*. Viv had always considered that one of the Deputy Heads Nerys, to be the obvious choice to undertake the staff development role. Nerys had excellent relationships with almost every member of staff and had been at the school longer. However, Nerys was hoping for secondment to an advisory post, so it had been decided that Viv would be a better choice in that she would offer continuity. Viv worried that Nerys would have done it better, was more skilled and could have given more time to it as she did not teach a subject. Despite these worries Viv was eager to develop staff development in all its aspects, and believed that she was gradually being accepted in her role. She knew appraisal was a highly contentious issue for a few in Woodside yet was optimistic that my research project, her staff development interviews, and other activities would gradually alter attitudes. She knew there were a few who resisted any involuntary involvement and recognised that they were often the very ones who needed support. We agreed that appraisal currently had such negative connotations in many teachers' minds that perhaps the process needed a new name.

The next construct, C5, placed elements either alongside the emergent pole *efficiency, looking for the best result* or on the implicit pole, *developing deeper relationships, excited*. Viv could see that two thirds of the elements she had selected were in this latter category and agreed that she was finding this time in her career very stimulating. She acknowledged that the counselling training she had undertaken quite recently was proving invaluable in her many roles in school in that she tried to listen more attentively generally. When she was rushed, however, she knew she was

brusque and put some people off. When asked what she could do about this Viv thought for a while. She said this problem related to her general 'busyness' and unplanned use of her time. She thought that if she had set times for being in her room she could say something like - 'I'm very sorry I can't see you now but I have some time on such a day. Could you come at 3.30 pm when we will be able to talk undisturbed?' Viv said she had already realised, as she was talking, that she would have to make arrangements for someone else to take her phone calls, and would need to have a signal on her door, like the Head's, to indicate that she was occupied. We agreed that there were other things she might do and they would be part of our discussion at the end of the repertory grid.

When we examined the elements she had placed on the opposite side of the construct Viv said that to some extent we had earlier identified some of the areas needing to be dealt with efficiently, but Viv now said that as we had been talking about arranging a reserved meeting time she had thought of all the meetings she attended. We decided it would be helpful if we listed the meetings and plotted them so Viv had a visual representation of the pattern. Viv commented that some meetings were not well managed and went on too long. Improving the efficiency of meetings generally in the school would be a good thing, especially since the middle managers had never had any Inset on their managerial role. We added this to the list for later consideration.

The next triad presented consisted of E1, talking to staff, E5, responsibility for managing the Heads of Year group, and E7, role in the senior management group. Viv described E7 as *policy making, looking forward to having an influence*. The emergent pole was described as *my responsibility for people's personal development*. As Viv made her decisions about the other elements she could see the completed line of the repertory grid showed many areas where she would be influencing policy making, and at the same time highlighted those areas where she was assisting others' development. Viv looked at this line closely and stated that she was feeling better about what she already did in school, and could see more clearly the significance and purposes of her tasks and how they inter-related. She recognised she was on a learning curve about what opportunities her staff development activities offered for her own

development as well as the potential for individual and school improvement. Viv said she had flashes of ideas about what she might do or be allowed to introduce but thought that, at the moment, she was thinking haphazardly, grasping at any good idea that she heard of. She decided she needed to put her activities in a more coherent framework, perhaps by looking for a course or some reading to deepen her understanding of the wider implications of staff development, and what needed to be done to achieve the best result for her input. She did not want to miss anything, because she had not thought of it or did not know about it.

Next we moved on to differentiating between E3, staff newsletter, E5, responsibility for managing the Heads of Year group and E8, role as counsellor of children. Viv put the latter two together as *the role of the teacher in disciplining children*. She explained that there were hierarchical procedures for referring misbehaving pupils depending on the seriousness of the misdemeanour so that she tended to see a succession of the worst offenders. There were difficulties in that, despite published ground rules, there was no general agreement as to what constituted bad behaviour, so that often pupils were sent to her for what she considered minor infringements. This wasted her time and made her angry. She felt discipline was a whole school issue, pushed into the background because everyone was coping with major changes in the curriculum and staffing structures. She believed in a positive approach to behaviour management; she agreed that she did not have many problems in her own classes but she had been teaching at the school a long time and that helped. English lessons were more numerous than some other subjects, so she taught the pupils more frequently and thus had a better chance of getting a good relationship going. Examining this construct had made her realise that something needed to be done about those teachers who sent pupils out repeatedly. Viv decided to include the need for examining the working of the current guidelines on the Senior Management Team agenda.

We then examined the other pole of C7 which Viv designated as her *concern about her memory affecting the day-to-day running of the school*. Realising she was taking on more responsibilities sometimes made her anxious, Viv explained. Already she knew she forgot things causing errors such as those described earlier. She often covered up others or managed, by

the skin of her teeth, to deliver on time. When we discussed this it became obvious that Viv had no basic structure for ordering her activities but dealt with incidents as they arose, and had very little formalised, apart from her school diary, to assist her in keeping track of the pattern of meetings and deadlines. 'Strategies for better organisation' was added as an item on the list for later consideration.

Construct 8 defined further an issue that we had touched on earlier. Linking together E2, staff development interviews and E9, liaison with Glen and the Head, Viv construed these as *my own projected image as being efficient, understanding and making things happen*. Four more of the nine elements were placed on this pole indicating how important a factor in defining Viv's school presence and activities this construct was. Its relationship to the previous construct was obvious, and to the other pole of this construct which Viv termed *finding an area where I can off-load, be myself, be at ease*. She considered that the need to be at ease and be herself was likely to increase as she grew into her managerial role. Although she had many good friends on the staff and could share her concerns with them, particularly in the PSE team, there were times when she could sense conflict between her personal and official contacts in school. She was hoping that her staff development interviews would bring two-way benefit, helping her to get to know the teachers better and vice versa.

Viv said she could recognise, by how surely she placed the elements, that it was fundamental to her well-being that the image she projected as a dynamic, caring manager was a valid one. She claimed she was not ambitious, and did not want to be deputy head if Nerys left, but did want to be influential, respected and efficient. She would only be able to maintain this image if she became more organised, less stressed and streamlined her activities.

For the ninth construct the triad presented was E1, talking to staff, E6, whole school assemblies and E7, role in the senior management group. Viv placed E1 and E7 together as *facilitating a whole school policy of teaching and staff development, making people feel less threatened*. The other pole she named as *making things more interesting so people participate more and develop confidence*. Viv positioned only one other element, E8

counselling children, on this side. She explained her reasoning was that she believed that many of the problems which she had to deal with stemmed from the boredom many pupils appeared to feel. Much bad behaviour occurred whilst moving pupils to and from assemblies which were seen largely as information-giving gatherings. Viv hoped that the current experiments with times and ways of collecting pupils would lessen the number of pupils who caused trouble. As co-ordinator of the Heads of Year group she was also working with them to produce a structured, thematic programme for assemblies which would link to the issues in the PSE course and support what she said to pupils when counselling them. She felt that everyone would benefit and become more confident in joining in and planning assemblies if the Heads of Year could hit on ways to make them less dull and troublesome.

When she saw she had placed nearly all the other elements on the emergent pole I asked her why she thought people were threatened. We reflected on probable internal and external factors: the need to reduce staff numbers had caused structural changes; staff were worried who would go and how would the proposed changes to a more streamlined faculty system affect them; some staff saw their responsibilities would shrink, whilst others would be asked to take on more but without any more money; curricular changes were upsetting some of the more established teachers who were resisting introducing the altered syllabuses because they thought they were less valuable than the current ones; other staff had been seriously upset by the lack of parental support in the recent pay dispute, and were tired of the continuing bad press; the job market was not buoyant.

At the end of this review, to which I was able to contribute perspectives I had gathered from teachers, Viv said she could see just how much staff development activities were likely to be needed in the next few months and she felt in her new role she would be able to make a difference.

To define the next construct, C10, Viv placed

- E1** Talking to staff,
- E2** Staff development interviews,
- E5** Responsibility for managing the Heads of Year group,

E7 **Role in the senior management group,**
E9 **Liaison with Glen and Head, on the emergent pole *as wanting to use time to very best advantage.* On the implicit pole she grouped**

E3 **Staff newsletter,**
E4 **Role as a member of the PSE management team,**
E6 **Whole school assemblies,**
E8 **Role as counsellor of children, *as concern about making sure things run smoothly.* Viv stated that this construct summed up for her what had been buzzing around in her head. She could see that in examining her concerns about her ability to ensure the smooth running of those areas she had selected, she had, in fact, more clearly defined for herself one aspect of her new role, to assist in the smooth running of the school overall.**

When we discussed the grouping on the emergent pole, Viv declared she realised that when we had started the repertory grid Learning Conversation she had been mainly narrowly focussed on her own worries about her own performance in her own changing roles. Now she saw her worries in a wider arena and felt less vulnerable. She had come to realise that she was doing a good job on the whole; she understood the range of her tasks more clearly and could see even more possibilities and directions. However, she also grasped that a great deal was being expected of her but no allowance was being made to enable her to achieve the potential. She now had a different view of what she might achieve and saw the job as being a really significant responsibility. Changes would have to be made, and she wanted the opportunity to discuss and plan how to effect those changes. Viv also said that this construct could be applied to the whole school as it moved into coping with the cuts and changes.

We decided to look at one more triad and then consider the questions that had arisen during our conversation. The three elements **E2**, staff development interviews, **E5**, responsibility for managing the Heads of Year group and **E6**, whole school assemblies were presented. Viv defined the first two *as looking at certain individuals and helping them to gain confidence in their role*, and then aligned nearly all the elements on this side. She mentioned specific instances where she felt she was doing this, citing two colleagues from the English Department. She was encouraging

one in her new appointment as Head of Third Year, and she was listening while another debated the possibility of leaving to start up a deer farm. The staff development interviews were giving Viv a chance to see situations from the teacher's point of view and to offer support, although she realised she could not manage to follow up everything, even in the few she had done so far. Viv said that she believed even someone as experienced as the Head needed support, especially throughout all the recent, often unpopular, decisions he had had to make. Being positive was part of her role, Viv believed, particularly when her male counterpart was so negative and difficult to deal with.

When we examined the other side of the construct *maintaining children's interest* Viv had only placed there one element, E6, school assemblies. Earlier we had discussed Viv's role in this area and had examined ideas for the improvement of assemblies, some of which were already in train. We decided that we had examined the elements sufficiently and could move on to consider the issues noted throughout the conversation.

As we looked at each item on the list we noted down possible actions. The following list summarises the conversation.

Cover

- 1) Consult with School Secretary about recording needs and possibly involve her help in
 - a) recording/managing process
 - b) making up-to-date list of details of all supply teachers
 - c) designing a basic form, to be returned by teachers.
- 2) Delegate some of the straightforward telephoning.
- 3) Ask Harrald about a user-friendly computer programme.

Staff Development - Current

Talking to staff

- 1) Decide on suitable time after school, with limits.
- 2) Ensure priority in own diary.
- 3) Inform all staff of time of availability.

- 4) Ensure privacy and comfort e.g, no phone calls!
- 5) Arrange for a 'Do not disturb' mechanism.
- 6) Write individual arrangements in diary at time of agreement.

Staff Development Interviews

- 1) Consult timetable for mutually convenient times.
- 2) Plan realistic programme of interviews.
- 3) Present to Head as part of Staff Development Policy.
- 4) Negotiate with teachers, put dates and names in diary.
- 5) Arrange reminder mechanism.
- 6) Ensure optimum conditions for discussion.

Staff Development - Future

- 1) Devise programme of staff development interviews.
- 2) Design simple questionnaire re Inset experience and needs, particularly in relation to current curriculum changes.
- 3) Collate all information.
- 4) Plan programme of Inset, showing time and resources needed.
- 5) Present to Senior Management.
- 6) Negotiate for more time - fewer classes next year?

Newsletter

- 1) Draw up timetable of deadlines for production.
- 2) Pin up on wall. Stick to it.
- 3) Involve teachers more - ask for contributions, cartoons, etc.
- 4) Include reports of positive achievements, pupils and staff.
- 5) Print reminders of meetings.
- 6) Enlist some help.

Heads of Year Group

- 1) Share management of meetings e.g. take turns to chair/scribe.
- 2) Link assembly theme to PSE topics where appropriate.

- 3) Ask for suggestions - visiting presenters, music, drama, etc.

Meetings

- 1) List all meetings - Question necessity of
 - a) holding it?
 - b) attendance?
- 2) Make chart - in colour ? use format from timetable?
- 3) Publish reminders/cancellations in newsletter.
- 4) State time available for meeting when appropriate.
- 5) Keep to agreed deadlines.
- 6) Organise Whole-school Inset on how to run efficient meetings.

Phone calls

- 1) Look at phone call list and divide into urgent/non-urgent.
- 2) Decide on best time to make them.
- 3) Decide on times when can be reached - inform office staff.
- 4) Ask office staff to vet calls more efficiently.
- 5) Make arrangement for undisturbed times.

Senior Management Agenda and Minutes

- 1) Ask Nerys what she used to do.
- 2) Ask Nerys to take notes as well at important times.
- 3) Check with group that you have summarised clearly any contentious issues.
- 4) Don't worry if papers are not always beautifully typed.
- 5) See if school secretary could type them up - confidentiality?
- 6) Plan in enough time;
 - a) soon after meeting to check that main points are down
 - b) to write up more fully.
- 7) Draw up production timetable with deadlines.
- 8) Pin up circulation deadlines and also put in diary.
- 9) Include need for review of behaviour policy as discussion item.
- 10) Suggest setting up group to deal with appearance of school.

Stress prevention

- 1) Recognise own abilities- doing good job already.
- 2) Negotiate time allowance to develop staff development.
- 3) Collect ideas/worksheets for use when called away.
- 4) Plan treats.
- 5) Use review mechanism to support daily planning.

Delegation

- 1) Decide what could be shared or delegated e.g.
 - Middle school liaison ?
 - Friends of Woodside Committee?
 - Staff coffee arrangements?
 - Examination information?

Viv said she found itemising action points for each area extremely helpful, both in seeing connections between the various tasks and in seeing how she could make the tasks more manageable. As we ranged over these topics I pointed out that people, planning and preparation, all beginning with p, were the main focuses. As we worked through the areas where Viv needed to be more organised she placed tasks under these three heading and added papers and phone calls. As we talked we ticked off the points on our fingers and almost accidentally devised a simple system for Viv to check through these areas. Viv decided to use each finger to represent a heading, and felt she would be able to check through the tasks easily by checking each finger in turn. I suggested that she needed another p, for priority, in the palm of her hand, to remind her to order the tasks. Viv felt we had brought order to her somewhat chaotic thinking and was very optimistic about the degree of improved organisation the p-system, as she called it, would bring to her management tasks.

** (This Learning Conversation, one of the longest, was also one where the decision-making was more apparent during the repertory grid Learning Conversation and not arising later as often happened. The planning was shared and to some extent more*

overtly prompted by me than usual. While it was a very satisfying repertory grid, very detailed and wide ranging, it was also challenging. It was satisfying in that I felt we had fulfilled Viv's stated purpose in doing the repertory grid - to help her organise her time more efficiently - and had made a good start in defining strategies to enable Viv to validate the image of herself as being a caring, efficient manager.)

Commentary

This repertory grid Learning Conversation was challenging for Viv in that we examined her customary ways of being and suggested changes. She appeared to find the process positive and energising. She declared she felt eager to get on with things. It was challenging for me as researcher as I had been more directive, and made more suggestions more openly than usual. The process had been absorbing, even uplifting. I hoped that the outcomes would be equally positive, beneficial and effective. We agreed to have other meetings to check on progress. In these, Viv reported on her teaching as well as her progress in the strategies we had devised. My relationship with Viv flourished as we met in a variety of situations, such as the PSE and Senior management Team meetings. We also worked together on developing the Staff Development Programme and on the Woodside contribution to the Runnymede Consortium, which are described in Chapter 4.ix.

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Viv's responses to the final questionnaire indicated that she felt that neither she nor the pupils were affected by the presence of the camera or the observer on either visit. She made use of the video with her class but she reported that many of them began to watch but then went back to their seats. She watched some on her own at home and with her husband. Some friends watched a part of one video and thought that the children were well-behaved. She was prepared to show her video to anyone, for teaching purposes.

Viv wrote that she learnt about herself that her voice sounded quite

different from the way she imagined. She noticed that in discussion with the children she nodded a great deal, but she did not feel that she had learned anything particular about herself personally.

About her teaching she learnt that it is generally when the group is structured and the task broken up that the class is most successful. She learnt that her pupils generally worked well in the small and large group situations. One member stood out as having difficulty in controlling his behaviour.

Viv reported that she was not sure she had learnt anything about herself from talking to me except that the talk helped her confidence as I was very positive in response to her queries. About her teaching, she learnt that she generally organised the group well and gained worthwhile responses from them. Regarding her learning about her class, Viv wrote, 'The boy who finds it difficult to listen was discussed. I think I handled him better with the researcher in the room than I do on some occasions. He is better if talked to gently but he sometimes needs removing from the situation'.

Viv had felt very positive towards being appraised but a little anxious. Afterwards she wrote that she felt that further appraisal would help all staff 'if only they could be persuaded that it is a positive thing'. As a result of taking part in the research project Viv stated, 'I have tried to organise myself and the class in a more structured way and explain the task clearly. I did this for the video and found that the children responded well'.

** (I was pleased to read that Viv had learned about her teaching from our conversations but I was very surprised and disappointed that she did not mention more about her personal learning from our extended repertory grid Learning Conversation. This very intensive conversation, much talked about by Viv afterwards, was the basis of our continued work together. I can only think she restricted her replies to the narrower focus of teaching.)*

C.S.H.L. GRID - Viv

RAW GRID WITH VERBAL LABELS

ELEMENTS

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3

		E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9		
HELP TO HELP THEMSELVES	C1	1	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	1	C1	MAKING THINGS HAPPEN
SIMILAR PHILOSOPHIES	C2	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	C2	HOW THINGS SHOULD BE IMAGE
ROLE IN PHIL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT	C3	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	C3	DEALING WITH CHILDREN'S PROBLEMS
DEVELOP CHILDREN'S POSITIVE IMAGE	C4	3	3	2	1	1	1	3	1	3	C4	INSET/APPRaisal CONCERNS
LOOKING FOR EFFICIENCY	C5	3	3	1	3	3	1	1	3	3	C5	DEVELOP DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS
RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE'S DEVELOPMENT	C6	1	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	C6	POLICY MAKING
DISCIPLINING CHILDREN'S ROLE	C7	3	1	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	C7	CONCERN - MEMORY DAY-TO-DAY
PROTECTED SELF-IMAGE	C8	1	1	1	3	3	1	3	1	1	C8	FINDING AREA OF EASE
FACILITATING WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY	C9	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	3	1	C9	MAKE MORE INTERESTING
USE TIME WELL	C10	1	1	3	3	1	3	1	3	1	C10	MAKE FOR SMOOTH RUNNING
HELP TO GAIN CONFIDENCE	C11	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	C11	MAINTAIN CHILDREN'S INTEREST

* * * * * LIAISON GLEN AND HEAD
 * * * * * COUNSELLING CHILDREN
 * * * * * SENIOR MANAGEMENT AGENDA
 * * * * * SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES
 * * * * * RESPONSE - YEAR HEAD'S GROUP
 * * * * * SOCIAL EDUCATION TEAM
 * * * * * NEWSLETTER
 * * * * * STAFF DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW
 * * * * * TALKING WITH STAFF - PRIORITY

Figure 20b

C.S.H.L. GRID - Viv -

SPACED FOCUSED GRID

CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 1 -		ELEMENTS									CONSTRUCT POLE RATED - 3 -	
		E 8	E 6	E 3	E 7	E 9	E 1	E 2	E 5	E 4		
CONCERN- MEMORY DAY TO DAY	RC7	* 3	3	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	* RC7	DISCIPLINING CHDRN ROLE
INSET/ APPRAISAL CONCERNS	RC4	* 3	3	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	* RC4	DEV CHDRNS POSITIVE IMAGE
ROLE IN PHIL SCHOOL MANGMT	C3	* 3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	* C3	DEALING CHDRNS PROBLEMS
USE TIME WELL	C10	* 3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	* C10	MAKE FOR SMOOTH RUNNING
SIMILAR PHILOSOPHIES	C2	* 3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	* C2	HOW THINGS SHOULD BE IMAGE
FACILIATING WHOLE SCH POLIC	C9	* 3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	* C9	MAKE MORE INTERESTING
HELP TO GAIN CONFIDENCE	C11	* 1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	* C11	MAINTAIN CHDRNS INTEREST
DEV DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS	RC5	* 1	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	* RC5	LOOKING FOR EFFICIENCY
HELP TO HELP THEMSELVES	C1	* 1	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	3	* C1	MAKING THINGS HAPPEN
RESPBTY FOR PEOPLE'S DEVP	C6	* 3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	* C6	POLICY MAKING
FINDING AREA OF EASE	RC8	* 3	3	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	* RC8	PROTECTED SELF-IMAGE

* * * * *												
* * * * * *SOCIAL ED TEAM												
* * * * * *RESPONSE-YEAR HEADS GROUP												
* * * * * *STAFF DEVL INTERVIEW												
* * * * * *TALKING WITH STAFF-PRIORITY												
* * * * * *LIAISON GLEN AND HEAD												
* * * * * *SENIOR MANAGEMENT AGENDA												
* * * * * *NEWSLETTER												
* * * * * *SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES												
* * * * * *COUNSELLING CHILDREN												

3. iv Individual Rating Scale Conversations - Group 2

This section contains accounts of the *rating scale conversations* held with **Group 2**, using the criteria rating form **Kingston Polytechnic Criteria for School Experience** (Figure 8). When talking with the teachers we usually simply called it 'the rating form'.

The scores decided upon during the initial conversations and any changes negotiated later are shown in Figure 21 at the end of this section.

Sarah G2A

The Context

Sarah was a mature teacher who gave the impression of being rather quiet and modest in the staff room. She was pleasant but tentative in our initial meetings and seemed rather flustered before the first lesson. She was rather more focused in the classroom than her general demeanour led one to expect.

On previous occasions I had passed this lab when Sarah had been teaching and noticed a noisier, less controlled ambience than was apparent on this occasion. I was already in place as the pupils came in.

** (This was the first time I had used the Kingston criteria other than with a student teacher so I was eager to see what kind of conversation ensued.)*

The First Lesson

This was a mixed, fifth-year, Integrated Science class preparing for the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE). The activity was an experiment to see which fuels burnt more efficiently in one minute. The equipment was all ready for the pupils to collect but more detailed emphasis on the amount of fuel to use would have prevented some of the mess that occurred as they collected the fuels. The pupils were asked to carry out the experiment in groups, to observe, record and answer questions on a work sheet, supported by information and reminders on the board. The overall atmosphere was friendly, noisy, relaxed and fairly purposeful but the academic level did not seem sufficiently stretching for an examination class.

The class obviously enjoyed getting on with the activity. Sarah appeared to be fairly at ease as she walked around the groups on the first bench but seemed unwilling to venture beyond that, preferring to raise her voice to speak to pupils on other benches. This added to the general noise

level. She did not appear to expect to fully control the class, but to aim to present a friendly, easy-going approach and to settle for a reasonable level of order.

The Rating Scale Conversation

Sarah was obviously very relieved when the lesson was over. I thought she must have been very anxious beforehand. She said she thought it had gone well, probably because the pupils had been on their best behaviour for the camera, and joked that she would like to borrow it. I asked her the usual three questions.

1. Why did you join in the research project ?

'I nearly didn't. Then I thought it might be quite an interesting thing to see. I was a bit apprehensive.'

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

'Fairly average, I think. I'm old-fashioned in my approach. I am trying to update my methods, but I'm not as energetic as I was.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I have no career plans. I would like to work for a few more years. I don't intend to go on to age sixty. I am worn out - I would like part-time work but it is hard to get. Four-fifths of the timetable would be lovely.'

Sarah told me, 'I am very happy generally. I got married late so I have no family but I would like to spend more time at home. I am finding teaching increasingly "wearing". There is never a chance to sit down. I am exhausted at the end of the day which affects my home life more and more. I consciously try to keep calm. There is no point in shouting because they ignore it'.

She explained that the class was not particularly interested in Science

and had not opted to study it but had to follow a course of Integrated Science as a core subject. She believed that this meant that they did not have the same degree of commitment as they had to their chosen subjects. Sarah said apart from the presence of the camera and the researcher, there was another reason why the pupils had paid more than their usual level of attention. Today's lesson was part of a CSE assessment, to be written up the next day, which would affect their final grades. She said it was not a bright class; she was expecting them to achieve Grade 4 on average, with a possible Grade 3 as the highest.

She felt that the pupils had changed in their expectations during the last few years. She described these changes: 'They need to be stimulated more, and expect more, perhaps because of TV; They soon "switch off" and don't seem to be able to concentrate for long'. In view of these changes she recognised that there was a need to make the teaching of Science more practically-based because 'children respond more when they do more practical work'.

Sarah admitted that she was finding it difficult to keep up with the new approaches and new courses. She explained, 'I am really a biology teacher "learning as I go" to present this integrated course on pollution, energy, etc. The course tries to relate to the pupils' experience and it is keeping me on my toes. The new approaches get me busy. I am trying out new things and there is support for all these changes. We have regular Departmental in-service training, and soon I am going on a day-course for methods of assessing practical work'.

We viewed the video of the lesson together. Sarah's reaction was a mixture of pleasure and relief. She commented on how much more she appeared to be in control than she had believed. She was pleasantly surprised by the easy atmosphere and gratified to see how the pupils were getting on with the work. We then went through the sections of the rating form, Criteria for School Experience (Figure 8), together while Sarah indicated where she considered she was on the criteria levels in each section. In Section 1, Personal and Professional Qualities, Sarah said that while she could claim to meet Level 3: Is able to share in a range of professional tasks within the school, and although she was able to adopt some other roles in

school, she did not see herself as an innovator so could not claim to be on **Level 4: Is able to adopt a variety of roles (including some as an initiator) within the school.** I had placed Sarah on Level 3 too.

The next section, Section 2, Verbal and Non-Verbal Skills, Sarah had placed herself on **Level 4: Shows ease in using a variety of social skills as appropriate in the classroom situation.** I explained to Sarah that I had placed her on **Level 3: Uses social skills to promote improved responses and participation by pupils** because it seemed to me that she was not fully at ease because she was hesitant about moving beyond the front bench to visit the groups at the back. Sarah agreed with me and we discussed the effect on pupils of knowing that she never went to the back. Sarah explained that, because she was not very tall, she liked to be able to stand on the dais so she could see all the room at once. We looked at her friendly relationship with the pupils near her and how her proximity helped her to see clearly how they were getting on. I suggested that it would help her overall control of the class and keep the other pupils on their toes if she circulated more and made positive comments about their work. Sarah agreed to try this strategy and that we would examine the next video to measure its effectiveness.

The third section was Planning and Preparation. Sarah said she was clearly able to meet **Level 3: Provides evidence of detailed sequential planning with reference to the points above for a programme of work over three or more weeks** but while she could understand how her units of work contributed to part of the new Science curriculum she would certainly not claim to be able to fulfil **Level 4: Demonstrates understanding of the contribution which a planned programme of work is making to the whole curriculum.**

When we came to Section 4, Relationships with Pupils (including class control and organisation) Sarah said that she was not sure that the criteria were in the best order and perhaps the last two levels,

- 3: Interaction with pupils shows that encouragement and reception of ideas are more frequent than direction. Is responsive to individuals as well as to the class as a whole.**

4: Is able to sustain class cohesion and also a high level of motivation in individual pupils.

should be reversed. She considered that it was easier to achieve 4 than it was to achieve 3. She found the encouragement and reception of ideas more difficult to manage than directing the activities and responses of the pupils, so she would change the order and put herself on her Level 3.

In the fifth Section, Presentation of Materials, Sarah again placed herself on Level 3: The presentation of the material is closely integrated with verbal discussion e.g. analysis, synthesis. After we had discussed Level 4: The material takes account of both product and process objectives Sarah decided that the new methods were leading her to place greater emphasis on process than she used to, so she would say she was working towards 4.

Again in Section 6, Achievement by the Pupils, Sarah decided that she did meet Level 3: Uses individual work, group work and resource-based teaching effectively but could not honestly say that she reached Level 4: Meets the needs of a mixed-ability class.

The final section, Recording and Evaluation, gave rise to another discussion about the order of the criteria and what the criteria meant. We also discussed how Sarah had taught her own subject until recently and how she would have placed herself then. Finally she placed herself on Level 3: Records and evaluations show a recognition of both process and product dimensions, although not too comfortably.

Sarah appeared to be very pleased with our conversation. I hoped that it had engaged Sarah in self-appraisal, had allowed her to recognise her achievements and also to note the steps she needed to take to reach Level 4 on each section, if she wished. I was relieved to find that our placings were very similar.

Commentary

Sarah was a modest, self-effacing teacher who had hesitated to join in at first. However, she appeared to be very pleased and to have gained from

the process. She was an example of a teacher who, although jolted by new curriculum requirements to teach a subject with which she was not wholly conversant, was valiantly trying to keep up to date. This is an increasingly common situation as the recurrent changes in the National Curriculum find teachers needing to adjust to new syllabuses and assessment procedures. Particularly in the primary phase, teachers report feeling inadequate to the task of delivering every core subject competently.

** (At first I felt very satisfied with the outcome of this conversation because it had gone well. Sarah had been very open and our general agreement on the levels had reassured me that my evaluations were not widely off course despite our discussion about the order of the criteria.*

Later, however, when I thought the session over, I felt less confident of the value of the conversation, but when I tried to identify why I was not able to come up with one clear answer. I recognised that it had been a shorter conversation than a repertory grid Learning Conversation usually was, but it appeared to have been useful and of value to Sarah, who was as involved and motivated as Allicia, the first teacher to undertake a repertory grid Learning Conversation, had been. I decided that, although there had a been a good rapport and easy communication in this *rating scale conversation*, there was not the same level of thinking and discrimination required of the teacher as there was in a grid conversation. The *rating scale conversation* was not as deeply searching on either side, I felt. As researcher, I certainly had not found this process as stimulating, but that was not the point. Or was it? Could the degree of involvement of the appraiser in an appraisal conversation be a factor which affected the level of follow-up support for the appraisee? Was the quality of the discussion an important factor in ensuring that the appraiser retained interest in the development of the appraisee's targets? Would this kind of conversation be as potentially effective in

raising teachers' perceptions of their performance as I believed a repertory grid Learning Conversation to be? These and other issues raised by the use of these rating procedures are addressed in Chapter 4. iv.)

I also realised that I was expecting that, in the process of deciding where she placed herself, Sarah would have noted the difference between the levels and not only would have recognised what was required to move to level four but would want to work towards achieving those levels, as students usually did. I had not suggested that she did so, but had made a suggestion relating to only one level. I would need to find out what she had decided in the next conversation.

Sarah's questioning of the order of the criteria made me look again at the rating instrument I was using. It had been appropriate for using with students in that I knew them and had seen their preparatory files and so was basing my evaluations on a greater degree of knowledge about them than I had about the teachers at Woodside. How had I arrived at my ratings of Sarah's performance on the basis of observation of only one lesson? They could only be based on assumption in some areas.

When Sarah had queried the order of the criteria on one section of the rating scale we had briefly spent some time evaluating the areas it covered and its ease of use. I decided I needed to give some thought to the use of this instrument. Perhaps it would add another dimension to the conversations I would hold with the members of Group 2 if I asked them to evaluate the rating scale. Perhaps I could find another one to use as well.

** (Before I observed Sarah's second lesson I asked her if she would be willing to try out a self-evaluation rating scale I had found, and to evaluate it. She said she was pleased to be asked. We arranged to talk about it after the next observation. I thought that if it appeared to be more useful or easier to use I could adopt it.)*

The Second Lesson

Sarah had decided to be less ambitious in this lesson in the amount of

materials to be tested but keep the problem-solving, practical approach to which she was trying to accustom herself. The organisation of the lesson was noticeably better. The pupils were required to design and test different shaped pieces of paper for the optimum surface area coverage. Sarah looked more relaxed and was more in touch with the activities, and actually carried out the experiments at the same time as the pupils with a view to sharing her results. The pupils liked this idea and were interested to see what she would devise. They were co-operative and carried out the experiments quite amiably but there was a sense of the work being largely irrelevant. There was a much more interesting sub-culture. Parties and plans for the weekend were being discussed and there was much liaising about prospective boy or girl friends.

Sarah did visit each group and encouraged their efforts. However, the task was not greatly taxing in any way, which was a pity since Sarah was working to improve their involvement and motivation.

The Rating Scale Conversation continued...

After the lesson Sarah said she thought it had gone well, despite the work not being stimulating enough. She had realised as soon as she had started explaining the work, that it was not really taxing enough, but she had not taught this part of the course before and it had 'read alright' when she had prepared the lesson. She reported that she had not become too anxious because she felt more able to cope with this sort of occurrence and also she knew I would not be finding fault. Since our last conversation she knew she was much more relaxed. She told me she was seeing a difference in the pupils too. She was going round her classes and was consciously 'mingling more' in all her classes and praising pupils' efforts. She declared, 'Life is easier and I actually enjoy teaching some of the younger groups'.

When we re-examined the Kingston rating form Sarah told me she had thought about the Level 4s that she considered she had not reached and had looked at the form several times. She still placed herself on Level 3 on the first section, but we agreed that since she was now circulating and felt more at ease she was now at Level 4: Shows ease in using a variety of social skills as appropriate in the classroom situation on the second section, Verbal and

Non-Verbal Skills. She felt she was moving towards the Level 4s on the other sections.

We then looked at another self-evaluation form. Sarah said she had filled it in as far as she could. She said she preferred the look of the Kingston rating form and experience of discussing the ratings, rather than doing it on her own. It had not really been illuminating, although it was a self-appraisal technique she had not used before. This self-evaluation form was also tried by Jack, G2C, but in both instances the benefits to the teachers were minimal so it was not considered worthwhile to continue with it or to change to using it.

Commentary

Sarah's pleased comments and her brisker, more confident manner suggested that she had found our conversation very useful and had acted upon it. It had taken place at a time when she was in need of reassurance and had boosted her self esteem and had enabled her to see which strategies were effective. She said she had enjoyed our meetings and asked if I would visit her again if there was time.

Despite my reservations about the use of the rating scales, our *rating scale conversation* had been of positive benefit to Sarah and had affected both her perceptions of her teaching and her teaching performance.

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Sarah reported that initially she was a little apprehensive and conscious of the camera's presence. She noted, 'I don't think that the camera affected me much'. Sarah wrote that she was also apprehensive at first about the researcher's presence, but both the class and she had felt more relaxed on the second occasion. She thought that the pupils were better behaved than usual and only a few were affected.

She was willing to show her video to other members of her Department for teaching purposes and had watched the video with her class. They had made general comments about their appearance and mannerisms

and remarked that the video-recording was a true portrayal of a normal lesson. They also made various observations about their own and others' 'experimental techniques'.

About watching the video Sarah reported, 'I was interested to see how calmly and well I coped with what appears to be a very active and demanding situation'. About her teaching, she was pleasantly surprised to learn she was much better than she thought. About her class, she learnt 'They responded well and had a mature attitude to the situation'.

From talking to the researcher, Sarah indicated that she had learnt about herself, 'Non-recognition of my own apparent teaching skills. An appreciation of the need to smile more frequently and praise the children more often'. About her teaching she had learnt that she had, 'Good monitoring of a class during practical work'. About her class she had learnt,

- 'a) that I underestimated my good relationship with them
- b) the willingness and interest displayed in the work done'.

Sarah wrote of her attitude to being appraised before she joined the research project, 'Agreed with the idea but rather apprehensive about how'. Her attitude had not really changed afterwards but she had 'appreciated this recent experience of appraisal'. As a result of taking part Sarah wrote, 'I have made a conscious effort to

- a) praise the children more often, and
- b) smile more'.

** (As Sarah was the first teacher in Group 2 to be visited these responses were made several months after our first conversation. Her comments on her learning are very similar to the comments she made at that time. This is not always the case. The teachers' responses to the questionnaire do not always reflect the learning points discussed at the time of the conversation. Concerns, decisions and insights that were examined in detail and appeared to be very significant at the time are sometimes not mentioned but, equally, learning we had not discussed is often reported.)*

Monique G2B

The Context

Monique was the second teacher with whom I used the rating scale. She was young, energetic and vivacious. She was solely responsible for all the music throughout the school, including putting on musical evenings and carol concerts. As part of her efforts to encourage pupils to play instruments she ran music clubs and had started a choir. Monique was usually busy with pupils at break and lunchtimes and appeared to work very hard and be very popular.

The First Lesson

The mixed class of 17 second year pupils were gathered outside and became excited when they saw the video equipment. Monique went outside and quietened them. Then she allowed them into the room, which was not really large enough for a practical subject. She quickly called the register and the pupils became quiet. Monique went straight into 'Alistair's Tune', played it several times on the piano, at different speeds, to remind them how it went, as an introduction to their playing it.

Monique then arranged which pupils would play which instruments. There was a choice offered. Glockenspiels were distributed to some pupils who were told not to open the boxes yet. Other groups lined up at the store room to collect their instrument, with the prospect of playing on large keyboards causing excitement. When they were all settled, Monique ran through the music, bar by bar, saying the notes and then playing them. The class was then given time to practice. Three boys without instruments were given percussion instruments. All the pupils were really involved and enjoying themselves. Each group played the first bar in turn, then all the groups played together. The process was repeated for each bar. Finally, they all played the whole tune. Monique was very encouraging. The children were very involved and trying hard to get it right.

The instruments were then put away very quickly and orderly.

Monique settled the class then played four tunes for them to say whether they were in a major or minor key. The pupils appeared to enjoy the test. She called the pupils round the piano where she played chords to test their discrimination. Then they went back to the desks and took out their books. Monique dictated notes explaining major and minor, then set homework. It was an excellent lesson in that there was a mixture of activities, instructions were clear and learning was fun. Monique was actively involved at all times and transmitted her enthusiasm and energy to the pupils.

The Rating Scale Conversation

Monique said she thought that the lesson had gone well. She enjoyed teaching her subject and loved to see the pupils make progress. I asked her the usual preliminary questions.

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'Just to help, I suppose.'

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

'I am a very informal teacher. I see the classroom as a home setting. I am hard working. I want the best out of each child. I get satisfaction from seeing a child playing a note correctly. I want a point for incentive and recognition. I resent my unpaid efforts compared to some of the other teachers. I feel negative about carrying the workload of a Head of Department without the status and pay.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I want to be a Head of Department. I enjoy responsibility. I push myself to my own limit. I enjoy working with other people. I just want to do music.'

** (This was another example of a teacher who felt seriously undervalued. I knew that she was very highly regarded by the Senior*

Management Team but their recognition of her worth was not made sufficiently overt, either in words or by a scale point. I also knew that the Senior Management Team had agonised at great length about how to distribute points for extra responsibility, within the constraints of falling pupil numbers and the need to restructure how the curriculum was organised. The factors affecting these decisions were understood to a degree by the staff generally but the reasoning behind the final decisions was not clearly communicated, resulting in murmurings of dissatisfaction.)

When we watched the lesson Monique said she had known that she worked hard and now she could see that she did and that the pupils were enjoying the lesson too. She said that seeing how well the lesson had progressed only fuelled her anger at the lack of understanding of the importance of her subject to the pupils' overall development. She felt her hard work in promoting music was not sufficiently appreciated, nor was her responsibility for teaching music to every pupil sufficiently recognised. Monique compared the number of hours she worked for no extra pay points with those worked by some other better-paid, less committed teachers who taught only examination classes and went home 'on the dot'.

We looked at the make-up of the groups, which was decided by pupil choice, noting whether they were all girls, all boys or a mixture and compared the behaviour of the groups. Monique was also interested in discussing individual pupils and in relating how they were getting on with music. She was interested to hear how these pupils behaved in other classes and which subjects they seemed to enjoy. She said she thought her teaching was good generally and was reassured to see, and to hear from me, that it was as she thought.

When we examined the rating scales Monique quickly placed herself at the top level of each section. In view of the excellent lesson I had seen and the evening performance I had attended, which Monique had produced, I had no difficulty in agreeing with her self-assessment. She was a tremendous asset to the school.

Commentary

After our agreement of the levels on the rating scales, where did that lead? Monique had made no comments about the order of the levels on the rating form as Sarah had done. She had simply nodded at each level as she read it through and said, 'Yes. I do that'. Although there were no overt targets for Monique to work towards, I still felt that the conversation had been very positive, and useful for both of us.

Monique had been thoroughly involved in our conversation about the incidents in the lesson. She had seen her pupils from a different perspective. She had received detailed feedback on her teaching and she had gained reassurance that she was as good a teacher as she thought.

** (I had benefited from seeing and talking about a very high quality lesson where pupils worked willingly and happily and were learning. The lesson had provided the opportunity to observe pupils enjoying using a wide range of practical and interpersonal skills as well as absorbing musical theory. It made me think again about other lessons I had seen, and reassess my own understanding of what constitutes 'good teaching'.*

The conversation also made me reflect on what I was engaged in. I was already unhappy with the rating scale I was using, but my unease increased as I appreciated that the rating scale was not really appropriate for using with a competent teacher. It had served as a useful basis for a lively conversation, but I felt it had not prompted any worthwhile degree of discrimination or stretched our thinking about that particular lesson. No teaching targets were implied or had been agreed, so when I went along to the next lesson it would be with no expectation of being able to discern clearly any area that Monique might have been working on. The setting of targets, or areas for improvement, whether openly discussed or implied, suggested motivation and progress. If we agreed that a

teacher was on the top level on all criteria then there was no easily recognisable focus for learning, that I was aware of. Monique may have identified areas for improvement in her teaching which we had not discussed because the criteria had not dealt with them, or they may have occurred to her later, when she reflected on the conversation or watched the video. I was again aware of the gap between my construing of the effects and learning arising from our conversations and the teachers' perceptions, a gap which varied in dimension but was ultimately uncrossable.

This made me examine my own attitude. On one level I was trying to observe neutrally the effect of using the rating scale, but I was also trying to foster a change in perception and/or performance. Was I outside the research, a scientific observer, or involved in it, an action researcher? Was it possible to be both?)

The Second Lesson

The class were working on jazz lyrics after hearing 'Frankie and Johnnie', etc, the previous lesson. As a way of re-capping the work covered in the previous lesson, Monique chose a very lively pupil called Alistair to answer questions. This worked well, as it occupied Alistair and kept the rest of the class interested. Monique then uncovered a large diagram which demonstrated the derivation of popular music. She spent a few minutes explaining it and playing appropriate rhythms. Then she set the pupils into groups to decide on a lyric to be set to music. Every child was interested and worked well. They were given time to practise and perform, their efforts were valued and constructively evaluated. This was another exciting, productive lesson.

The Rating Scale Conversation continued...

Monique was excited when I spoke to her afterwards. She explained that for the last few weeks she had had a student on teaching practice in to observe and learn. The supervisor of the student had been so impressed by

what he had seen of Monique's teaching that he had asked if a group of music students could come in for workshops. His praise had again emphasised for Monique her belief that her talents were not appreciated internally. She told me she intended leaving at the end of the school year. She said, 'I can't see a future in being in the Art, Design and Technology Faculty. I'm fed up with the lack of recognition. I want to go into the media if possible'.

Monique, who had recently married a freelance television cameraman, told me his pay and working conditions seemed much more favourable than hers. His work was valued and he had the stimulus and challenge of change. He had urged her to try for a job in television because he believed there were openings for her, particularly in Welsh television. They intended moving back to Wales and she had already made some very promising contacts.

** (Monique was successful in getting a job with Children's Television in Wales. The Senior Management Team was so determined to find a worthy successor that the short-listed applicants for Monique's post were asked to come to the school to deliver a lesson, a practice I had not encountered before.)*

Responses to Final Questionnaire

When asked whether the pupils had been affected by the camera Monique reported that the pupils had reacted in different ways. She wrote, 'They were all really excited. The children were more excited at the thought of being filmed and it was harder to keep their concentration on the class activity'.

She had shown the video to the class. The class made some very constructive comments about their own behaviour. One boy said 'Don't I talk a lot when I shouldn't?' and had since improved. They also commented that everyone seemed to be having fun. Monique thought this was shown on the video in lots of ways, too. When she had shown the video to her husband, he had said she was very relaxed as a teacher.

Monique wrote that she had not really learnt a great deal from watching the video, as she had previously had a lot of lessons videoed and had learnt most then. She had found it more interesting to listen to the pupil feedback when watching the video with them.

Monique related that talking with the researcher had confirmed her own views of herself in the classroom, which gave her confidence to know that she was not judging herself too harshly or too leniently. She wrote that she had learnt, 'I try to create a friendly, homely atmosphere and that I am quite relaxed with children. They discovered about themselves. They looked to be having more fun and enjoying themselves more than I thought'. She reported she had been looking forward to taking part in the research project to see if her own self-assessment was valid.

Monique's response to the question 'Have you made any changes as a result of taking part in the research project?' was 'Yes, if anything I am more positive and relaxed with the children and they have slightly modified their behaviour that was shown on the video. I tend to see each pupil from their point of view, having discussed their work and attitude with them after the video'.

** (Monique told me she had taken a large part of a double lesson to show the video to the class but I had not asked her how she had used it. Until I read these comments I did not know how constructively she had used the video, both to enhance her own knowledge of her pupils and theirs about themselves.)*

Jack G2C

The Context

Jack was a young teacher aged about thirty, who taught Maths and assisted in the organisation of the timetable. He was generally quiet in the staff room and did not often contribute at meetings. He appeared to be easy-going and relaxed on first meeting and only later revealed a very dry, laconic sense of humour.

The First Lesson

This was a fourth year Maths lesson. Jack had set a problem-solving task concerned with measuring the volume and surface area of tin cans. A variety of labelled cans were available. He quickly re-capped past lessons on this topic and then set the task. The pupils were asked to decide what criteria manufacturers use when deciding on the shape and size of cans. Lively discussions developed regarding the size and the content of cans, the shape related to the contents, the design of the labels, stacking potential, ease of handling and value for money.

Towards the end of the lesson, three sets of measurements were offered and the class was asked to see if they could find a relationship between the circumference and the volume. They worked hard and some stayed to ask questions at the end, including Richard, who can be difficult. Jack remained calm and unhurried, circulating round the class, answering queries, giving assistance and making an occasional comment in a very easy manner. Jack's manner with the pupils was low key and unemphatic. The class were obviously tuned in to his style of delivery and his off-beat humour.

The Rating Scale Conversation

Jack said he was pleased with the lesson. He said he had had difficulties when he first came to Woodside, but things were much better now. He felt he was established and accepted by the pupils. He claimed to have a very bad

temper and to 'go bananas'. Jack said he thought Woodside was generally a good school and particularly liked the way he had been allowed to be himself and do things his way when he had first come, although these had not always been viewed favourably. He felt he had been given space to adjust. I asked him the usual initial questions.

1. Why did you join in the research project ?

'I had no reason not to, I'm prepared to be open.'

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

'I am enthusiastic, and I feel confident since having been on an excellent course.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I'm good at organisation - time-tabling, etc, but I'm not particularly ambitious, probably Head of Department. I am looking for a job but I don't want to move far because of my young family.'

Jack had unexpectedly been given a lesson to cover so we did not have as long as we had planned. We looked at the video of the lesson but Jack did not show the same degree of interest as most other teachers either in seeing himself or in watching his pupils. He told me that during the lesson he had looked at the rating scales I had given him. Jack thought that it was easy to use and he could very quickly place himself. We discussed his ratings and considered how we had decided on them. Jack was impressed, he said, by the fact that there was no difference in our placings. On the first section, Personal and Professional Qualities, we had both placed him at Level 3: Is able to share in a range of professional tasks within the school. I had not placed him on Level 4: Is able to adopt a variety of roles (including some as an initiator) within the school only because I had seen no evidence of it and needed to check with him. He said he felt he was not yet ready to take on that sort of role nor could he see a way of becoming more innovative at the moment.

We had both placed him on Level 4 on the next four sections. This seemed to give Jack great satisfaction. We moved on to examine Section 6, Achievement by the Pupils, where we agreed that he did achieve Level 3: Uses individual work, group work and resource-based teaching effectively but perhaps did not sufficiently consider the less able in his class or had not provided extra problems for the very bright so could not claim to have fully reached Level 4: Meets the needs of a mixed ability class. Jack said he was aware that he very often set work to the middle of the class and that he expected to think up something quickly if a pupil finished well before the others. He had investigated a Maths scheme where each pupil worked at his or her own rate but he had felt that the teacher was reduced to being an administrator and that the pupils would know what every Maths lesson would be like. He knew he had some less able pupils, particularly one girl, but said he would not normally set different work for her but would keep an eye on her and make sure he helped her, which I noted he had.

On the final section, Recording and Evaluation, we had both placed him on Level 3: Records and evaluations show a recognition of both process and product dimensions. Although I had seen no examples of his record keeping, I was making an assessment based on what I heard him say in class, how he had questioned the pupils and the kind of work he had set. I did not think he was a particularly reflective person so I had hesitated to place him on Level 4: Employs a variety of techniques for self-appraisal. Jack remarked that he thought about his teaching to the degree that it had gone well or hadn't, but that was about it. He was glad that he had improved since he first came and had been stimulated by the excellent practical ideas from a recent course but felt that he did not give sufficient attention to questioning the quality of his teaching. He said this was the longest conversation he had ever had about his teaching and, although it was useful to hear how someone else viewed what he did, he found the experience of shifting the appraisal from thinking about the pupils and the work to concentrating on evaluating his teaching slightly unnerving. He said he tried to switch off at the end of the day and to keep thinking about school to a minimum.

He asked if he could take the video home as he felt he would look at it differently after our conversation.

Commentary

The lesson had been very stimulating. The use of real cans had been an excellent resource which helped the pupils to be fully engaged in the problem. Jack told me it was one of the ideas he had heard about on the course he had recently attended.

Although Jack had received very positive feedback about the lesson, the conversation had been detailed and our communication open and comfortable, I did not feel that it was touching Jack's thinking to any degree. He seemed to have enjoyed the experience but I did not feel that any further thinking would take place, unless it was externally prompted. He seemed content to accept things as they were.

The Second Lesson

This was a fourth year lesson for twenty pupils. It was based on a prepared paper on matrices. Duplicated worksheets were distributed and the class was set to work. Jack asked them to write down how they solved the problem and to attempt to work out methods for each of the first five problems and then apply them to later problems.

I wondered if Jack was worried or ill as he seemed so different. He was lack-lustre, pre-occupied and not really involved in the lesson as he had been in the first one. He circulated the whole lesson and the children concentrated quite well but the lesson had none of the excitement and liveliness of the earlier one I had observed.

Some of the pupils finished the first few problems and wanted to know if they were on the right lines. Jack said they would discuss how they had achieved their solutions later. Many of them were going to Germany the next day for two weeks and were expected to take the worksheet with them to complete. They were anxious to know that they were right so far, but the end of the lesson came without there having been an examination of their first solutions. The pupils had worked practically the whole lesson on the worksheet without any change of activity or focus.

The Rating Scale Conversation continued....

I began by asking Jack if everything was all right. Jack said he knew the lesson had been dull. I interpreted this reply to mean that he did not want to talk about whatever it was that was affecting him. He said he had not put on a special lesson because this was where the class were and the pupils couldn't move on until they had consolidated the work on the topic of translation. The worksheet had to be completed, but he would not be surprised if those going to Germany did not manage to finish it. He said the pupils had been restless recently and he had been shouting at them. He also felt their behaviour was affected by the presence of the video-camera and me in that they had been much quieter than usual. (Most classes were less affected the second time.)

I commented that the pupils had worked well through what had been a long session and suggested he could perhaps have broken it up by some discussion of their methods of solving the problems, as they had asked, and by perhaps praising those who had worked well. Jack said that he would not use praise in that way. He felt that good work was its own reward and he expected the children to work hard and to enjoy work for its own sake.

Commentary

Since our first meeting Jack had received promotion to Head of Maths. I congratulated him on getting this promotion at his age and reminded him that he had told me that was what he wanted. He said he was very pleased about it, but did not appear to be.

He apologised that he had not managed to look at the video of the previous lesson and had left it at home. He explained that he did not have a video-player but had intended to ask a neighbour but had not managed it. I felt he was probably not really interested since it would have been possible to view the video at school if he had really wanted to. He said he would bring in the video-recording so I could add the second lesson to it and then he could look at them both at his leisure.

When we examined the ratings again, he said he did not think he had changed in any way, although sometimes things we had discussed had come into his mind. I felt he was dispirited and there was no point in continuing any discussion at that time. He promised to bring in the video and the self-evaluation form.

Later, Jack did bring in the video and the completed self-evaluation form. We had a short discussion about the form. Jack said he found filling the form quite interesting. It had not taken long to complete but it had not made him think for long about his teaching. He found parts of our conversation came back to him but he had not thought again about the self-evaluation form until I had asked him.

I copied the second lesson on to the video-tape but Jack never indicated that he had watched it, either at home or with his class. I thought back to our first conversation, when he had decided that he was not yet ready to take on other roles in the school, and wondered how he would adjust to his new responsibilities.

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Jack reported that he had felt a little affected by the presence of the camera and the researcher and, although he did not know which one had affected him, he had tended to consider more what he was about to say. He felt that some of the pupils generally seemed to accept the video very quickly and he thought they were used to it from other lessons but were quieter than usual on the second visit.

He was sorry he had not watched the video at all, apart from with me, but he would be prepared to show it to others.

He felt that by talking with the researcher 'one may gain some insight into other people's perceptions of you'. He stated that he probably did learn something about his class but wrote, 'I can't remember exactly, i.e. you tend to pick up things in conversation and they come to mind when the situation demands'.

His attitude to being appraised before taking part in the research project had been that he did not mind either way and this had not changed but he now thought 'it could be a useful exercise on an on-going basis'. He considered he had made no changes as a result of taking part.

Stephan G2D

The Context

Stephan was a young probationary teacher who worked in two departments, Maths and PE. He seemed to be rushed and busy when seen around school but in the classroom he was calm and mild. He was usually dressed in a track suit, which he told me he knew was rather frowned on, but he said he just did not have the time to keep changing into a suit between lessons. Our meeting had been difficult to arrange because Stephan took teams to matches and arranged practices in the lunch hour, as well as attending all the meetings for both departments. It had also been postponed because of cover requirements.

The First Lesson

Both the lessons I observed were Maths lessons. There was a very striking, varied display of children's Maths work on the wall. Stephan was ready, waiting for the class and when the third year pupils came in. They settled very quickly. He took the register unobtrusively and named the children efficiently. The first part of the lesson was spent finishing a project on graphs that the pupils had been working on in small groups. Some had worked on it in their own time and so had finished; others were needing to colour their work ready for presentation. Stephan circulated and spent plenty of time explaining to those who needed it. He was particularly effective in using pauses to ensure that he had the attention of the whole class. He then spoke quietly and the class listened attentively. He had other activities ready for groups who had finished. Stephan displayed a very helpful, calm attitude. One of his biggest assets was his manner which conveyed to the pupils both that he liked them and also expected good behaviour. He was a provider, i.e. he had a back-up stock of pencils, scissors, glue, rulers, etc. to compensate for any lack of equipment by the pupils. This greatly facilitated the finishing of the presentation graphs.

The second part of the lesson was spent in a presentation by each group of the topic work to the whole class for assessment. Stephan organised a thorough clearing of materials from the desks before the evaluation session started so that the evaluation process seemed important. When one boy (Peter) said about his project, which was in the form of simple bar charts, 'I can't draw so ours is no good. It's got no pictures', Stephan said, 'You should say, "We chose numbers and graphs because we're good at them, rather than we couldn't draw anything"'. Peter was cheered up, and since he is generally difficult, this positive approach paid dividends when his group gave their presentation.

Stephan explained that each small group had to say why they had chosen their topic and how they had decided to present it, and why they had chosen that manner of presentation. He set time limits and explained how the projects were to be evaluated. The class were to award two marks for:

- a) presentation - was it clear, eye-catching, dramatic and colourful?
- b) data and accuracy,

on a three point scale of (1) satisfactory, (2) good, (3) very good.

Stephan explained carefully what he wanted them to do but this seemed difficult for some children. However, Stephan explained it all again and his relaxed, encouraging attitude made it easier. The pupils evaluated each other's work, without making any nasty comments. I thought the idea was a good one and the session had been very well-managed. The marks were recorded in Stephan's mark book which gave importance to the pupils' evaluations.

The Rating Scale Conversation

When I asked Stephan how he thought the lesson had gone, he said he was relieved to get all the projects completed, so he was pleased with that. The pupils had been rather lively but he was happy with how the evaluation had turned out, so that was not too bad. He had enjoyed the lesson because it was more or less how he had planned it and the projects

were so varied. Some pupils must have spent hours working at home, he thought, which was good but he could not always think of ways of making Maths exciting. I asked Stephan the initial questions.

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'I'm a probationary teacher, and although I feel I am doing quite well, I joined in in the hope of learning something about my teaching, and because I felt it was interesting.'

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

'I'm enthusiastic and I enjoy teaching, but I feel quite pressured because I am working in two departments and both expect extra work from me. I'm finding it hard to keep up with the pastoral side as well as all the matches and organisation from the PE Department.'

3. How do you see yourself in the future?

'I expect to gain promotion because I work hard, but I don't know whether I'll try to stay in my subject, move to PE or try to move up through becoming a year head. Or I might get out of teaching, I don't know.'

When we looked at the video together, unlike most teachers, Stephan made no comment about how he appeared but paid close attention to what happened when he spoke. He was pleased to see how quickly the pupils settled and we noted how he made effective use of pauses when he wanted to gain attention. He said he could see that being tall was an advantage, as was teaching a popular subject like PE. He felt that this helped him to have very few discipline problems. As he watched he said he realised the need to look round more often to see those who had hands up because he missed some pupils and got too involved with some. We discussed an incident where a pupil called Faye, who could be insolent, had left her seat to go over to another group. I had watched with interest knowing that she could be cheeky if challenged. Stephan had dealt with her very calmly by asking

'What are you doing, Faye?' in a tone of mild enquiry. She replied she was going to draw a seagull for another group. Stephan just nodded. If he had challenged her more forcibly she would probably have been rude. As it was she drew the seagull and returned with no fuss. He said he was always wary when asking her to answer or to do anything, but he could not let her go unchallenged. So far there had been no difficulty but he knew from other teachers that she could 'be a madam'.

When we examined the first section on the rating scale, Personal and Professional Qualities, Stephan had placed himself on Level 3: Is able to share in a range of professional tasks within the school. I told Stephan that I had placed him nearer to Level 4: Is able to adopt a variety of roles (including some as an initiator) within the school. I explained that I had reached this evaluatory level based on the fact that he was already adopting a variety of roles. He was already a form tutor, and was operating in two curriculum areas, with particular organisational responsibilities in the PE department. I considered the way he had introduced the pupils to what was obviously a new way for them of evaluating each other's work as initiatory, and I believed that he would continue to introduce new ideas. Stephan said he could agree with my reasoning but that he had interpreted 'an initiator' as being someone who introduced a noticeable wholesale change in the school perhaps of method or policy.

** (Recognising that our interpretations differed re-emphasised the difficulty in using a rating scale that had not previously been discussed or negotiated.)*

In Section 2, Verbal and Non-Verbal skills, we had both selected Level 3: Uses social skills to promote improved responses and participation by pupils. We agreed that while almost all the time Stephan appeared to be very comfortable in the classroom and had a good repertoire of skills, there were times when he needed to be more assertive. We had examined incidents in the lesson where Stephan had himself remarked that he needed to firm up the tone in which he had made his requests. I had suggested that he could have used praise to reward those who had been prompt rather than mildly rebuke those who were dawdling.

In the next section, Planning and Preparation, Stephan placed himself on **Level 2: Chooses content closely related to stated objectives. Shows evidence that the range of performance of the class has been taken into account. Provides evidence of strategies for a progression of work.** Although I had only seen one lesson, I had placed him on **Level 3: Provides evidence of detailed sequential planning with reference to the points above for a programme of work over three or more weeks because there was evidence that the work had been carefully planned, it was the culmination of a topic lasting more than three weeks and it had allowed for variation in performance.** Stephan said again that, when I explained how I had reached my decision, he could see that it was valid, but that overall he did not always achieve the level of detailed planning he knew worked best.

We discussed how valid it was to base any assessment on a 'one-off', whether it be to assess a teacher's performance on one visit or to use one examination paper to represent the whole of a pupil's efforts over a year or two years. Stephan said he was surprised how much I had 'picked up' about him and the pupils in one lesson. He found my evaluations were valid, when I explained my reasoning and mentioned incidents from the lesson, but said he would prefer it if I could also observe him teaching older pupils. He believed our ratings would be more matched in that I would place him at lower levels.

Again, in the next section, Stephan had placed himself on a more modest level than I had. In Section 4, Relationships with Pupils (including class control and organisation), he had placed himself on **Level 3: Interaction with pupils shows that encouragement and reception of ideas are more frequent than direction. Is responsive to individuals as well as to the class as a whole.** He did not consider, as I did, that he had reached **Level 4: Is able to sustain class cohesion and also a high level of motivation in individual pupils.** Stephan also wondered whether these two levels needed to be re-written to make them clearer.

Stephan was the second teacher to comment on the criteria in this section. When asked to explain, he said he was not really sure what 'direction' meant, and he never felt that he managed a high level of motivation in all pupils, so he would never reach level four. I argued that

we had both watched the recording of the lesson and, if it would be useful, could watch again to measure the level of motivation demonstrated by the pupils. I felt he had to agree that they had remained keen and interested all the way through. At times, he had asked them to work more quietly, and to get on with the extra work when they had finished, but I could not remember his asking them to get on with their projects. We agreed that in this lesson all the pupils had shown a high level of motivation, but that Stephan was taking a broader view in that he did not feel he motivated all the pupils he taught or always maintained class cohesion, either in PE or Maths.

** (This statement led to a discussion about the factors affecting teaching performance, and the variables relating to teacher, task and pupils. I believed that Stephan, in taking a somewhat unrealistic view of believing that he could motivate all of his pupils in all of his lessons, was not recognising his current level of achievement.)*

On the next two sections we were in agreement. In Section 5, Presentation of Materials, we had both decided that Stephan had reached **Level 4: The material takes account of both product and process objectives.** In Section 6, Achievement by the Pupils, we both placed Stephan on **Level 3: Uses individual work, group work and resource-based teaching effectively,** but in the final section, Section 7, Recording and Evaluation, our evaluations differed. I agreed with Stephan that he had reached **Level 3: Records and evaluations show a recognition of both process and product dimensions,** but I had placed him on **Level 4: Employs a variety of techniques for self-appraisal.** I explained that I was extrapolating that, because he had high expectations of himself, because he was so caring and conscientious, and because, in his lesson, he had introduced his pupils to the process of setting criteria for success, that he did evaluate his own performance in differing arenas in differing ways.

Stephan agreed that he did think about his performance in his different roles and that he did set himself high aims, as I intimated, but he had two comments to make about Level 4. The first was that he had

interpreted the criteria up to Level 3 as being related more to recording and evaluating pupil performance and that Level 4 seemed 'to jump to be about the teacher' and he queried the use of the word 'techniques'. He thought the word 'techniques' was off-putting and he was not sure what was meant, but he could not suggest a better way of putting it, except to say 'ways' or 'methods'.

We had a discussion about the original use of the rating scale and the way students were encouraged to evaluate themselves after each lesson in the light of their stated aims, and also to evaluate the schemes of work in terms of content, progression, appropriateness, etc. Stephan remarked that that kind of detailed evaluation had been expected of him when he was a student but that he had always left the writing up of evaluations to the last and had concentrated on preparation and planning. His tutors had not seemed too bothered so, although he had thought about how lessons had gone, he had never 'gone over the top' about writing evaluations.

We had to finish our conversation there. I thanked Stephan for his useful comments on the rating scale, and he said he had seen himself 'in a different light'.

Commentary

The chart of our evaluations shows that we had differed by 1 level in each of 4 sections, each time my evaluation being more favourable than Stephan's (Figure 21). Stephan's responses to the criteria had been much more useful in evaluating the use of the rating form than a conversation where we found little or no difference in rating. We had both had to explain our interpretation of the criteria and our reasoning, and in the process had both come to a better understanding of Stephan's performance as a teacher and the value of using the rating form.

The Second Lesson

For various reasons there was a greater length of time between my visits to Stephan's lessons than usual so the class had covered several topics since my first visit.

The class was very orderly and quiet when I arrived. Stephan explained what was required very clearly. Working as before in small groups, each group had two discs, with numbers on both sides, which were to be thrown up randomly. The numbers would add up to match a series of given numbers. The pupils then had to work out what numbers would need to be on two discs to make a different series of numbers. The next task was to discover how many games teams would play if a league was increased from 22 to 30 teams.

Most of the group conversations were about solving the problems. The problems were discussed periodically, as a class, and possible ways of arriving at solutions were shared. One or two pupils just stared into space, looking vague but, even though some pupils did not contribute much effort, there was no disturbance. The room was airless and the class seemed lethargic. Stephan opened some windows, but a girl quietly closed them again and he did not notice.

The Rating Scale Conversation continued....

We could not have a discussion immediately after the lesson as Stephan had to rush off. When we did meet later in the day he said he was sorry he had had to postpone the conversation. He said he was very rushed all the time as he was practically running the PE department because the Head of PE had no organisation skills and no interest in the department, since he was waiting to leave to sell Tupperware. Stephan was very bitter that he, while still a probationary teacher, was more concerned about the school's fixtures, the training of teams, arranging of house matches and keeping track of games equipment than was the Head of the PE Department. He was angry that the Head of PE would be asked to evaluate and report how Stephan had completed his first year.

He said he was very tired. He had two lots of Departmental meetings to attend, reports to write on two subjects and Sports Day to organise. He felt that he had received almost no support from either the Head of Maths, or the Head of PE, both of whom were intending to leave. He said he would look for jobs outside teaching, if only he had the time. He was longing for

the end of term, hoping for a better Head of PE next year, and generally feeling undervalued.

** (Stephan was not the only probationary teacher who had found insufficient support during this first year. Allicia (G1A) and Esther (G1F) had both felt unsupported. I felt that the school needed to introduce a more systematic induction/mentoring programme, such as I had noted in some other schools. Allicia already intended leaving in the summer and, if Stephan left, then the school would have lost two potentially excellent teachers.)*

It took Stephan quite some time to calm down enough to be able to hold a conversation about his teaching. The situation was not helped by the fact that the video had not worked properly so the recording was poor. We used my notes as the basis for our discussion. When we looked again at the original ratings Stephan said he would not change his self-assessment except in Section 2 where he now considered he had reached Level 4. He believed that was partly because he had tried to improve those areas we had identified as being easy to improve effectively, and partly because time had gone by and he felt more accepted by the pupils.

I was pleased that Stephan himself had identified a general improvement. I felt he needed to recognise that he was making progress and had achieved a great deal in his first few months. I reminded him that my evaluations were more positive than his and suggested that we spend some time thinking about what he had achieved and learnt since he had joined Woodside, even if some of it had been thrust upon him.

** (It had taken quite a determined effort on both our parts to complete our schedule of meetings. When extrapolating our difficulties with our voluntary involvement to the introduction of an imposed appraisal scheme in a school, I could see how easy it would be for a system to fail without time, commitment and co-ordination.)*

Roy G2E

The Context

Roy, Head of PE, was a mature, established member of staff. He was very frank and affable, and appeared to be relaxed and fit.

The First Lesson

The pupils were divided into two groups. There was a short warm up session followed by a brief explanation of the lesson's main topic, which was ball skills. The lesson followed a pattern of a demonstration by the teacher, an explanation of what the pupils had to do, then the execution of the exercise. The skills were clearly identified and quickly demonstrated and the activities were well-explained and progressed in difficulty. The boys' interest was maintained throughout each sequence. Roy's control of the lesson was excellent, and the boys worked hard to please him. The lesson ended with a competition between the two groups which was marked out of five. Roy gave alert attention and encouragement to each boy. His voice was low but audible (important in the gym). This required the pupils to be quiet if they wanted to hear what was said. Roy drew attention to safety requirements in the placing of the large apparatus and the use of the small apparatus. I felt it was a very sound lesson which achieved what Roy set out to do - improve fine motor skills - but rather old-fashioned in its approach. I was surprised that, at the end of what appeared to be a carefully timed lesson, he had left insufficient time for the boys to shower and change. The boys were still getting dressed when the next class arrived. The teacher was really cross because of the hold up, because it was cutting into a single lesson and there was barely time to get much done when there was no delay.

The Rating Scale Conversation

Roy said it had been a good lesson, the boys were keen to learn and were still interested in trying to get on a team, even if it was a house team. He was beginning to find it a strain, he reported, to keep up the level of

demonstration but he believed it helped to give a teacher credibility if he could show the pupils how to do it. He had achieved his aim for the lesson which made him satisfied.

We went to hold our conversation in the PE teachers' room. This was extremely untidy but Roy seemed undisturbed by the jumble of equipment and kit and made a space for us to sit down.

** (As I held conversations with the other PE staff I gradually learnt that all the other PE teachers were tired of trying to keep the room tidy and avoided using it whenever possible. Both the men and women PE teachers reported that they were so fed up and angry with Roy's lack of organisation that they avoided him too.)*

1. Why did you join in?

'I am interested in improving my teaching, and getting good feedback. Why not?'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I'm feeling stagnant. I should explore new ways. We work in a vacuum and never see other members of the department teach. (It could be arranged if I really tried).'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I intend to leave teaching. The industrial action has really affected me. Even if everything goes back to normal and teachers' pay improves, I'm disenchanted. My wife is earning more than me as a Tupperware manager and we're hoping that in the next two years we will be invited to be a husband and wife team. We already have received lots of valuable prizes and holidays as a result of my wife's success and so, since I'm not interested in a senior management or pastoral role, this seems a good opportunity. We've got two young children to bring up and I need

more money and recognition than I get now. It's all very well the Head saying "Thank you" in the staff room but it's not enough.'

The video was a poor quality recording partly because of the dim lighting in the gym, so we gave up after a while and had a discussion based on my notes instead. Roy said he would try to watch the recording at home on a better machine. We examined the criteria and Roy said in the first Section, Personal and Professional Qualities, he placed himself on Level 4: Is able to adopt a variety of roles (including some as an initiator) within the school. I explained that I had placed him on Level 3: Is able to share in a range of professional tasks within the school because, although I knew he was Head of PE, I did not know enough about his activities in school to do otherwise. Roy said, although he had recently lost quite a lot of interest in school, he had fought for improvements, including the renovation of the showers which was taking place currently and the renovation work on the Sports Hall.

When we examined the other sections we found we were in agreement that Roy's lesson had demonstrated Level 4 on the next five sections in that he showed ease in using a variety of social skills as appropriate in the classroom situation; he demonstrated understanding of the contribution to which a planned programme of work made to the whole curriculum; he was able to sustain class cohesion and also a high level of motivation in individual pupils and the material took account of both product and process objectives and he met the needs of a mixed ability class. When we came to Section 7, Recording and Evaluation, we had both selected Level 2: Evaluates the extent to which objectives have been attained and uses evaluation as a spring board for future planning as appropriate. My rejection of the last two levels was based on the recollection of working in a PE department when, although we were aware of individual pupil's performance, we had very little time to keep any form of systematic written record. I had not included Level 4 because I felt Roy had been delivering competent lessons for several years and was not really interested in evaluating his performance or changing it.

Commentary

This was one of the shortest conversations I held. Roy was more

animated when talking about the prospect of selling Tupperware than he was when discussing his teaching. He was fired with enthusiasm for this new venture, and kept coming back to it at intervals. Telling me about it seemed to renew his determination to do something to expedite the change. At the end of our conversation I felt Roy would give no more than he absolutely had to the school and for the sake of the department it would be better if he left soon.

The Second Lesson

Roy was very different in this second lesson. He seemed tired and out of spirits and, although he was just as efficient in keeping all the boys active throughout the lesson, he was not as cheerful and encouraging, but was rather sarcastic and short-tempered. It was a very similar lesson to the last one except that there was much more practice with small apparatus with varying sizes and weights of ball being used and there was no competition at the end.

The Rating Scale Conversation continued....

Roy said he was unsettled and fed up. The problems of dealing with the building of the new Sports Hall were causing him to feel pressured. He said he had managed to watch the video of the previous lesson at home and had also shown it to his family. He was pleased with that lesson and the way the boys had participated well. As we watched the video of the second lesson, he said he was not enjoying watching it as it was far from perfection and just showed him how tired he was. He also mentioned again his wish to leave and pointed out that it was getting near the date when he would need to hand in his notice if he wanted to leave at the end of term. He said he was 'tempted to just go, and take a chance'.

He cheered up somewhat when he told me his wife was now an area training manager, and they were to attend a large party in London given by Tupperware to say 'Thank You' to all the successful sales people and managers. He pointed out that he was not being given a party to say, 'Thank you' for coping with the building work. He felt it was not really his job to supervise the builders or worry about security.

* (Roy was in such a wrought state that I felt he could not really concentrate on discussing his teaching for long and that our conversation was allowing him to let off steam. I felt he was so fixed on the 'green fields and pastures new' of Tupperware promotion that it would be better all round if he was successful in his bid to leave.)

Glen G2F

The Context

Glen was a very self-contained, pleasant person who was courteous, supportive, encouraging and thoughtful. He worked very hard yet he never appeared to be rushed or cross. He rarely wore his suit jacket in school so always looked as if he was really working. He felt that his many duties as Deputy Head impinged on his teaching, so he came very early to school so as to be fully-prepared. I noted, when we were in a meeting with the Headteacher, Glen calmly accepted the fact that Mr Crauley was involved in a long phone call which was wasting Glen's time. He quickly slipped back to his room and prepared for a later interview with parents by bringing back a file to read while Mr Crauley continued phoning and dealing with other business. He said he had become used to this time wasting and tried to use the time gainfully.

The First Lesson

This was a Science lesson. The room, which was not a Science lab, was ready and the progression of the work was already written on the board. Glen had already explained that he arrived at school at 7.30 a.m. to make everything ready in the classroom, as far as he could, so that, should matters connected with being Deputy Head arise, his lessons were ordered and defined. His control was obvious as he checked homework and called the register quickly and efficiently. He indicated to the class the probable time scale for completing the experiments and then they set to work. He circulated the classroom and very pleasantly and humorously exchanged comments with each group.

Glen put the responsibility for discovering the answers on the children and skilfully encouraged this mixed-ability group to think. He used praise effectively and a wide range of facial expressions to encourage the pupils to respond, particularly eye-widening when waiting for an answer and an open smile when he got one.

Moving the class to the front for a change of activity was accomplished very efficiently. The pupils were interested and all involved in the problem-solving activities. Volunteers were asked for and, although it appeared Glen was itching to make the experiment work by taking over, he restrained himself. The class went back to their desks to write up what they actually saw.

His movement round the class continued and Glen was careful to give warning of time limits. A pupil who was wasting time was quietly moved to another desk without any fuss or disruption. The lesson finished in an orderly manner, after next week's development of the topic had been discussed. Homework was not just set, but talked through to prevent any misunderstanding.

The Rating Scale Conversation

Glen said he thought the lesson had been acceptable to-day but there were days when he rushed in at the last minute, with his mind on a school problem. He felt that his pupils were not getting the best Science teaching he could deliver but since he was ambitious he had to go for promotion which meant less and less time actually teaching. The system was wrong, he believed, in that good classroom teaching was not recognised and the only way to move up the pay scale was to move out of the classroom into administration or pastoral duties.

1. Why did you agree to take part in the project?

'I am anxious for evaluation and to review what's going on in a lesson. Such information and feedback is valuable.'

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

'I enjoy teaching. I am conscientious, modest. I think there is room for improvement, I am keen on development. I feel frustrated by the encroachment of administration.'

3. How do you see yourself in the future?

'I enjoy the school environment. I want to be a head - via experience in advisory work or a training college.'

We started to re-construct the lesson immediately afterward. Of particular interest to Glen was how pupils worked when he moved from a group. Glen had already said he was modest and this proved to be so in that some of his gradings were lower than mine. We were in agreement that he was at Level 4 on the first two sections;

- 4: Is able to adopt a variety of roles (including some as an initiator) within the school.**
- 4: Shows ease in using a variety of social skills as appropriate in the classroom situation.**

When we came to Section 3, Planning and Preparation, Glen placed himself on Level 2: Chooses content closely related to stated objectives. Shows evidence that the range of performance of the class has been taken into account. Provides evidence of strategies for a progression of work, whereas I had placed him on Level 4: Demonstrates understanding of the contribution which a planned programme of work is making to the whole curriculum. I was astonished by this low grading but Glen said he really thought that he was losing his overview of the Science curriculum, particularly since it had been changed. He managed to deliver his units but largely depended on past experience to see him through since he did not have enough time to plan properly.

Under the heading for Section 4, Relationships with Pupils (including class control and organisation) again there was a discrepancy. Glen had only placed himself on Level 3: Interaction with pupils shows that encouragement and reception of ideas are more frequent than direction. Is responsive to individuals as well as to the class as a whole. After the well-managed lesson I had seen, my placing was on Level 4: Is able to sustain class cohesion and also a high level of motivation in individual pupils. I felt I had almost to persuade Glen that the lesson had been better than he perceived. Fortunately, although the lighting in the video had been very

pale, we had been able to discern enough for Glen to accept that the class had been motivated and, apart from quietly moving one boy, there had been no lack of cohesion.

Glen had also selected a lower level on the next section, Section 5, Presentation of Materials. He did not consider that he had reached Level 4: The material takes account of both product and process objectives as I did, but placed himself on Level 3: The presentation of the material is closely integrated with verbal discussion e.g. analysis, synthesis. After a discussion about the kind of learning experience that he had provided Glen agreed that in some lessons he probably did reach Level 4 but not always.

For Section 6, Achievement by the Pupils, we both decided that Glen was on Level 3: Uses individual work, group work and resource-based teaching effectively but for Section 7, Recording and Evaluation, Glen had again chosen Level 3: Records and evaluations show a recognition of both process and product dimensions. I had hesitated but thought that he probably would meet the criteria for Level 4: Employs a variety of techniques for self-appraisal. Glen said he did not have much time to systematically evaluate his performance, which is why he had jumped at the chance to take part in the research project, and was in favour of the introduction of the staff development interviews.

Commentary

This was a surprising conversation to hold with a Deputy Head, I thought. Again there was the difference between how I evaluated what I had seen achieved in one lesson and how the teacher viewed his own performance. I was making my judgements about the quality of teaching based on observations of many lessons in many schools, whereas the teachers very often had only their own lessons as a measure. The opportunity to observe, in a focused manner, other teachers teaching was rare. Only the Modern Languages Department had made provision for observing each other and that was largely to evaluate materials.

Although I felt our conversation had offered Glen a useful and welcome opportunity to observe, evaluate and discuss his lesson I did not

feel that our conversation had set any immediate targets or had been particularly thought-provoking. Glen appeared to be very satisfied and grateful but I felt the conversation had been affirmatory but not developmental.

Second Lesson

This was not the same class I had observed earlier because of timetable changes. The class was a mixed second year group. The lesson started with an experiment which involved mixing liquids and noting colour changes and effects. Instructions were clearly given and the class worked really well. There was no fuss despite much moving around by the pupils carrying strong alkalis and test-tubes. Again expected time limits were set firmly, there was much praise and high expectations. Glen structured his lesson well and had clear views on the point and direction of his lesson. He was very clearly in charge and gained instant attention when he required it. His strengths lay in his control and fairness, his high expectations of good behaviour and his interest in both the children and the subject. This lesson was as competent as the first.

The Rating Scale Conversation continued....

Glen had been called out briefly and the class had continued working very well, on the whole. He was interested to see on the video who had worked well in his absence and who had slackened. We looked at our initial ratings and Glen felt that there was some change. He wished he could say he had improved on all fronts, but he was trying, particularly in getting ahead of the new Science syllabus.

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Glen wrote that he was affected by the presence of the camera for the first couple of minutes, then he forgot it was there. He thought that he had been a little affected by the presence of the researcher but 'probably spent more time thinking about kids I hadn't yet got to see (group practical)'. The pupils had been affected by the camera, some more than others with, on the whole, a slight tendency to behave better than usual. He did not view the

video apart from with me but he was willing to show it to anyone.

From watching the video he wrote he had gained, 'An update on mannerisms! Style of approach to pupils/whole class. A valuable mirror!'

Glen's reply to the question, 'Did you learn anything about yourself from talking with the researcher?' was 'Yes - an excellent soundboard from an independent source who had advanced listening skills and had the essential quality of positive reinforcement. The ability to question one's approach and consider alternative styles'.

Questioned about his learning about his class, Glen wrote, 'Oh yes! The extra eye was most helpful! The time when no teacher is present opens up a whole discussion! Yes, to discuss a class in itself is marvellous'.

Glen's attitude to appraisal was 'Positive, before and after. This was well done. I shudder to think of it being done any other way'.

After taking part his attitude had altered in that he was aware of, 'The need for positive support. Time/interruptions are crucial factors. Follow-up work is essential too'.

Glen wrote that he had not made any changes in his own lessons, but had 'many thoughts for staff development, so thanks very much!'

Elaine G2G

The Context

Elaine was a member of the very successful Modern Languages Department. She appeared to be rather anxious when in the staff room but was very welcoming and at ease in the Modern Languages Block. All the Modern Languages teachers were overshadowed, to some degree, by the competence of their Head of Department, Ava G1C.

The First Lesson

This was a highly-motivated examination class, working well towards GCE. Elaine first checked that the homework had been done. Then she held up a set of flash cards showing the form of questions in German. A pupil had to choose someone to answer at random so everyone paid attention in case they were chosen. The activities were changed frequently from oral to written work to listening to a language tape, and the lesson ended with a short test. The pupils changed books to mark the test, so they remained involved. It was a very competent German lesson, very well-managed, stimulating, practical and varied.

The Rating Scale Conversation

Elaine said she was quite pleased with the lesson. It was a good class and a pleasure to teach. Now she had been through the observation she said she wondered whether it would perhaps have been better to observe her teaching a less motivated class. This led into the initial three questions;

1. Why did you join in?

'I like to learn anything. I feel I am not working at my best and could benefit from help.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'After four and a half years I still feel ridiculously new. I have done other things – mainly disastrous – translating, tourism, and working for a charity, none of them wise choices. I feel disorganised.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'Not in teaching for ever – I would like to have a family. I like classroom contact. I don't like exchange work (trips abroad). I don't like dealing with the money side. I feel that is because the people on the other side are awkward and unhelpful. I don't want to be Head of Department. It's too consuming.'

When we looked at the video Elaine said she looked more in charge than she felt. I asked her where she felt disorganised, as there was no sign in this lesson, or in any lesson I had seen in the Department. She thought that a lot of the feeling probably stemmed from coming into teaching later, after doing other things, and feeling she was not as established or experienced a teacher as some of the others. When we considered the experience of the other teachers in the Department, Elaine agreed that she was at least on a par with the others, apart from Ava. She thought Ava was an excellent teacher, an efficient Head of Department and a lovely person. Elaine felt she would never be able to reach that level of efficiency and yet would not want to do it with any less commitment and flair. She said no-one in the Department wanted to take on the job, although they knew Ava was thinking of moving on.

As we watched the lesson Elaine was very pleased by the students' response to the various activities, and said she felt it was really useful to see the pupils in action from a different perspective, and to identify exactly what was happening. She found the discussion very reassuring and was beaming with delight.

When we came to look at the rating scale, which she said she had not had chance to examine beforehand, Elaine quickly scanned each section and

decisively placed herself on Level 4 all the way through. She made no comments about the rating scale. I had placed her as probably on Level 4 all through but I had wanted to ask a few questions to check. I felt Elaine was so lifted by the positive experience of our conversation that it was better to leave the evaluation as it was. Taking into account the quality of the observed lesson, and knowing how thorough were all aspects of the Modern Languages Department's work, I had very little doubt that Elaine was rightly placed.

Commentary

Elaine has found the rating scale conversation really useful. She asked me to observe and discuss a different class, who were lively but less able, rather than visit the same class again. She felt it would be more useful to her. Elaine came to me a few days later and said she had really appreciated the chance to talk about her lesson as she had been feeling somewhat uncertain about her capabilities. Apart from the uncertainty, if Ava left, about the Head of Department post, she explained that her husband, an academic scientist, was not impressed by 'her little job' and felt she should aspire to greater responsibilities. However, as a result of seeing herself in action and being reassured that she was teaching competently, and enjoying it, she had felt more confident. Talking about her teaching had put some of her uncertainties into perspective and she recognised that she could do something very well. She thought she might even apply for Ava's post.

I had made arrangements for another visit but two weeks later Elaine came to tell me that her husband had been head-hunted to lead a very prestigious research project, which entailed moving house. She was leaving as soon as the school would let her and they had found a rented house. She said she was pleased for him but sad to leave such a supportive Department, and hoped she could find an interesting job.

Margery G2H

The Context

Margery was a teacher of middle-age that I hardly saw about the school. This was because she was not full-time and was usually so busy in her cookery room between lessons that she hardly came down to the staff room. She appeared to be experienced and down-to-earth, with a wry, direct manner and seemed somewhat disenchanted with the current changes in the curriculum.

She explained that she regarded herself a teacher of old-fashioned Domestic Science and believed that all pupils should be taught the life skills necessary to look after themselves in the future, particularly as changes in many aspects of life, such as the lack of job security and altered attitudes to marriage often demanded greater self reliance than in the past. Margery wanted the pupils to have an adequate understanding of health, cleanliness and nutrition, and to be able to cook basic, wholesome food. In particular, she was not in favour of an experimental, problem-solving approach to cooking which she considered wasted materials and did not give the pupils the 'skills and thrills' of producing something edible. She was resisting the curriculum changes advocated by the Head of the Art, Design and Technology Faculty.

The First Lesson

The mixed class of second years knew beforehand they were bread-making because some came early and started during break. They were obviously keen and well-prepared. Margery appeared and organised those who had not brought everything they needed. She had a very loud voice with a hectoring tone, and appeared quite brusque and hurried. She came over to me to explain that, because bread-making was very difficult to fit into the allotted time, she felt under considerable pressure and nagged and rushed around, hoping that the bread would rise and be cooked in time.

The children did not appear to be upset by her shouting and largely did what she told them to do willingly. The whole lesson was orchestrated at full volume by Margery. By the end of the double lesson nearly all the bread was cooling and the whole room was in excellent order, spotlessly clean and ready for the next class. Margery examined the finished bread and made favourable comments. The pupils were really pleased with their rolls and loaves. At the very end of the lesson there was some discussion about the factors necessary for successful bread-making and what would be the probable outcome if any of these factors were omitted, but it was not developed or given any particular significance. Margery appeared to be extremely relieved when the lesson was over.

** (I was relieved too. I had found listening to her voice for a double lesson was quite a strain, no doubt because I was not involved in any activity other than listening and watching.)*

The Rating Scale Conversation

Margery was glad to sit down and very willing to talk. I felt she was probably quite isolated because of working part-time and being the only teacher who taught her subject. She said that bread-making lessons were the ones she dreaded because of the need to allow time for the dough to rise. Cakes were much easier because there was no waiting. I told her I was impressed by the fact that a variety of types of bread had been made in the time and that the room was perfectly ready for the next class. I asked her the three questions;

1. Why did you join in?

'My first reaction was "Oh, my God!" then there was a kind of group hysteria – not liking to be different – then I thought it sounded quite exciting.'

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

'Sometimes great, sometimes not – like this morning! Mixed-ability classes bring difficulties. I enjoy my job but feel I am always

battling against time. There is never enough time. There is no meaningful discussion. It's a case of cleanliness v. chat. The kids don't benefit and I'm frustrated. The biggest problem is when the kids don't bring the ingredients. I would put myself 3 on a 1-5 scale. The kids should be making discoveries but ingredients cost money. There is no money for experimental work. I can't ask kids to bring ingredients for disasters. I feel one must be physically fit. I'm on my feet all the time. You need a sense of humour and a strong back!

3. How do you see yourself in the future?

'At my age I can't get any further, unless I go full-time. I am only paid part-time but I do a Head of Department's job. The subject is not given any status so there will be no developments there.'

When I came to play back the video of the lesson I discovered the camera had not recorded the sound. Margery was both very disappointed and a little relieved. We had a short discussion about the lesson and I offered to video two more lessons as the first recording had not worked. Margery agreed.

The Second Lesson

On the next visit I saw a very different lesson. Margery was markedly different, smiling and friendly, and much more encouraging. This time the pupils were making soup. Again, the pupils were prepared with their ingredients brought from home and eager to get started. There were worksheets ready for making each kind of soup. A few children were not cooking and these were set to copy work and given some questions to answer. One of this group wasted a lot of time showing off and trying to disrupt those who were working. Margery was very much calmer. She was pleasant and helpful, but still demonstrated a strongly authoritarian approach. She kept her eyes on all the groups who were cooking and stepped in quite often, perhaps taking over too much. As in the first lesson, the pupils were absorbed (on the whole) in their tasks and Margery kept them

on their toes by reminding them of the next task and urging them to tidy up as they went. Miraculously, everything was clean and back in its place by the end of the lesson and a good quantity of soup had been made by nearly all the pupils.

The Rating Scale Conversation continued....

Margery was excited at the prospect of viewing the lesson and paid great attention to the video. She said, 'I am amazed by how much ground I cover during the lesson. No wonder my legs are tired!' She was also surprised by the behaviour of the boy who was supposed to be doing written tasks. She said she had not noticed just what a nuisance he had been to the others and how he had interfered when she was busy elsewhere. We could see on the video that he was careful to note what she was doing before messing with the other pupils' utensils or throwing bits of paper on the benches. She was surprised by how tolerant of him the other pupils were, and how they had ignored him whenever possible. She said she would have to think about how to avoid this happening again. In the past she had been able to provide the ingredients for all the class to buy, but now she had no budget, so if a pupil did not remember the ingredients then he or she was not able to cook in that lesson.

We considered the kind of task that was usually set and Margery admitted that the work was often repetitive. She would give serious thought to preventing this sort of hidden behaviour.

I drew Margery's attention to the high degree of involvement and enjoyment of those cooking and their satisfied expressions at the end of the lesson when they were arranging to collect their soup to take home. She said they really liked to be able to take things home, and many of them made the dishes again for their families, particularly small cakes and quiches.

Using the video of this second lesson but occasionally referring to the first observed lesson, we then moved on to consider the Kingston rating form (Figure 8). We found we were in agreement on each section. On Section 1, Personal and Professional Qualities, we had both selected Level 3: Is able to share in a range of professional tasks within the school. In the next

four sections we were agreed on Level 4. In Section 6, Achievement by the Pupils, we both decided on Level 3: Uses individual work, group work and resource-based teaching effectively.

On Section 7, Recording and Evaluation, I had assumed, on the basis of our extended conversations, that Margery probably was on Level 4: Employs a variety of techniques for self-appraisal but she had selected Level 2: Evaluates the extent to which objectives have been attained and uses evaluation as a spring board for future planning as the appropriate level. She queried the wording of the criteria on this section.

The Third Lesson

When I arrived to observe this lesson I was surprised to find a different class. The groups had moved on and Margery was at the beginning of a new cycle. This was a demonstration lesson where Margery prepared bread and soup. The demonstration was very well done. Margery gave many tips and anecdotes from her own experience to make the demonstration interesting and colourful. The pupils were very interested and asked many questions. They were encouraged to follow the processes from a worksheet and they finished the lesson by writing up descriptions of the methods in their exercise books with support from text books.

The Rating Scale Conversation continued....

When I asked Margery about the lesson she said she enjoyed the demonstration lessons because they set the scene for the following course. I commented on how she was more relaxed each time I saw her and how her enthusiasm came across to the pupils. Margery said she needed to feel successful somewhere in her life as she had many unresolved domestic problems. She was glad to be able to tell someone because she found herself at odds with the Head of Department. She felt she could not tell him about her problems because he was a man, he was younger than her, a 'workaholic' and impatient of those less dynamic than himself. He was never ill and had no children so she felt he would have no sympathy with any of her difficulties, especially since they disagreed so strongly about her subject.

We re-examined the rating scales together and Margery commented that she had been thinking and talking about her teaching a great deal and had watched the videos a few times. She would move herself up the scales generally since she was so much more conscious of what she was doing and aware of what she needed to do.

Commentary

It was interesting to see the usual process in reverse so that I saw the demonstration after I had seen the practical. The opportunity to observe Margery three times was fortunate in that each time I learnt more about how she taught, and gained a wider understanding of the content of the course. It was a salutary reminder of how easy it would be to make erroneous judgements based on one observation if there was no negotiation between observer and teacher.

Margery's cheerful demeanour and more confident approach as the visits and conversations continued emphasised the value of extended support in developing teachers' self-esteem and achieving any sustained improvement in teaching performance.

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Margery was affected a little by the presence of the camera. She wrote, 'On the first occasion I was much more aware of it than on the second and third. More conscious of my movements and what I was saying'. She reported that the presence of an observer made her 'play to an audience'.

She thought a few of the pupils were affected and were better behaved than usual. After the first visit, she wrote, 'I was more relaxed and used to the machine and the observer, therefore the children tended to ignore it more'.

She had made good use of her video. She watched her video alone, more than once, with her family and with the class. The comments reported were, 'My own children at home - Boring! They didn't know anyone in it

besides me! The pupils in the class were interested to see themselves on the TV, particularly two children who kept appearing on the screen'. Margery was prepared to show her video to anyone.

From watching the video, Margery reported she had learnt, 'I walk miles each day. If I keep calm and relaxed it rubs off on the children. The few who do not want to work need particular attention. It is difficult in a practical lesson when the children are not sitting down - difficult to curtail them. I came across as quite interesting, amusing at times and I seemed to have got most of the children's attention. This surprised me'.

From talking with the researcher, Margery said she had learnt, 'The second session was better as I didn't realise I must have been affected by the camera and equipment. I was much more 'uptight' on the first occasion. Again the mood - relaxed or otherwise - has a great effect on the class'.

Margery stated that before taking part her attitude had been, 'Reluctant to join but did not want to appear the "odd one out". Fear of the camera and an observer'. Afterwards her attitude was, 'Great - really enjoyed it. I would like a job on TV'.

As a result of taking part Margery listed the following changes;

'Deliberate policy to be calm, unruffled!

More attention to finding interesting work for the few who do not take part in practical lessons to prevent disruption'.

Bub G2J

The Context

Bub was the Head of Science. He was very quietly spoken, pleasant and unassuming. He had strong views on curriculum development and was trying to bring the Department up-to-date with a new curriculum, and to support all the members of his Department in the design and implementation of the units of the Integrated Science Course. He had extra concerns, firstly, because of a teacher who was not fulfilling her responsibilities and secondly, because the Headteacher had just suggested a new faculty structure which would amalgamate Science and Maths. He had asked both Heads of Department to apply for the post of Faculty Head, but neither of them wanted it. Bub said his priority was to get the Science Department running properly rather than take on any more management responsibilities.

The First Lesson

This was a large mixed class (for a practical subject) of 24 third year pupils. The class waited outside, and came in very noisily when Bub told them to come in. Bub said 'Good morning'. Only a few answered but the noise lessened considerably. It was obviously a very lively class. Bub settled them but they were not totally attentive. Bub waited for total attention, which took some time, and then quickly recapped the last lesson. Then he moved to the back of the class for a demonstration.

The pupils were quite giddy at the beginning of the lesson and some were playing around. Bub ignored trifling misdemeanours and continued with the lesson, demonstrating with enthusiasm, and expecting the pupils to join in. He asked questions skilfully and related relevant anecdotes. Gradually the interest of the pupils became more focused on the work. He achieved this gradual improvement without reprimanding anyone. Eventually the pupils were all listening well. The pupils moved from bench to seats very quickly, with no fussing. Questions were prepared on an over-

head projector, which Bub switched on at this stage. He read out the questions and made sure everyone understood them. Then the class was set to write the answers in books, drawing on the experiments they had seen.

Bub's enthusiasm for his subject and encouraging voice were very effective. He spoke very quietly and intimately which had a calming effect and gradually gathered the children's interest very skilfully by asking questions from all sides of the group and looking as if he really wanted to know what they thought. This strategy took a little time to secure the interest of the whole class, but once Bub had achieved it there was no further loud behaviour.

The Rating Scale Conversation

I asked Bub how he felt about the lesson. He was 'fairly happy' with it, he said. We discussed how excitable they had been before they had even come in, and I complemented him on his patience and skill in bringing the pupils to a calmer level of behaviour without raising his voice. Bub seemed surprised that this should be noteworthy because it was 'just how I am'.

Briefly I described other beginnings of lessons I had observed and assured him that I had not seen many teachers 'win over' a potentially difficult class so quietly and successfully. Bub was very keen to observe the behaviour of the pupils, particularly after my comments, and was surprised by how much more he could observe when he was not occupied in gaining their attention. He acknowledged that he had dealt successfully with their rowdy entrance and could see that if he had gone outside to quieten them he could have got their interest even earlier. He could see what I meant by the absence of any telling off and the effect of quiet expectation of interest, but he had not thought that was anything special.

We discussed the advantage of seeing other people teach and how secondary school teachers often only caught glimpses of other teachers teaching. He commented on the amount of time some pupils spent not actually doing anything, either before getting started, or between tasks or because they had finished and were waiting to be told what was next. That was an area he would tighten up, he said, now he had seen it. Bub said he

felt he was 'fairly comfortable' with his teaching but perhaps had become so keen on getting his pupils to enjoy Science that he had become less observant as to what was actually going on.

When we looked at the rating form, we had both selected Level 4 on the first three sections, taking in to account that Bub had recently introduced a new Science curriculum, had demonstrated a variety of appropriate social skills and had an overview of the whole curriculum.

When we examined Section 4, Relationships with Pupils (including class control and organisation), Bub had placed himself on Level 2: Secures attention sufficiently to allow effective learning. Changes class organisation smoothly to suit changing activities e.g. at the beginning or end of a lesson. I had hesitated between Level 3 and 4 and then had placed him on Level 3: Interaction with pupils shows that encouragement and reception of ideas are more frequent than direction. Is responsive to individuals as well as to the class as a whole. However, when we reviewed the balance of the activities, Bub felt that while he was receptive of the pupils' ideas he was keener to direct them to what he wanted them to do. He said he would not claim to reach Level 4: Is able to sustain class cohesion and also a high level of motivation in individual pupils. There were some pupils and, occasionally, some classes, that he found hard to motivate. I explained that I thought that for a large part of the lesson he had achieved Level 4 and perhaps the criteria were not as logically structured as they could be.

In Section 5, Presentation of Materials, after much discussion we settled on Level 4: The material takes account of both product and process objectives. In Section 6, Achievement by the Pupils, we agreed that Level 3: Uses individual work, group work and resource-based teaching effectively was appropriate, and on Section 7, Recording and Evaluation, we both suggested Level 4: Employs a variety of techniques for self-appraisal.

Commentary

This was a long conversation. Although it was very detailed about the lesson, it was difficult to pin Bub down to a clear statement because he frequently referred to other pupils and other lessons, as well as to his Departmental problems. Gradually I realised that, as well as trying to use the

rating form to evaluate his performance generally, as Stephan had done, Bub was considering the rating scale as an instrument for observation in his Department, and was seeking to become conversant with the levels of the sections by thinking of appropriate examples.

We talked about other observational techniques, and how to manage the introduction of observation in a Department in a fair, positive and developmental way. At this stage Bub wanted to try to use peer observation to help with the new curriculum and also to help do something about the poor performance of one teacher.

The Second Lesson

This was a lesson with the same class. They were much less noisy at the beginning of the lesson than they were previously and much more subdued throughout. This was a revision lesson where Bub was taking them through the units covered. He was encouraging them to ask about any areas they wanted clarifying and making sure they all had the notes they needed in their books. There was discussion of how to revise. Bub said he could not give them any idea of the examination questions because they had not been finalised. The class was given some time to revise (either on their own or by asking each other questions) or to copy up missing notes.

The Rating Scale Conversation continued....

There was not a great deal to discuss about the lesson. Bub reported that he had watched the copy of the video of the first lesson again and was surprised to find something new to notice each time. He only wished there was time to develop the video-recording of lessons. He was convinced that he had to get his Department observing each other, even without the use of video, but had had a negative response, even from the most go-ahead teacher. They were prepared to be observed by him or me but not by each other. I suggested that probably no-one wanted to be asked to observe Chris, whose poor performance was causing resentment and perhaps her difficulties needed addressing separately. There needed to be a climate of trust between the teachers in the Department which was missing at the moment.

We looked again at the rating form and Bub said he had thought over our conversation. He now agreed that he was probably where I had put him on Section 4 but he felt that the other agreed levels were still about the same.

Commentary

I felt Bub had so much on his plate. He had good ideas, cared about his subject and the Department and was willing to work hard but was deluged by change and badly let down by the poor performance of a crucial post holder.

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Bub found that he had been a little affected by the presence of the camera and the researcher. He wrote, 'It makes one calmer-mannered'. He thought the pupils were affected by the camera on both occasions in that they behaved differently but he did not specify how. He had watched the video more than once, with others and commented that it was, 'Interesting to see things that I normally would not notice about pupils' behaviour and one's own mannerisms'. He was prepared to show his video for teaching purposes to other members of staff.

He thought that watching the video, 'shows up areas which need attention', and when talking with me 'things were pointed out which seem normal practice but were commented on positively as being not normal practice'. He had learnt about his teaching that 'whilst general class control is adequate, individuals do things which are unnoticed'.

Bub described his attitude to appraisal before taking part as 'Not concerned - no harm could come from it - only good could result', and this had not changed. As a result of taking part he had made the following changes;

'Tried to give less slack time (after first video).

Tried to pick on positive points in other people's teaching.

Have suggested that others watch colleagues teaching to gain ideas and look for what works well'.

Marnie G2K

The Context

Marnie taught PE. She was about thirty years old, always appeared to be in a rush and almost crackled with nervous energy. She barely sat down at staff meetings and rushed her drink at break. She said she was really keen to talk about her teaching and arranged to meet after school so we could give plenty of time to our conversation without interruption.

The First Lesson

This was an outdoor Games lesson with third year girls in the first two lessons of the day. It was a rather bleak day. Many of the girls were reluctant to get changed into sports kit but Marnie urged them and encouraged them and eventually energised them. They were arranged in small groups and set to practising skills, then playing games of netball. Marnie circulated round the groups, from court to court, joining in and praising their efforts. She was brisk and energetic, using lots of praise and encouragement to keep the momentum and worked hard to include all girls and make the lesson lively.

The Rating Scale Conversation

Marnie thought the lesson had 'not been too bad considering the group and the weather'. She remarked that some of the girls wanted to be in the house or school teams but did not want to practise and did not seem to see the connection between turning up to practice and being selected. We discussed the difficulties of dealing with a tendency for some girls to be embarrassed about appearing in shorts for outside activities, particularly in the third year.

When I remarked on how well the lesson had developed, despite the girls' initial reluctance, Marnie attributed this partly to the fact that she could generally out-perform the girls. She believed a crucial factor in getting them to join in was that she was not asking them to do anything she could not do,

nor stay out longer than she did.

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'I've always been interested in styles of teaching and the appropriate styles of teaching. I have just recently attended a course on styles of teaching so I joined for curiosity reasons. I'm not inflexible and welcome constructive criticism. I'm the kind of person who jumps in. I invariably join in although I hesitated, I waited for a colleague. I'm hoping it will lead to discussions between me and Roy. It should reveal the strengths and weaknesses in a large Department and help in getting the best out of children.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I feel I'm too direct in my teaching. PE means 90% organisation. I need structure. I am aware of the need for change. Teaching PE is always allied to weather conditions. I teach by demonstration but I'm not as fast as I was but doing gives credibility. I tend to get involved personally with the children. I think it's good for communication and awareness. I am quite pastorally oriented. I have few personal confrontations but it rebounds if a child is vindictive towards me. Occasionally my bounciness annoys them.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'Not necessarily becoming more active. I need to fit the style to the activity and find a more creative structure in the aesthetic aspects. I can present skills in a problem-solving way. When I came back from the course I tried new ways and I will apply this to netball skills. As for my career, I'm ready now for Head of Department but there are not many vacancies. I would like to move into teaching Drama. Perhaps I could do a theatre production course or some kind of theatre course. Adviser? I'm not that career-minded. I don't have ambition. I am interested in pastoral work but I have no time with all the matches, etc. When it comes to having

children that's a personal problem area. Adoption is my main aim. To have a family is a "Catch 22" situation for us.'

Marnie became upset when she was talking about adoption. She explained she and her husband had successfully undergone vetting to be adoptive parents but had heard nothing for eighteen months. She said she was in a state of uncertainty, whether to try for another job or keep on hoping to be contacted about a baby. She confided that she managed best by not thinking about it and keeping busy.

We then watched the video. Marnie had already been experimenting with different approaches, as a result of the course on teaching styles. She had decided that she was generally too 'autocratic' and was working towards becoming 'democratic' so she was keen to see how she appeared to the pupils. This video was a collection of extracts rather than a whole lesson, as I had tried to film the initial session when the girls were all together and then had filmed groups on the netball courts. Marnie was particularly interested in watching what she did not normally have the chance to see and also in hearing my interpretation of what was taking place. She said she was surprised how much energy she spent in chivvying and how she appeared rather more dismissive than she realised when dealing with what she decided were girls' excuses, not reasons, for not taking part. We watched individual girl's reactions and discussed how difficult it must be for one girl, who was fat and subject to teasing, to go through the agony of wearing shorts. Marnie said she herself had always loved all forms of physical exercise and perhaps did not always sympathise enough with those who shirked PE, partly because she felt they needed the exercise and knew some would never take part given the chance of escape.

One particular incident caught Marnie's attention. Towards the end of the lesson, after Marnie had left one group to visit another and was out of sight, one girl deliberately threw the ball over the fence and then argued noisily with the other girls for a long time about who would retrieve it. Marnie was quite surprised by this incident, She said she expected them to be 'a bit less keen' when her attention was elsewhere but expected that once a game was going that the impetus would carry them on, especially in cold weather. She had not realised the degree to which they 'messed about',

particularly when it meant they stood around waiting in the cold. She asked, 'Didn't they know they were being filmed?' I explained that it was quite likely that the girls were uncertain whether they were being filmed because I did not look through the viewfinder all the time.

Marnie appeared quite dismayed by this episode. I pointed out that this incident had taken place almost at the end of a very active lesson, had really been caused by one girl and that, like so many teachers, she was homing in on a small incident perceived to be a fault, rather than looking at her excellent performance during the whole lesson. She said she did tend to worry if anything was not as she wanted.

Marnie was very interested in the rating form. She had found it very useful and easy to use. She had no queries about the order of any criteria, although she thought the language could be clearer. As we went through each section we found we were in agreement all the way through that Marnie was on Level 4. We spent a long time discussing whether it was ever possible to fully meet the needs of a mixed ability class, but decided that Marnie was providing a positive environment wherein each girl's level of aptitude was recognised, and where she had the opportunity to develop and to have her contribution valued. Marnie was very gratified to find that there was no difference in our evaluations, and said she had found our conversation very reassuring at a time when the PE Department was 'not a happy place to be'.

Commentary

As happened frequently in these conversations, Marnie revealed those very personal concerns underlying her professional performance. She was in conflict with the Head of PE but dealt with it very professionally, mentioning it as a factor affecting her work at school but not dwelling on it. She had been excited to talk about teaching styles and to recognise that she was making developmental targets for herself.

I was pleased that Marnie had enjoyed our conversation and relieved that she was eager to be observed again because I felt that when a teacher was placed on Level 4 on all sections the point of using the rating scale was

completed and the need for a further conversation diminished.

The Second Lesson

Timetable changes meant that this was not the class I had observed before but was a class of second years. It was a cold, windy day and Marnie said she would adapt her lesson to the weather. She had planned to train for a track event but she would have to adapt it to keep all the girls moving more. The lesson began with a session of reciprocal teaching with each girl teaching a partner a warm-up exercise. Marnie cut down the number of hurdles to two lines of four hurdles instead of eight. She seemed more relaxed and made more spur of the moment decisions to adapt the lesson to the pupils' responses than she had in the earlier lesson.

The Rating Scale Conversation continued....

Marnie said she was pleased because she had managed to get all the girls involved. She had made it light-hearted on purpose because of the cold weather but she said, 'I could have been better organised'. She told me after our first conversation she had been working hard at making sure that the girls were not left to lose interest. She was continuing to experiment with being less directive, and appearing to be more relaxed and 'jokey'. She said she was introducing more opportunities for training each other in pairs or small groups which was working really well. Another change she was trying was to encourage the girls to identify what was needed in terms of particular skills or strategies rather than just to instruct them, and then to evaluate themselves. She said the changes were not necessarily very noticeable but she felt less fraught and was pleased to feel that she was gradually changing her style, as she had wanted.

She told me she would have increased responsibility in the next school year because the Head of PE was leaving. She was excited by the prospect although she felt uncertain about how the new post would work.

** (Marnie was suddenly informed about the availability of a very young baby for adoption. She was shocked, ecstatic and panic-stricken. The LEA allowed her to to leave immediately. Marnie*

*brought the baby into school to show to everyone at end of term.
She reported she was tired but very happy.)*

Figure 21

Collated Scores from Ratings

	G2A	G2B	G2C	G2D	G2E	G2F	G2G	G2H	G2J	G2K
1	3/3	4/4	3/3	3/4	4/3	4/4	4/4	3↑/3	4/4	4/4
2	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4
3	3↑/3	4/4	4/4	2/3	4/4	2↑/4	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4
4	3↑/3	4/4	4/4	3/4	4/4	3↑/4	4/4	4/4	4/3	4/4
5	3↑/3	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4	3/4	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4
6	3↑/3	4/4	3/3	3/3	4/4	3/3	4/4	3↑/3	3/3	4/4
7	3↑/3	4/4	3/3	3/4	2/2	3/4	4/4	2↑/4	4/4	4/4
	-1			+4	-1	+4		+2	+1	
	Q		Q	Q	Q			Q		

The numbers down the left side of the grid represent the seven sections on the rating scale. The teachers' self-ratings are in the upper triangle, my ratings are in the lower. The differences in our ratings, plus or minus, are shown in the first row of boxes. Those teachers who commented on the order of the levels within a section are indicated by the letter Q.

After the second conversation, any agreed improvement, in all cases of one level, is indicated in red. Where a teacher indicated that he or she felt they were working towards the next level this is indicated by an arrow.

3.v The Control Group - Group 3

The control group consisted of ten teachers randomly selected from the thirty who initially agreed to take part in the project. The different levels of involvement and intervention for each of the three groups had been clearly explained, as had the random assigning. At the beginning they had agreed to take part in whichever group they were placed. When I approached the members of this group individually to explain which group they were in, what that involved, and to arrange the first visit, each teacher appeared to find this acceptable. However, after I had finished recording the lesson of a teacher in this group, she approached me and asked how I felt the lesson had gone. She appeared to be agitated and obviously wanted to talk about the lesson and receive some reassurance. She said, 'I know you are not supposed to say anything but surely, off the record, you will tell me how I'm doing'.

** (This was a difficult situation. I already had misgivings about the point or practicality of using a group as a control where there would be no conversation. This teacher's request for feedback reinforced my unease. I felt really uncomfortable. Although I had really not anticipated this response, because I felt that I had explained what would happen so clearly and checked that that was acceptable, I realised it was unnatural and unfair not to discuss the lesson.*

Another disquieting result of undertaking this visit to a member of the control group, which compounded my initial misgivings, was the realisation that just the presence of an observer and a camera was, in itself, an intervention. The expectation of the visit would probably have made the teacher think about her teaching, she may have prepared more thoroughly and it most likely had some effect on the pupils. 'When someone new comes into a classroom, then the very presence of an additional adult who is not normally present may itself influence what happens' (Wragg et al. 1996).

Her request indicated that the experience of being observed and filmed had had a strong effect, and not to be able to discuss this experience was frustrating for both of us. However, despite all these concerns, at this time, I felt I had to continue with the imposed research structure.)

I reminded her of the requirement for the control group to receive no intervention. I suggested that we could have a conversation after the required second visit, if she would be kind enough to wait. This was acceptable.

In the light of this experience, I offered to each of the teachers in Group 3 the option to have a conversation about their teaching after the second required visit. These conversations varied in length and type according to the teacher's preference. Although these conversations are outside the parameters of the original research programme, some teachers asked for a repertory grid Learning Conversation. The grids elicited are to be found in Appendix 10. I shall develop the issues of changing research methodology in Chapter 5, 'Evaluations and Reflections: Paradigms of Research and Action Research'.

Maryann G3A

The Context

Maryann was a young teacher in her second year of teaching. She appeared quite defensive in the staff room but was very relaxed and friendly with pupils, with whom she was popular.

The First Lesson

This was a Maths lesson, with a mixed group of fifth year, low ability pupils, revising the formulae for finding the circumference and area of circles for an internal examination. Maryann gave a quick revision of the formulae on the board. She then demonstrated two examples, asking for answers, before setting the class to work some examples in their books. Maryann made no attempt to make the topic interesting, but did stress the need to be able to use these formulae in a forthcoming examination.

The pupils worked very slowly, and there was a good deal of good-natured banter exchanged. Maryann prevented any real disturbance by circulating round the tables and giving individuals careful, patient explanations, so motivating them to continue. The lesson seemed very long and no change of activity was offered. Eventually, the class lost interest in the work and tried to start conversations, hinting that talking was what they usually did. They said, 'Why are we doing work today? We usually just talk.'

The task did not appear to have any interest for this class. I felt that these pupils could have become unruly and while Maryann was not managing to persuade them to do much work, she was preventing them from becoming disruptive.

Commentary

Maryann had a good relationship with these pupils, who obviously had no liking for application to tasks. I felt that she was avoiding

confrontation and was containing this group of pupils, having lowered her expectations of teaching them much. She exhibited a wry, amused tolerance. The pupils accepted her as being interested in them and understanding their attitudes while still trying to teach them something and maintaining the rules of the school. In terms of teaching Maths, this was not a good lesson but, as an example of mutual tolerance and a degree of co-operation, it was skilfully managed. Maryann needed support from her Head of Department in providing more relevant materials and planning for more changes in activities.

** (I felt most uneasy after this lesson. Although Maryann said nothing, she looked embarrassed and defiant. I was impressed by how she had persuaded the pupils to do some work and felt that there were many aspects of her management that merited positive comments, but, because she was in Group 3, I was unable to make them. I felt very uncomfortable at the time, a discomfort which increased as I recognised that I had behaved in an unnatural and apparently unsympathetic manner which could only have negative results. What a disastrous contrast this was to a repertory grid Learning Conversation!)*

The Second Lesson

The second lesson was better but not inspiring. It was a fourth year class, because the fifth year had left, but again of lower ability. The class knew they would not be taking any external exams in this subject and did not really want to work for the approaching internal exams. This class was the most affected by the presence of the camera and some pupils were rather silly. Again, Maryann used her considerable skills to try to keep them working but I felt that such lessons were regarded by the pupils as time-filling and irrelevant. However, good humour prevailed and some work and revision was achieved. I felt exhausted just watching her keeping the pupils on task as much as she could.

The Questionnaire Conversation

Maryann was very relieved when the observations were complete and I felt she was embarrassed because neither lesson had been very successful. She seemed quite happy to receive no feedback at the time. After the second observation, I asked Maryann the three questions;

1. Why did you join in?

‘Nerys got me in a half-Nelson!’

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

‘Most of the time I enjoy teaching. I’m sometimes frustrated. I like children. They amuse me. I’m quite patient.’

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

‘I live at home so I would want to stay local.’

Commentary

There was a discrepancy between Maryann’s claim to enjoy teaching and what I had observed. It did not appear that Maryann had enjoyed teaching either of the lessons. I felt it was sad and ironic that Maryann, as the first teacher in Group 3 and, therefore, not intended to receive any feedback, was clearly in need of support, and probably needed to talk about her teaching more than many of the other teachers I had visited. I wondered if the Senior Management Team were aware of her situation.

Later, Maryann and I had several conversations in which we discussed her feelings about dealing with the number of low-ability classes she had been allocated and the lack of Departmental support. She revealed that she felt powerless because she was new to teaching. Maryann described how she ‘just struggled on’ and tried to do the best she could. The situation was getting better, she claimed, as the pupils accepted her, and she was becoming firmer in dealing with them. She had lost her temper a few times which had subdued some pupils for a while but had left her upset. We discussed actions she might take to help herself.

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Maryann reported that she found the presence of the video-camera had affected her a great deal, as had my presence. She described the experience as 'Nerve-wracking!' She found that 'some pupils were better-behaved and supportive, whilst others regarded it as an opportunity to play up.'

She had watched the video alone and although she said she felt 'Embarrassment!', she was willing to show it to others. Watching the video had 'confirmed suspicions about some pupils when one's back is turned'. She reported, 'Being observed makes me nervous, so I reacted defensively. I think you become "used to observers". It's a new experience (since teaching practice)'.

Myra G3B

The Context

Myra was a part-time member of the Modern Languages Department. She was very concerned to be as effective as the other, full-time, members of the Department, but had family commitments that prevented her from giving as much time to her job as some of the others.

The First Lesson

Myra delivered an extremely competent German lesson, very similar in construction to other Modern Language lessons I had observed, in that she used a variety of visual aids and techniques. The topic was 'Typical Meals in Germany'. After a brief, general introduction, there were many new words introduced. Myra interspersed these with anecdotes. There was an oral translation exercise with good translations from the class. A set of flash cards showing pictures of food was used for a game in pairs. The pupils were divided into two teams, numbered round the class and paired by number. When their number was called, the first of a pair to put up his or her hand was allowed to answer. If the answer was wrong, the partner had a try. The next activity was a change to working in exercise books. The work was ready on the board.

Was magst du?

What do you like?

Ich Mag ...

I like ...

Myra managed the lesson from the front, standing the whole time, as I had seen in other Modern Language lessons, giving total attention and encouragement all the time. The pupils looked involved and joined in eagerly.

Commentary

Myra was rather tense at first but soon got in to her stride. After the lesson, Myra was anxious and said she thought the children had been a little affected by the video. She asked me for comments on her lesson, although she had agreed not to receive any. I talked the situation through and agreed to talk to her immediately after the next observation.

The Second Lesson

This was a very similar lesson to the first in that Myra worked hard to keep the pupils' interest by changing the activity frequently, and involving them in speaking, both to her and to each other. The topic was sports activities. During the lesson the pupils were introduced to the new vocabulary and then practised how to ask someone which sports they liked and how to invite them to take part.

The Questionnaire Conversation

Myra had said she wanted general feedback on her teaching, so I arranged for us to watch the video together, after I had asked her the three questions;

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'I thought it would help me – I would see how I am. I've been out of teaching for six years, so it's a techniques and reassurance thing.'

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

'I'm dedicated and I care. I am more effective with some groups. It depends on the rapport.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I have no great ambition. I like the day-to-day contact. I don't want to be Head of Department. It's too consuming.'

We watched the video together and Myra was very pleased with our

discussion. She was pleased to see herself in action and found the process of observing and discussion very reassuring. There were very many positive incidents to analyse. Myra was particularly interested in watching the pupils' levels of attention, which had been maintained throughout. She said she was happy with what she had seen of herself and it was 'not bad for a little 'un'. We discussed the Modern Languages Department's style of presentation and she reported that she had been 'helped tremendously' by the willingness to share resources and ideas of the others when she had first returned to teaching and was grateful for the excellent working relationships within the Department. She enjoyed working in the Department because of the friendliness and because the courses were all so organised. There was still room for individual preferences but, if one teacher was off, any of the others could stand in without any difficulty.

Myra was very grateful for our conversation and thanked me profusely. It had provided her with the insights and reassurance that she had needed.

Reponses to Final Questionnaire

Myra wrote, 'I felt very self-conscious indeed and my lesson did not flow well. I was conscious of the observer - but I felt she was sympathetic to me. I did not watch the video with the class but now, at this stage, I feel we could enjoy it together.'

She had looked at the video on her own, and would be prepared to show it to others. From watching the video, Myra reported she had learnt about herself, 'I'm not keen on being video-ed! I feel I'm fairly self-critical anyway and particularly this teaching year, having been at home for 6 years with my children. After watching the video, she felt much more confident about her teaching because, 'it helps to see the strategies you set in motion from the pupils' viewpoint'. She did not feel she had learnt much about her class, either from the video or from talking with the researcher.

Myra stated she had learnt about herself from talking to the observer. She wrote, 'I found her comments useful and would have welcomed more of them. I think it would help to know where each individual slots into the overall picture - without viewing others in the classroom, we are sometimes

working in isolation. I felt this particularly because of the long gap out of teaching and all the new ideas. I think she triggered ideas in my mind which have helped me to become more confident in my teaching ability'.

Myra described her attitude to being appraised, before she joined in, as 'very keen - I felt it would help me to know if I was "on the right track" in my attempts to modify my former teaching style, which was traditional, class-orientated, etc. Now I am trying all sorts of things, group work, projects, etc.'.

Her reply to the question, 'Has your attitude changed?' was, 'Yes slightly. I found the camera intrusive and unwelcome, although I did welcome the observer's presence and comments'.

As a result of taking part, Myra claimed, 'I am trying to be more encouraging to pupils and I have relaxed more with the particular group with whom I was observed'.

Auriel G3C

The Context

Auriel was a member of the Modern Languages Department. She worked closely with Ava, the Head of Department. The quality of the teaching the members of this Department provided was recognised within the county and they all contributed to teachers' in-service courses.

The First Lesson

This was a German lesson with twenty-six mixed pupils in the third year. The topic was the modes of transport the pupils used and the frequency of use. The class was settled, attentive and involved. Auriel started with flash cards in a question-and-answer session. She valued every response, usually by saying 'Yes - very good' or 'That is right' in German. She spoke German as much as possible. She went round the class randomly asking, 'How did you come to school?' She then moved to an overhead transparency showing forms of staff transport. Next she introduced adverbs, with which the pupils helped to produce a written chart and then checked the answers.

The next activity was listening to a tape which covered all the words and structures introduced. The pupils were required to write down a symbol or an initial for the answers. There was a quick check by changing books for marking. The pupils were then directed to a linked passage in a text book, 'Deutsche Heute' which reinforced the practice with adverbs. The pupils appeared involved all the way through.

The Second Lesson

This was the same class, but since my last visit quite a few pupils had opted to give up German at the end of the term. These were no longer working at anything like the same rate. Auriel dealt skilfully with several

topics as she was revising as well as checking for any missing work. She worked hard to maintain the pupils' interest, when several had lost motivation.

Commentary

Again it was a very competent, well-prepared lesson, but there was a little less sparkle. Auriel said she felt she had 'lost' them and was becoming more stern and threatening. She felt she had to complete the syllabus for those pupils who had opted to take German next year.

Auriel felt sufficiently satisfied with her Language teaching to join in the research project, but when it was suggested that all the members of the Social Education Team had another video-recording made of a PSE lesson for discussion, Auriel declared she did not feel confident enough. Nerys remembered that Auriel had only recently joined the Social Education group and recalled how nervous she herself had felt at the beginning of the work on Social Education.

The Questionnaire Conversation

Although in Group 3, Auriel said she would like to have a repertory grid conversation about her teaching, but before we began to watch the video, I asked her the three questions;

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'I thought it would help me. I'd learn something.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I am conscientious and hardworking. I have a good relationship with most classes. I am aware when a lesson has gone well or disastrously. I worry about how to get groups functioning better and Ava and Elaine help. I enjoy it when it is going well.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'In the short term, I am happy to continue as I am and to build up rapport with all groups. I need to feel secure. This is only the second year full-time. I am interested in pastoral work. I know my limitations. I am lacking in inspiration. I do not feel I could ever be a Head of Department after seeing Ava do it. I have not got these qualities.'

As we talked about her role in school and her home situation, Auriel decided that it would be more developmental to examine how she felt about the factors at school and home that were affecting her performance. We discussed her teaching while we watched the video, although the sound was poor. Auriel said she would try again at home as the school equipment was not very efficient. The repertory grid we completed can be found in Appendix 10.

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Auriel reported that she was a little affected by the presence of the video-camera and researcher. She said initially it took a long time to settle but she felt less worried in later sessions. None of the pupils were affected but behaved the same as usual. She looked at the video on her own and with someone else, and it was remarked how different her voice sounded on video. She was prepared to show her video to others for teaching purposes.

From watching the video, she had learnt about her teaching that 'lesson preparation and use of classroom materials and equipment were good. General development of lesson and change of activity were introduced at appropriate times. Completely ignored one pupil throughout entire lesson! Very worrying to see this'. About her class she had noted, 'A good majority completed all the different activities and were well involved in pairs work, even if I was not close at hand. They also chew a great deal'.

From talking to the researcher, she had learnt, 'I should not underestimate the effort and preparation that goes into my work, nor the achievements and enjoyment of the class. I always expect a great deal of

myself in all aspects of my work'.

Auriel had been, 'Somewhat apprehensive', before taking part but had 'thought it would benefit me and my teaching'.

Her attitude had not changed. She said, 'I still dislike being watched but I'm sure I can learn a great deal from such experiences'. She had not yet made any changes as a result of taking part because it was too close to the end of the year.

Rula G3D

The Context

In the staff room, Rula, a young teacher, was lively, noisy and occasionally brusque. She was fiery at times and looked quite despondent at others. She taught in two Departments, Geography and PE.

The Lesson

This was a third year Geography class, starting the topic 'Australia'. Rula began the lesson by 'brainstorming' the idea of all things Australian. This was a lively section but well-controlled as Rula did not allow it to go on too long. There followed atlas work in pairs, comparing three maps and asking the pupils to make deductions from their observations. Rula gathered in their observations and praised those that offered them. She demonstrated a very pleasant manner and encouraged pupils to answer.

Next, the class was given a prepared map and asked to fill in sections, choosing their own symbols. Rula circulated and gave advice when needed. When something was wrong she corrected the mistake in a calm, smiling manner. The pupils were interested and appeared to enjoy the lesson. I sensed a well-established, friendly rapport.

Commentary

Rula was very keen to talk but agreed to wait until after the second observation. I was interested to see the marked difference between her relationships with children and those with her colleagues.

The Second Lesson

The subject of this lesson was 'Travel'. The pupils had been asked to obtain travel brochures and there was a good selection available. The pupils

showed a lively interest in the topic which had been well-prepared. Rula had a series of travel scenarios prepared, such as the time and cost of travelling between two places by the fastest, cheapest, or most scenic route or booking a holiday for a family, couple or a single person, who perhaps did not like one form of transport, or had differing needs. The pupils were excited and noisy at first but settled down to solve the problems. Rula insisted on quiet and sufficient time for reading because, she explained to the class, she herself needed to read every word and always felt threatened by reading at school. Some pupils quickly came up with answers. Rula asked questions skilfully until some pupils realised they had not read the small print, or checked available dates. I felt that apart from learning about forms of travel the pupils had learnt valuable life skills, in a fun way.

The Questionnaire Conversation

Rula asked for general feedback on her teaching. She requested copies of her video to take home to show her boy friend. She answered the three questions;

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'Just to be helpful and to see if I can benefit in any way.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I hope this would be a help. I am not achieving the standard I would like to achieve. I see myself as an aid to the learning process. There is a lack of organisation – not necessarily mine. I find it difficult to teach when I'm not in my own room, especially exam classes. There is a low percentage of good children taking Geography because the best ones were selected for Section Bi-Langue, that's Geography through the medium of French.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I am not going anywhere in the Education system. It is hard to change career after nine years. I had two years abroad in the

Bahamas and there were much better conditions there. Teachers were respected and supported. There are no promotion prospects in the school. I am not a Geographer, I'm PE really, but I don't want to keep going out in the cold, but I feel I don't belong in either Department, although I am expected to participate in the running of both. The pastoral side I find unwelcoming. I've looked at the role of Year Head and it is mostly chasing children and disciplining them. The negative side does not appeal to me. I think that it is a depressing, demanding job.

I've just been on a JIGCAL course (Surrey Computerised Career Advisory Service) and I wanted to introduce it right away, but I've been told we might look at it next year. I'm the sort of person who wants to get on with it now. My boyfriend and I are thinking of opening a hotel and restaurant but we haven't got the capital yet'

As we talked, Rula was very friendly and open, and apparently quite relaxed but it soon became apparent that she felt frustrated at several levels. She was very scathing about the organisation of the PE Department and not satisfied with the Head of Year with whom she worked. She saw a missed opportunity to provide specialised career advice. Those above her were inefficient and uncertain, she believed, and she hated working in these conditions. It was stressful trying to move from PE into Geography, she said, because she was not totally conversant with the examination level work. She said she actually didn't want to come to school each day.

Rula explained that she was very upset about having to move into another room to accommodate the new French/Geography course. She had quarrelled with Francie about sharing a room. Attendance at the JIGCAL course meant that she had missed so many Mondays that she couldn't develop the current topic sufficiently and had had to press on.

Holding a focused conversation about her teaching with Rula was difficult because she was so emotionally overwrought. I listened and tried to develop our discussion about the numerous positive aspects of her teaching but she needed to pour out her anger, which would bubble up and take over. I was very concerned about her health as she became so flushed as she

talked. She perceived that there was very little positive in her school life, and appeared unable to accept positive comments, even when the evidence was before us.

** (I felt that this conversation had probably been therapeutic for Rula but not useful for developing her teaching. I worried about her all that evening. The next day she appeared bright and cheerful and asked if I would be able to visit another lesson. We had several conversations and I was to discover just how volatile a person she was, out of the classroom and in her private life.)*

Francie G3E

The Context

Francie was a part-time teacher who had been invited to work extra days at Woodside to introduce an experimental course, Section Bi-Langue, teaching Geography through the medium of French. I had heard a great deal about this prestigious course, the introduction of which had caused some ill feeling among other members of staff. There had been a quarrel about rooms and the Head had asked me to try to mediate between Francie and Rula, since I had an 'official' reason to talk to both of them.

The First Lesson

The lesson was to introduce a new topic, Density of Population. The pupils, who had been specially selected to take part, waited quietly outside. They were called in and entered, quietly talking. Francie waited for them to settle, then began the lesson immediately with the new topic. She worked energetically to make the points clear, giving the facts in different ways, with illustrations. She frequently asked the children questions and only accepted replies in French. The children were very hesitant in answering. They were rather subdued, obviously concentrating. Francie asked them to compare maps showing the towns and population of Great Britain and France, and the land surface of Great Britain and France. She wrote new vocabulary on an overhead projector sheet, as it was required. The pupils were given time to talk to each other, in French. They appeared to enjoy this activity and relaxed. They were asked to find reasons for population growth. They were much more interested and confident in answering questions now, after actually looking at charts.

Commentary

The lesson was very well resourced, with numerous maps, diagrams, photographs, slides and illustrations, many of which Francie had produced

herself.

Although Francie was aware that she was in Group 3 she told me she had already asked Mr Crauley if it would be possible to have some of my time as she would welcome a detailed analysis of a lesson, rather than the visits she was having from 'officials' who swept in and out but gave her no indication of how she was getting on. I felt that little purpose would be served by waiting, as I wanted to get to know Francie before discussing the quarrel. She was pleased when I suggested we started right away.

The Questionnaire Conversation

When I asked Francie how she thought the lesson had gone, she immediately mentioned every aspect that she perceived negatively. I complimented her on presenting such a well-prepared lesson, and suggested that, when we observed the video together, she would see that the lesson was extremely competent. We began with the three questions;

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'I think any help you can get with evaluating yourself is useful and enriching, any help, any help at all.'

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

'I enjoy teaching. I am lacking in confidence and have a poor self image and I am well aware of it. I am very easily depressed by my own efforts and my own ideas of whether something has succeeded or not. I get very depressed if I overhear a child say he was bored. It worries me if a child is sitting there yawning, although I am quite capable of sitting there yawning myself, if the room is hot and I'm tired. It worries me. I think, "Come on, there's something lacking here". I have fairly high ideals. There are some skills I have got and others I haven't. I think I know the things I can't do and I do think I know the things I can do.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'This is very difficult. I've had twenty years' experience of teaching part-time. This project of teaching Geography through the medium of French is a different position. It is in no way the usual progress. Head of Department or Head of Year; that's not me. I am very interested in Languages and the way forward for Languages and the Humanities. Three years are mapped out. I must see it through, and perhaps I'll be able to show others how to do it.'

We watched the video and Francie was really intense in her attention, although she said she had video-recorded parts of lessons before. Francie acknowledged that she works hard and is very aware of the significance of the experimental project she was managing. She said, 'I know I have low self-esteem and I always doubt myself. There are things I know and I know how to go about getting them to do things, but I don't have artistic and imaginative skills. I am able to be more positive now which I couldn't have done some years ago.'

'I will try anything to get knowledge over, anything that will appeal. It's got to be enriching. I have to work hard at different approaches. I rely heavily on other people giving me their ideas in books and games in the classroom. It doesn't come automatically as it does with some people. I cannot draw and drawing brings things alive to children. In terms of knowing what I want and what I want them to achieve, I think I know where I am going. I don't go overboard in the discipline area, I don't think I have discipline problems, you know, just the odd child who fidgets. I couldn't come in and terrify them, that's not me.'

Francie noted how reticent the pupils were at times. I pointed out that they appeared to understand what she was saying, but were rather hesitant to answer in French. Francie said she often wondered what they were thinking about these lessons. I suggested that we asked them, because it would be useful to know, they would welcome being asked, and it would add to the information which Francie needed to collect for the evaluation report she would be writing at the end of the first year of the three year course. Francie was hesitant to ask them herself so together we drew up a few questions, to which I would ask the pupils to write responses.

We talked over her feelings of insecurity, which she thought arose partly because she was not a 'trained Geographer'. Francie thought that better liaison with the Geography Department would help her, as would observing other teaching methods. I proposed that she could visit other school as there seemed to be sufficient resources to allow her to make such visits.

We considered ideas for recording the progress of the experimental project, including collecting examples of materials, video-recordings, pupils' work, their comments and evaluations, as well as Francie's own assessments. Francie seemed more positive about her involvement in the project, and said our conversation had confirmed much of her own thinking.

Commentary

Francie had a tremendous need to talk about her work and the problems connected with it. She needed to be reassured and to discuss the aims of her project and activities in detail. It appeared that she felt she had to 'prove' the project, while her involvement was having the effect of isolating her from the rest of the school. Francie worked so hard! I wondered if she could maintain the pace and the amount of supportive material she was providing. I also thought perhaps the pupils could do more themselves in her lessons.

When we examined the pupils' written answers to the first questions they were asked about the course, Francie was pleasantly surprised by their responses, which revealed that while they understood what she was saying they still waited for someone else to start answering in French. They indicated that they really liked working with maps and diagrams but felt that some of the copying of work was unnecessary. We discussed the information from the replies and considered what changes Francie might introduce to her lessons. Francie was energised and keen to try a different structure. She decided to continue to consult the pupils periodically.

Francie and I continued our conversations whenever time allowed. It was interesting to follow the progress of this method of teaching, to hear

about Francie's efforts and offer suggestions and support. The significance of my work with Francie is discussed further in the evaluation of the overall effects on the school (Chapter 4.ix).

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Francie found the presence of the camera had had little effect on her except to occasionally restrict her movement around the classroom. She commented that, 'before the lesson the idea of an observer heightens tension but once the lesson has started I am not aware of them or only momentarily.' She felt the pupils behaved the same as usual but were slightly more reticent in answering. She looked at the video more than once, alone and with someone else. 'Lesson structure, class movement, pace and content' were commented on. She would be prepared to show her video to other members of staff. Francie wrote that she had learnt about her attitudes, and other people's reactions from watching the video, it probably had helped her crystallise her thoughts. She had also learned about class reaction, and discovered that her pupils concentrated harder than she thought.

From talking with the researcher she felt she had learned 'probably not more than I realised, but it is often helpful to talk to someone'.

Her attitude to being appraised was positive and she had learned that any appraiser entering a classroom must be prepared to take time for discussion before and after.

Francie wrote, 'I have made changes in lesson structure, but I have had so many visitors and, as what I am doing is a pilot project, I constantly review and assess myself - so it's difficult to say what part the research project played in this.'

Jan G3F

The Context

Jan was an unassuming person, always friendly and welcoming. She appeared calm and serious. She was well-established at Woodside, a popular member of the English Department and well regarded by pupils and staff.

The First Lesson

This was an English lesson based on the book 'The Long and The Short and The Tall'. The mixed class consisted of only sixteen fifth year pupils, some were absent taking an exam. Jan spoke very quietly. There was a low-key feel to the class as though they were prepared to do whatever was asked. I learnt later that they were subdued because of being reprimanded the previous day for missing work. The lesson was well-prepared, with all the questions ready. They had to choose a character, identify the characteristics and then talk in character. Jan walked round visiting groups, occasionally making a joking reminder, 'No fraternising in the ranks'. The second part of the lesson was very effective. The pupils had to hold a conversation in character, which offered a chance for successful revision and an opportunity for expression. The class worked very well, and obviously enjoyed their dramatised exchanges.

The Second Lesson

This was an excellent lesson. It was a dramatisation of a trial scene from 'Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry'. The organisation and preparation were clearly evident. Tasks had been assigned and a work list had been drawn up by the children. One boy managed a southern 'drawl' so effectively he was given the main role. Jan was hardly apparent during the actual lesson, which was managed by the pupils. The 'jury' apparently were not as vociferous as they usually were in discussion because they were aware of the camera.

Jan had changed from being wary of the camera to seeing it as a valuable tool in the classroom and wanted to use the video for class discussion of their interpretation of the scene.

The Questionnaire Conversation

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'Curiosity – we can all learn to teach better. I realise I have had no guidance for 11 years. Sounds like fun. I am game for anything.'

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

'I am generally happy. I am a good teacher but I feel a bit stale. I'm a bit disillusioned with Education. It's had an effect on me and my teaching. The attitude of my colleagues and the children is depressing. Not having enough books causes frustration.'

I think I play an important role in school; over the last two years I have regarded myself as a senior member of staff. Younger members of staff ask for my advice, which I find flattering. I have been here 11 years – I found a student crying yesterday and I felt I could say the right words.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'A dramatic change in a new direction! I'm leaving at the end of the year to farm deer. I believe one should follow one's dreams; I am petrified but I'm going to try it.'

Jan said it was ironic that she should have such an opportunity to see herself teaching just as she was leaving the profession after eleven years at Woodside. She was pleased to receive such detailed information and to hear what was specifically 'her'. She could see how effective was her quiet manner of speaking and how often she knelt down to talk to pupils, or sat at the table with them. She explained that, as she was very tall, she felt she

needed to lessen the distance between them.

Commentary

At the end of our conversation, Jan said she wished she could have had this kind of talk earlier in her career as it was both enlightening and stimulating. Jan was quick to see the potential of using the video-camera in the classroom with pupils and within the English Department.

Responses to final questionnaire

Jan noticed that she was, 'a little more self-conscious, perhaps a little more reserved' in the presence of the camera and only a little affected by the presence of the researcher, 'only that I looked to the observer for her responses occasionally'.

Two different classes were visited. Jan thought the fifth years were better behaved than usual but the second years were the same.

She had watched the video-recording several times, with both classes and with her husband. She noted, 'The pupils are very keen to see themselves and are very interested in the 'laughs'. With more time we could have done a great deal with the trial scene. She had shown parts of it to another member of staff, Ava, and was willing to show it to others, especially for Departmental discussions.

Jan wrote, 'I have never seen myself teach and so it proved very enlightening. Having watched it immediately with the researcher, that is when I learned the most. Plenty of positive feedback, which was much appreciated. I move around a lot. Talk quietly in class. Lots of gestures. I positively reinforce good practice/behaviour/work. Get down to talk to children.

About watching the video, Jan commented, 'With 5X4 it was interesting to see the effect my presence had when in the vicinity of one group and how their motivation deteriorated when I was on the other side

of the class. With 2H1 it was a different sort of session, the purpose being to film the trial scene'.

Before she took part Jan reported she was, 'A little anxious, but I felt that I could only benefit from this. It is x years since anyone made any comments on my teaching or helped me with it in this way. I can't think when someone last came in my lesson to specifically help with teaching skills'. After taking part she said, 'I would still feel a little anxious about the same procedure again, but perhaps a little less!'

As a result of taking part she had tried to improve the assessment of the pupil's work in the lesson.

Geraldine G3G

The Context

Geraldine was relaxed, enthusiastic and always smiling. I felt she presented a contented, caring, motherly image, and was encouraging and receptive.

The First Lesson

This English lesson was with a large, lively group of third years. They should have had access to the Library but they could not get in to change their books because the door was locked. Geraldine had a pleasant, relaxed approach and apologised to the class for their lack of Library time. She explained why it was, and promised to ensure a visit at the earliest possible opportunity. The pupils were mollified by her apology and pleasant smiles. Her naming of the children was excellent and she used a very effective calming tone of voice. Geraldine put the pupils in groups and set them work on 'Shane'. The task was written on the board and was aimed at getting them to scan, understand, collate and report. Geraldine went from group to group showing illustrations of the clothes of the period.

When talking to a group, Geraldine had a very relaxed, approachable manner, but did not always keep an eye out for the other groups. The noise level was always acceptable and the only incident of any disturbance was dealt with calmly. When Geraldine wanted the groups to listen to each other, she firmly re-stated her rules and the lesson progressed smoothly.

Commentary

Geraldine appeared to have prepared the lesson and coped well with the unexpected change in activity – when they couldn't get into the Library – but I felt she had not thought sufficiently about what the class had to do and why. (The groups could have been asked to identify a spokesperson, a scribe

and a chairperson, and it would have been informative if she had noticed who adopted these roles). She was extremely interested in seeing her video and really wanted to talk about her teaching, but was willing to wait until after the second visit.

The Second Lesson

This lesson was with a different group of third year pupils. They seemed to be struggling with an exercise which required them to read a chapter to extract information about a character of their choice, and then to suggest their own ideas of actions he or she might take. Geraldine re-explained the task very clearly and was encouraging of their efforts, but it seemed to be too difficult for some and they grew restless. Geraldine remained good-tempered and spent the last part of the lesson reading to the class, which they enjoyed.

The Questionnaire Conversation

Geraldine said immediately that she thought the lesson had not been as good as usual and would be pleased to look at the video to see herself in action. I asked her the three initial questions;

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'It seemed like a good idea. I think by nature I'm a fairly co-operative sort of person and it would be good for me really because I'd be able to see the video later, and see things one should be aware of, so I agreed.'

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

'I enjoy the subject, that's what it is, and the day I stop enjoying teaching English I'll give up teaching. I enjoy the relationships with the pupils. These are not the brightest but I quite like them.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I'm not really interested in promotion. My children are too little. I think I prefer to stay in my subject. If I became interested in a career, it would be up the academic ladder rather than the pastoral ladder. If I was teaching full-time and had a lot more time at home than I do now, I'm not sure I wouldn't like to teach a sixth form, which I used to teach and miss.'

Geraldine explained that she had lately returned to teaching part-time and felt she was less tired than the full-time teachers, so enjoyed her days in school. Although bothered by difficulties in the English Department, she did not complain or blame anyone. She felt that because she was part-time she must tread carefully and not 'upset things'.

As we watched her video and discussed her teaching, Geraldine identified areas that needed improvement and immediately said what she needed to do. She paid particular attention to the pupils' reactions to her questions and noticed what happened as she went round the groups, watching who went back to work as she moved on and who was disturbed by her presence when she was showing the illustrations. I felt that Geraldine was very quick at deciding on strategies for improvement and would try to implement them. It was a very agreeable, balanced conversation because we viewed the interactions in the classroom in a very similar way, and shared a belief in the value of looking for positive ways of motivating pupils.

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Geraldine found that the camera made her very self-conscious but she was only a little affected by the presence of the researcher. The pupils were giddier than usual but seemed to ignore the camera in the second lesson. She had not realised that she could show the video to the class but would have liked to. The camera had revealed to her her mannerisms whilst talking, and she had seen that some pupils put their hands up very hesitantly. She remarked that she probably would not have noticed they had had them up at all without the video.

She had learnt from our conversation that she corrected the pupil's mistakes without 'putting them down', that I felt she had a good

relationship with her pupils and that she needed to change the activity earlier with the average/low ability group.

Geraldine reported that she was now less apprehensive about appraisal and was changing activities in her lesson more frequently as a result of taking part.

Miles G3H

The Context

Miles was the Head of Art, Design and Technology. He was always on the move and was rarely seen in the staff room. He was young and ambitious and had just mounted a very successful Design Open Evening which had surprised many parents by the quality of the folders on display. As I have already mentioned, the pupils appeared to receive a good grounding in Design and to feel confident, such as in making frames for their work, their folders in Maths and their finely-decorated Valentine cards. Two members of his Department had steadfastly refused to take part in the research project, and another found him difficult to talk to, so I was interested to have a conversation with him.

The First Lesson

This lesson was with an examination class. They were working individually, finishing pieces of design work on the layout and furnishings of a room. They worked quietly and intently. Miles walked round to see each pupil several times during the lesson and helped them, generally by quietly asking questions until they saw what to do. He was very sharp in getting them to tidy up at the end and I felt he could be very fierce, if crossed.

Commentary

At the end of the lesson Miles said he knew he could teach well, and would prefer to spend his time with me examining his management of the people in his Department and others with whom he came into daily contact. I complimented him on the success of the Design Open Evening, which had been stimulating and very well-presented, visually and socially, involving the pupils explaining the exhibits.

He said he had brought the idea with him. He had been involved in a

similar exhibition, a big one, about three years earlier at Goldsmith's Gallery. It had been basically an art exhibition from five schools in the area. This Woodside one was different because it was a Design evening. It was also showing the process itself, not necessarily the final product.

I mentioned to him the examples of pupils' confidence in design. He replied, 'I agree. I think that is true but I wouldn't claim that it is necessarily because of the Design Department. I think that's come through more so in the last few years, but it is also to do with the type of people in the area. The children are far more visually aware than they were in my last school which was a totally different social background. There is a strong emphasis on the actual design process early in the school and that comes through. That needs continually doing and the pay-off is when you get members of staff who see design as an acceptable form of communication within their particular subject area, when they accept a visual solution to what is traditionally seen as an oral or written response'.

The Questionnaire Conversation

I asked him the three questions, and received detailed answers.

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'Mainly, I think, because I wanted everyone else to do it, although I think I could have told you from the beginning those who would say, "No". Also I felt if something positive came out of it for me, then there might be something tangible for the whole Department. I'd be able to say this is what happened when I did it and say "How much could you learn from the same thing? How much could we learn from each other? For example, How can I change my style?" When they refused to join in, I suggested that they recorded their lesson so they could at least hear themselves. When Allicia told them how much she had got from her visit from you, I asked them if they now felt differently, but they both said "No".

So, I saw the exercise as a positive way of helping me and my

Department. I wouldn't be able to do the job unless I found teaching easy. It is a good aspect for me.'

2. What kind of a teacher do you think you are?

'I think I am an actor, I am not an imposer. I think I am firm. I am told by my wife and friends that I am a fairly dominating person. I am more confident with children. I don't deal with members of staff as effectively as I do with the children. Today's lesson was a very relaxed one, they flow like that in most lessons. They generally get on with it.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I see this as a five year stand in my life. In the first year, I was finding what the Department is about. In the second, I am starting to instigate change; in the third year, seeing the changes having an effect, then over the next two years being able to monitor particular pupils – see whether it works. It's been a big change for me, a new challenge. It's brought things out of me I didn't know I had.

I don't see myself going higher in the hierarchy because I really enjoy teaching the subject area, and the contact with Art and Design work. I want to stay within that subject. If I went on to be within the county, to be an inspector, which my predecessor did, I would be put off because I would miss teaching, which I really enjoy.

The other thing is totally different; it's to give up teaching altogether and set up my own business and move out of London altogether, on the Design side or working with children running some kind of centre where the emphasis is on Arts and Design. That's my dream, to be out of London, in the West Country, having my own area of land.'

Miles continued, 'I do a fair amount of personal work. I was previously

doing a fair amount of graphic design, that's what I trained in but just signs and shop fronts. I make personalised pots and mirrors, but I don't want to find myself thinking I have got to do 15 mirrors today. I like individual commissions'.

Miles explained the context of his wish to have a grid conversation. He reported, 'Obviously, when I came in there were certain areas that I identified that I felt were very important and where something had to be done to improve the Department as a whole. That is the most important thing for me. As regards teaching, I feel quite happy with mine. It has been nice for me in that I have come from a school in a fairly rough area where my whole manner was different. It was a different sort of school and I had to present a front, whereas here I can be much more relaxed, which is probably nearer my character, but in the Department there are weaknesses and strengths. Last year, I identified the areas that needed improvement, but the difficulty is knowing what to do about it. I have got an interesting situation in that I have got a weak teacher in that he is not introducing things in a way that I feel is stimulating for the children, but he is very efficient at what he does. I ask him to do something, he will do it very, very quickly but not with a great deal of imagination, which is rather like his teaching.

On the other hand, I have a teacher whom I think wants to be more imaginative, but he has difficulty in controlling the children and identifying methods for managing in the classroom. That is one particular area that is a problem for me. The efforts I have made to solve those problems have had some success but I would like more of a follow-up. I think I have got them on my side but having done that, having identified ways of helping them, it's what to do next. I have got him to think about it, but I don't think I've got him to accept that it is a problem. When I said, "I think you've got problems with classroom control," the reply was "I'm not the only one".'

Miles identified the people he wanted to include as elements in his grid, which can be found in Appendix 10. We had a discussion about his teaching after I had visited him the second time, although the quality of the sound recording was poor. Despite saying he felt confident about his teaching Miles was pleased to watch himself in action and receive reassurance that he had managed the lessons well. He pointed out situations

where he felt he could have been more supportive and noted that he had visited one group more than the others.

We also discussed how he might tackle the problem he felt he had with the two teachers in his Department who were not working as he wished them to do.

Responses to Final Questionnaire

Miles reported that he had not been at all affected by either the presence of the camera or the researcher. A few pupils were affected by behaving better than usual. Miles indicated that he learnt that he frequently directed his attention to one group rather than to the whole class and had reconsidered his technique. He wrote that he had been willing to take part, 'probably because I feel confident that I am competent enough to survive the exercise without undue criticism'. As a result of taking part he had decided he needed to 'monitor colleagues within the Department more frequently, particularly those who did not take part!'

Bill G3J

The Context

Bill was a young teacher who seemed to be permanently preoccupied. He never sat down in the staff room, even in meetings, but always appeared on the point of rushing off somewhere. Like so many of the young teachers at Woodside, he taught in more than one Department. In his case, he taught Maths, Technology and PE. It was difficult to meet Bill as he was so busy. When we did eventually manage to meet, the lesson was curtailed because of an extended assembly.

The First Lesson

This was a second year Maths lesson. Bill had been going to introduce a new topic for small group projects but decided to leave that until the next full lesson. Instead, he wrote some problems on the board and set the pupils to answer them in a set time. After some groaning, the pupils set to work quite willingly, working together, calling out comments on their progress and asking if they were 'doing it right'. They were obviously very comfortable with Bill and treated him rather like an elder brother. It became apparent that his prowess on the football field made him quite a hero for some of the boys.

The Questionnaire Conversation

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'You asked me to help by joining in, so I did. I also thought it would be useful to me. I like to be open to new things.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I try to be a good teacher of my subject but there are many

difficulties, with shortage of equipment and new courses we are expected to teach without any new resources, and poor organisation. I feel I don't have time to think about my teaching so I hope this experience will give me that chance.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I don't know what I am going to do yet. I have two young children and I don't find the pay is enough, but I will stay here for a while until I have more experience.'

By the time I met Bill I was almost at the end of the formal research project at Woodside, and so, taking into account the difficulties we had had in arranging this meeting, I decided to hold a conversation after the first lesson, even though we had only a single lesson in which to talk before Bill was required for Games practice. Bill was pleased not to have to wait because he was worried about his teaching and welcomed another's view. He explained that he felt 'spread out' and stretched. He knew that he was not teaching consistently, especially lately when he had had so many sleepless nights with a new baby, but he just struggled on because he wanted to get through this year. Bill enjoyed teaching and felt he had the potential to teach well, but he could not keep up with the level of preparation he knew was necessary to deliver good lessons. He felt let down by the lack of basic resources, in Technology, especially since he had explained the situation to the Head, and angry at the lack of organisation in the PE Department. Bill told me he had recently decided he would like to train to be a clergyman but it did not seem a possibility as they were barely managing on his salary.

We discussed the short lesson I had observed, and concentrated on the positive aspects which Bill was pleased to hear. We agreed that it would be helpful to discuss how Bill proposed to introduce and develop the next topic. Bill had to rush off so we arranged to meet again.

** (I felt Bill was in danger of becoming very stressed. He did not seem to have the time to talk to other members of staff, and was not receiving sufficient support from the various Heads of the Departments or the Senior Management Team.*

Our brief talk emphasised how difficult it was for most of the young, recently qualified teachers to have a chance to develop their teaching skills. They were all expected to teach a full timetable, some also had tutor groups and some, such as Stephan and Bill, worked in more than one Department. It was apparent from my conversations with these teachers that there was very little support provided by some Departments, and there was no induction programme provided by the school.)

Elizabeth G3K

The Context

Elizabeth was a gentle, quiet, mature teacher who specialised in teaching pupils with special educational needs. She worked with individual pupils offering support during lessons, or with groups who were withdrawn from lessons for specialised extra tuition. She was very unobtrusive both in the classroom, and around the school, although she appeared on other teacher's video-recordings.

The First Lesson

I observed Elizabeth with a small group of pupils but we decided that we would not use the camera. Each child had an individual programme which Elizabeth managed by skilfully 'juggling' the amount of attention she gave each child. She was very encouraging and firm, setting small tasks to be done before the next visit.

The Questionnaire Conversation

It was a pleasure to talk to Elizabeth after only seeing her on the periphery of other teachers' lessons. I asked her the three questions;

1. Why did you join in the research project?

'I did not want to at first but then, when I saw that others were joining in, I thought it would be all right and I did not want to be the only one not taking part.'

2. What kind of teacher do you think you are?

'I have been teaching for a long time and I enjoy it. I think it is

becoming increasingly difficult to teach, everyone expects so much. I'm glad I only have small groups. I am concerned about the decision to try to integrate more special needs children into ordinary schools as I don't feel we are successful with some of those we have now.'

3. Where do you see yourself in the future?

'I am retiring soon and we are going back to Scotland to live, after we've been on a cruise. I shall miss the children and the staff but not the recent difficulties and changes.'

Fortunately, because many of the inset courses I had attended at Kingston were for teachers of children with special needs, I had some insight into Elizabeth's work. We were able to have a detailed and stimulating conversation about diagnosis and remediation and also to consider the current move to integrate more special needs children into ordinary classrooms. Although, in principle, we agreed that integration had many Billefits, we were both concerned that schools were again being required to adjust to a policy change for which they were not really prepared or equipped. Elizabeth believed that there was not adequate provision for the present level of special educational needs. She said she was glad to be going before the situation worsened.

Commentary

Elizabeth was delighted to talk and to be listened to and I was relieved that I could make some informed comments. I felt that, like so many special needs specialists, Elizabeth's expertise and experience were under-acknowledged and under-used, an untapped, valuable storehouse of effective methods and knowledge of teaching strategies.

I commented that the room was not very light. I had obviously touched a nerve. Elizabeth became animated as she explained that she had only just moved into this room. Her previous room had been pleasant, she had had everything arranged to her satisfaction and had even brought some

carpet from home, because she believed that it was important for the children to feel comfortable and welcome. She had made her room a special place, and would try to do something with this one before she left.

Elizabeth said she had spent years building up her resources and teaching aids and would not mind leaving them all behind her, if she thought they would be appreciated and used by her successor.

3. vi Comments on the Video-recorder: The Physical Use of the Video-recorder.

An aspect of the research programme that proved to be quite difficult was the use of the ageing recording equipment, which consisted of several separate pieces; a heavy camera, a large tripod, a video cassette recorder, a microphone, a video-monitor, several cables and adaptors. Using this old equipment added dimensions of stress and error as it was unwieldy, heavy, complicated and sometimes the pieces loaned were not compatible. They were loaned to me on a weekly basis, so had the added wear and tear of car journeys on top of the perils of transportation up, down, in and out of school in a trolley. The constant wear on the equipment affected the quality of the recordings and there were some disappointing, poor quality recordings and occasionally no recording at all. Fortunately, I normally took notes as I observed the lesson, so there was an alternative record.

These various pieces of equipment took quite some time to set up and dismantle. Before a lesson, I wanted to be able to appear calm, to reassure the teacher and to be ready before the class came in. I aimed to be seated, still and unobtrusive, observing by way of the video-monitor placed on the floor, rather than standing behind the camera. This was often difficult to achieve. Often I had only the change-over time between lessons to set up. This meant I was often rushed, particularly if the previous class was late in leaving, and consequently did not always set up the microphone or the camera in the best place.

After a lesson I needed sufficient time to say something positive, at least, to the teacher, rather than rushing round dismantling the camera, rewinding the tape and collecting in all the equipment but I had to try to talk while checking that I had gathered everything, particularly if a class was due to arrive.

Although, with practice, I soon developed an operating procedure, there was often a feeling of tension as I waited outside a classroom, especially if the class to be observed was waiting with me. In practice, carrying out the research programme of lesson recording followed

immediately by conversations was quite ambitious. As I reflected on the pressures and tensions arising from trying to manage the equipment and carry out the conversations, I compared these present Woodside research activities with those of my concurrent role as a research assistant in the Kingston Project. I realised I was my own research assistant. How much easier it would be to carry out the observations if someone else dealt with all the equipment! I understood more fully why researchers have assistants.

Certain factors can be identified as minimising the disturbance caused in the classroom by the presence of recording equipment and observer. It is better for the researcher to be in the room before the pupils enter, ready, sitting quietly and composedly, avoiding eye-contact and generally being as unobtrusive as possible. I learnt to 'switch off' and not to appear to be watching. One way I found to be less noticeable was not to stand behind the camera tripod but to link the camera to a small video-monitor placed on the floor. This meant that I was able to sit beside the camera looking down at the monitor so that, while not obviously viewing the class, it was possible to watch the lesson and direct the angle of the camera by using a long handle. This was very effective in lessening the effect of the presence of the camera, as the pupils took far less notice if no-one was looking at them through the eyepiece. It also allowed me to take notes, which proved useful on those occasions when the camera failed.

As well as appreciating the value of a research assistant, I learnt the value of good equipment, particularly after I had had the opportunity to use a lightweight camera which incorporated both a microphone and a video cassette. As a result of my experiences with the equipment at Woodside, I now consider much more carefully the variable circumstances that surround the use of equipment, both in training presentations and research projects, for myself and when training and mentoring others.

3. vii Comments on the Video-recorder: Reactions to the Presence of the Camera.

The reactions of teachers to the suggestion of being video-recorded varied. At one end of the range were those two or three teachers who did not want to take part at all. Then there were some who were very nervous but agreed to take part; then came others who were confident and took the presence of the camera in their stride, and then those who positively welcomed the opportunity to see themselves on camera. At first, it seemed that it was the younger teachers who were not troubled by the camera, especially those who said they had been used to being recorded while at teacher training college, but eventually, when I had noted the reactions of all the teachers, age or experience did not appear to be a crucial factor in determining the kind of response.

The direction of the camera was normally aimed to capture interactions between teacher and pupil, and so the placing of it depended on the layout of the room. This meant that sometimes a lesson was well-established before the teacher actually appeared on the recording, as he or she moved round the room, although the voice was heard. Many classes were arranged in groups and teachers would move between groups, as work progressed (English, Maths, Art and Design). Other teachers arranged the furniture in rows (Modern Languages), or facing into the centre, (Maths, Modern Languages) or were constrained by the room to have a set arrangement (Science, Food Technology). One or two teachers altered the seating arrangements to suit the activity.

Just before and during the beginning few minutes of the first recorded lesson some of the teachers appeared to be nervous, but normally, as soon as the lesson got underway, they seemed to forget about the camera and my presence. This was confirmed when they spoke to me afterwards, and was what I had assured them generally happened. The pupils too appeared to adjust very rapidly to being observed, as it became commonplace to find a video-camera in the classroom, in the gym, or even on the games field.

The pupils' reactions were less noticeable than the teachers', on the

whole. They appeared to adjust quite quickly and although some 'played up', most ignored the camera, particularly after the first few times.

3. viii Comments on the Video-recording: Teachers' Reactions to Watching the Lesson Videos.

Although there was often a facetious comment when they first saw the video-recording of their lesson these were soon over and we quickly moved into a discussion of the lesson. As they saw themselves teaching, normally for the first time, the teachers' usual initial response was to laugh or to throw up their hands in mock horror and make a comment about how they looked. The first comments were often concerned with physical appearance:

'I didn't realise how small I am in relation to some of the pupils.'

'I've got to lose weight.'

'I'll have to put less stuff in my pockets.'

'Don't I wave my arms about a lot?'

'I look quite good really.'

'I'm glad I'm smiling.'

Then they became quieter as they became absorbed in watching the recording of the lesson and commented more on the interactions than about themselves. They very often made comments about how noisy their lesson seemed, and received assurance that the microphone recorded everything, without filtering, including ambient noise, so that the noise level seemed higher than it actually was.

Group 1 teachers had the opportunity of spending a long time examining their first observed lesson, while choosing as elements particular incidents which had significance for them. Some of these teachers asked to have a copy of the video-recording for their own use. I agreed if they brought in a blank tape.

With Group 2 teachers, we watched the video-recording together before applying what we had seen to the evaluation of their performance on the rating scale.

It had been my intention to use the video-recording with the control group, Group 3, solely for validation but some of these teachers really wanted to see their lessons and have some feedback about their teaching. I agreed that I would arrange for them to view their recorded lessons, with me, on completion of their agreed involvement in the project.

This meant that eventually all the teachers who took part had the opportunity to experience a reconstruction of their teaching, a vivid and stimulating personal experience, offering the chance not only to see themselves in a different light but to view their pupils from a different perspective.

Many of the teachers also asked for a copy of their taped lesson, so eventually there were many recordings of lessons in school. A teacher was not provided with a recording until we had watched it together and discussed it. An interesting development was the use they made of these copies. Some took them home to show to their partner or to their families. They reported mixed receptions; one very well-established teacher said she was proud of her video-recorded lessons and was thrilled to be able to show them at home what she actually did. It had been much appreciated by her parents and husband but not by her children. Another took hers home and wanted to discuss it with her partner but could not arouse any enthusiasm, and was told to stop 'going on about it'. Five teachers showed the video to the classes involved and used it to have a very useful discussion about class groups, their own learning and their behaviour. One teacher used my second visit as the opportunity to record a trial scene the class were rehearsing, so that she could examine the themes of the play in action, as well as getting feedback on her performance.

A really good suggestion came from a member of the English Department. She pointed out that since nearly all the Department had been involved in the project, if they agreed to pool their video-recordings they would have a bank of videos showing different teaching styles. They could all learn from these, and they could use them as induction for new members of the Department, as examples of ways of working. Another member of this Department passed on the useful teaching points she had made where the video-recordings had been used to involve pupils in discussion about

aspects of their lessons, and their behaviour. Other teachers said they had would try this too.

The video-recordings then were providing the teachers with opportunities for viewing themselves in action, often for the first time. The teachers were making use of them in different ways, and were learning about themselves, their pupils and the value of video-recording as a learning tool.

This idea of using of the video-recordings in a wider arena had come from the teachers, as all through the project I had ensured that I maintained the guarantee of confidentiality given at the start. Individual viewings were always arranged in a private room, and copies of the video-recordings were never left lying around. The use of the copies of video-recordings was an area that could have been developed much more usefully.

The collated responses to the questions in the final questionnaire about the presence of the camera, and its effects upon their learning about themselves, their teaching and their pupils can be found in Appendix 7. A summary of each teacher's response to these questions can be found in Chapter 3 at the end of the accounts of the individual conversations with the three groups, wherever a teacher completed the questionnaire. A more detailed analysis of their responses can be found in Chapter 4. viii.