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**COURSEWORK AND COURSEWORK
ASSESSMENT IN THE GCSE
- A MULTI-CASE ETHNOGRAPHY**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an empirical examination of coursework and coursework assessment in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). The research was conducted using the condensed fieldwork methods of multi-site case study, and fits broadly within the ethnographic research tradition. Case studies of the effects of coursework were made in six schools, across three different counties and two metropolitan districts. Examination texts, it is argued in the thesis, are open to interpretation and re-interpretation at different moments of use. Textual reading, moreover, is only part of the policy process - construction, reading, meaning formulation, meaning re-formulation and implementation. Texts allow multiple readings, although some texts are more 'readerly' than 'writerly'. These sources of meaning compete with previous examination technologies and with other discursive forms. They are practical documents and they are guided by specific sets of ideological meaning. They seek to provide apparatus for differentiating between candidates, and they play their part in the creation of individual subjectivities. A typology of teachers' attitudes towards GCSE coursework is developed, and these are classified as conformist, adaptive, oppositional, ritualistic, transformative and non-conformist. Teachers' initial reading of GCSE texts or their initial confrontation with the ideas behind the new examination draws upon both those internalized rules which actors reproduce in

their day to day working lives and those structural resources which position actors within set frameworks. Those elements of structure that are relevant to the matter in hand condition, but do not determine, actors' responses. Initial textual readings give way to subsequent interpretations and re-interpretations of coursework processes, and all the various readings are implicated in the implementation and re-implementation of coursework strategies. This cycle of activity at different moments and in different guises influences actual practice. An account is given of the way those structural and interactional influences impact upon initial textual readings within one of the case-study schools. Curriculum policy and curriculum practice within specific sites is always the result of contestation. Within institutions that devolve power and decision-making, outcomes are never all the same; that contestation will have different outcomes at different moments and at different places. Further to this, five sets of polarized concepts - weak/strong knowledge framing, formative/summative modes of assessment, the production of reliable/unreliable assessment data, limited/extended amounts and types of teacher interventions in coursework processes and normal/irregular classroom practices - are developed to help analyse issues such as the influence of the GCSE on classroom practice, integration of assessment and curriculum, pupil-teacher relations, pedagogy and pupil motivation. Finally the threads of the argument that has been developed in this thesis are drawn together to show

how dislocated relationships between examination policy texts and realisation have consequences for examination comparability, educational disadvantage, and the production and reproduction of educational knowledge in schools.

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DECLARATION OF PUBLICATIONS USED IN THIS THESIS

The following material has been modified and used in this thesis (chapter locations are given in brackets after each entry):

- Scott, D. (1988a), 'GCSE Integrated Humanities: A Response', *Forum*, 30, 2, pp.44-45 (Chapter four)
- Scott, D. (1988b), 'Problems of Knowledge in the assessment of empathy in the GCSE', *Curriculum*, 8, 3, pp.31-37 (Chapter four)
- Scott, D. (1989a), 'In defence of the GCSE', *Forum*, 31, 2, pp.53-56 (Chapter one)
- Scott, D. (1989b), *The GCSE: An Annotated Bibliography and an introductory essay*, CEDAR Occasional Paper 1, University of Warwick (Chapter one)
- Scott, D. (1989c), 'HMI Reporting and the GCSE', *Journal of Education Policy*, 4, 3, pp.281-287 (Chapter four)
- Scott, D. (1991a), 'The impact of GCSE on practice and conventions in private schools', in G.Walford (ed.), *Private Schooling: Tradition, Change and Diversity*, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd., pp.51-69 (Chapter six)
- Scott, D. (1991b), 'Issues and Themes: Coursework and Coursework Assessment in the GCSE', *Research Papers in Education*, 6, 1, pp.3-20 (Chapter eight)
- Scott, D. (1991c), 'Developing understandings of time and pupil maturation in the National Curriculum', *British Journal of Curriculum and Assessment*, 1, 2, pp.38-40 (Chapter eight)

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

After a lengthy gestation period, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) finally replaced the General Certificate of Education ('O' level) and the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE)¹ as the principal means of examination for 16 year olds. At the time of its introduction, concern was expressed both about the reliability and validity of the coursework element, and about the increasing burden of work that it was thought would be imposed on teachers and pupils alike (Burke, 1986; PAT, 1988). Although the GCSE is a recent innovation, it has a long history. The Examination Boards as early as 1972 were beginning to explore the notion of a common examination at 16+, and feasibility studies were started the following year (Kingdon and Stobart, 1988). Their success led to the setting up of the Waddell Committee which recommended a single system of examination (DES, 1978a)². In the spring of 1979 a Conservative Government was elected. The new Secretary of State for Education, Mark Carlisle, announced in February 1980 that the idea of a common replacement for 'O' Level and CSE would be further explored, and that it would incorporate three new elements: subject criteria, differentiated examinations, and a measure of teacher-assessed work (DES, 1980). One of his successors, Sir Keith Joseph, took the process one stage further when he revealed in a speech to the Northern Education Association in January 1984 that working

parties would be set up to develop subject-grade criteria,³ that candidates would be awarded grades in terms of positive achievement, and that the examination would essentially be criterion-referenced⁴ (Joseph, 1984). The final versions of the National and Subject criteria (DES, 1985a) were published in March 1985, and the first cohort of students sat the examination in June 1988.

The GCSE's primary purpose was to raise the standards of achievement of pupils and it was targeted at a wider ability range than previous examinations. One of its most important features is the use made of teacher-assessed elements or coursework in all the syllabuses (the time-scale was later modified for Mathematics)⁵. This was not entirely an innovation as the 1960 Beloe Report had suggested that there was a place for teacher assessment in the public examination system. Indeed it argued that formal end-of-course examination was unable to assess properly many important skills or end-products of learning, and that teacher-assessment of these skills would increase the examination's validity (DES, 1960). Coursework and teacher assessment were gradually absorbed into the public examination system, though generally they were confined to practical subjects with low esteem (cf. Goodson, 1981, 1982, 1985; Goodson and Ball, 1984)⁶. The National Criteria of the GCSE incorporated this thinking into its statutory requirements. Teacher-assessed components of the examination would serve the following purposes:

- a) to assess objectives which cannot be assessed externally;
- b) to assess objectives different from those for a written component;
- c) to provide a complementary assessment of the same objectives as a written component;
- d) to assess objectives for which there is only ephemeral evidence. (DES, 1985a, p.4)

The new examination therefore, differed markedly from its predecessors, though it did draw on ideas and themes that had been developed previously.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In 1987 the Secondary Examinations Council produced a working paper that gave examples of those areas which it would be more feasible to assess by teacher assessment than by end-of-course examination: experimental skills, fieldwork, research skills, interactive skills, co-operative skills, motor skills, speed of thinking skills, awareness of safety, the ability to put into practice simple theoretical models, explorative skills, skills that involve reflection and contemplation, skills of adaptation and improvisation (SEC, 1987). Though it would be possible to assess some of these skills without resorting to coursework assessments by teachers, and given that many practical skills were already being tested by such assessment (O-Level Technology), the emphasis on coursework was an attempt formally to widen the scope of public examination and as a consequence

increase its validity; that is, increase its ability to test in a realistic way the aims and objectives of the course.

As well as increasing validity, Torrance (1986a) argues that coursework and teacher assessment can also make the examination more reliable (see also Cohen and Deale, 1977; Torrance, 1985a, 1987a; Macintosh, 1987), because it attempts to assess the same objectives as the final paper but by different means:

within the specific context of examining, the Examination Boards themselves have variously recognized teacher involvement in contributing to both validity and reliability of grades, either by teachers being in a position to assess objectives when final papers cannot, or by teachers testing the same objectives but by different means and at frequent intervals, thereby increasing the 'sample of pupils' work available for examination (p.52).

Teacher assessment is therefore better able to guard against false negative and false positive experiences at assessing performance (Wood and Power, 1987). In the former case, due to anxiety, examination nerves and a host of other reasons, students do not perform to their theoretically capable maximum. In the latter case the examination records high success at a particular task, and yet in reality the student is not able to perform in this way. In addition, Wood and Power (1987) advance the idea that coursework assessment allows the assessment of 'best' performances, and that this is a more worthwhile activity than one-off end-of-course examination:

As with the elaborative procedures, here is the notion that the teacher/tester and student collaborate actively to produce a best performance, instead of a typical performance or worse (p.250).

The intention behind the subject criteria (DES, 1985a) was for pupils and teachers to work together throughout the two years to produce a portfolio of work from which a choice could be made. This allows the student, through reflection and revision, the opportunity to improve their performance (SEC, 1985). Torrance (1987a) supports this argument by suggesting that the teacher anyway is in the best position to determine task success or failure, both by the closeness that he or she is to the assessment procedure, and by the ability of the examination to match students to individualised assessments.

Teacher based assessment then can employ more flexible assessment techniques, though there is some evidence that teachers are reluctant to exploit this even when the examination encourages them to do so (Turner, 1983; 1984; Torrance, 1985b). Teachers, it is suggested, are more concerned with improving the reliability and comparability of their assessments than with exploring the potential of coursework and coursework assessment for developing their teaching programmes. Nevertheless, Macintosh (1987) argues that a well designed coursework programme allows greater flexibility in assessing candidates of different abilities and has a greater potential for achieving differentiation through common tasks:

It was becoming increasingly clear that well designed coursework programmes provide a potentially much more effective vehicle for achieving differentiation through common tasks across a wide range of subjects (p.32)

Commentators have also suggested that though coursework and teacher assessment can increase validity and also enhance certain forms of reliability, in other ways it contributes to less reliable examining. Kingdon and Stobart (1988) for instance, argue that:

the GCSE is a better examination in which there are more risks of certain forms of unreliability. (p.94)

Nuttall and Goldstein (1984) support this by asserting that variation in the conditions under which assessment takes place may make those assessments less reliable, and that coursework assessment in particular is prone to this⁷. For example, parental assistance during the completion of coursework assignments may make the examination less fair because disadvantaged pupils can call upon fewer resources:

The most difficult challenges to this were observations that disadvantaged children, who invariably did not have a family 'resource' to turn to, would become further disadvantaged (if the school failed to offer them equivalent resources) in relation to middle-class children.

(Kingdon and Stobart, 1988, p.98)

Other problems with coursework have been suggested. There are problems with testing individual competence in group teaching situations (Wyatt, 1987). Teacher assessments are unreliable because teachers are biased against certain types of pupils. It is difficult therefore for the teacher to distinguish between informed judgements and prejudice (Massey and Newbold, 1986). A significant percentage of the final grade could be awarded at an early stage with continuous assessment, thus

misrepresenting ability at the termination of the course (Horton, 1987b). Indeed the problems with deciding when to make assessments, the connections between different assessments made at different moments during the two years of the course and the relationship between formative and summative forms of assessment are problems that different schools are resolving in different ways (Kingdon and Stobart, 1988). There is finally, it is argued, a pressure to grade pupils more highly than they deserve, and to exaggerate their achievements because of the need to be accountable (Murphy, 1987a).

COURSELOADS

Kingdon and Stobart (1988) argue that:

The real impact of the GCSE is found not within individual subjects, but in their combination into a courseload. (p.78)

This courseload was found to be imposing an unnecessary burden on conscientious students (Kingdon and Stobart, 1988). It may also have been responsible for a larger than usual drop out rate in the examination's first year of operation (PAT, 1988). In general the debate concentrated on those aspects of coursework which were likely to increase or decrease stress and the effects this would have on pupil motivation. Horton (1987b), for instance, argues that coursework relieves student tension in comparison with end-of-course examination:

These new emphases on assessment during the course were able simultaneously to deal both with the

psychological problems of stress and anxiety so often associated with terminal assessment, and to extend the curriculum by emphasizing skills rather than recall.
(p.44)

On the other hand, North (1987a) suggests it may be unfair to subject children to the more frequent stress of periods of continuous assessment. The Secondary Examinations Council (1987) supports this assertion, but also makes the point that a different type of pupil may be advantaged because, with a reduced stressload, they may be able to reach higher levels of performance in coursework than they could in end-of-course examinations:

A coursework component can offer a fairer treatment to a hard-working pupil whose attainment never receives proper credit in formal examinations because of the anxiety they bring about (p.11).

But there is a shadow side to coursework demands:

.... it takes relatively little absence or apathy for a pupil to fall sufficiently behind for dropping out to seem the obvious strategy.
(Kingdon and Stobart, 1988, p. 92)

On the other hand, closer specification of target objectives and short term achievement goals (Goldstein and Nuttall, 1987; Murphy and Pennycuick, 1987) may lead to improved performances through increased effort:

Continual Assessment of Coursework can, because of its proximity to the task, provide reinforcement or a spur and may therefore contribute to raising the quality of pupils' work. School-based assessment also allows the possibility of giving pupils credit for initiating tasks and assuming responsibility for organizing their own work (SEC, 1985, p.32).

The continuous improvement in the proportions of students

receiving the highest grades over the four years since the GCSE was introduced⁸ gives some credence to the argument that coursework motivates students to perform better.

SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

Torrance (1986c) makes other claims about the advantages of having coursework and teacher-based assessment in public examinations.⁹ School-based examining can be a route into school self-evaluation:

What I wish to suggest is that school-based examining might be both a focus for the development of confidence in self reporting and a mechanism which might be used across schools (p.32).

Torrance goes on to argue that teacher-based assessment can stimulate school curriculum development by allowing teachers a greater amount of control over what they do. It can thus counteract the deskilling process that many critics of GCSE have complained of with the setting up of National Syllabus Criteria (Bowe and Whitty, 1983). But Torrance (1985a) warns:

.... overall the study suggested that where involvement in formal assessment was perceived to be part of a broad, continuing, curriculum development exercise, it was likely to be undertaken with some enthusiasm. When it was perceived as an unwelcome additional chore, divorced from any creative curriculum element, it was not likely to be accomplished particularly well. Thus training which takes place outside the school and focuses exclusively on decontextualised summative procedures and on teacher involvement in end-of-course grading is unlikely to prove helpful to teachers who are faced with the ever present reality of motivating pupils,

developing new ideas and using assessment formatively as part of an overall educational package (p.40)

However, as far as Murphy (1987a) is concerned, the inclusion of an element of Coursework in the GCSE is only a token gesture to greater teacher assessment. The small amount of coursework in many syllabuses will give it less emphasis than in previous public examinations:

Much has been made of the increased emphasis on Coursework Assessment, but this won't count for more than about thirty per cent in most subjects, which in fact will give it much less emphasis than it had in many former GCEs. (p.52)

Though Murphy is right to stress its minimal impact in many subjects, English and Social Science teachers and examiners in particular, have developed syllabuses with substantial coursework elements¹⁰.

EXAMINATION TECHNOLOGIES

The literature is concerned with some of the technical problems of the new examination. Doubts are expressed about the adoption of a behavioural objectives model of assessment design (Carhart, 1986; Scott, 1988a; b). For instance it is argued that lists of intended behaviours do not adequately represent the real structures of knowledge. Knowledge is always embedded within a context (Scott, 1988a). One way in which the behavioural objectives model decontextualises knowledge is by

portioning subject knowledge into discrete domains. Stenhouse (1975) shows how difficult it is to differentiate forms of knowledge in pedagogic and assessment contexts. There are always going to be problems with establishing domain inclusivity (Arthur, 1982; Horne, 1984; Murphy, 1987a). Further doubts have been expressed about the point and purpose of an aggregated grade. If the examination is seen as descriptive and diagnostic and not primarily about selection, then an aggregated grade serves no purpose at all (Avison, 1985; Hodgson, 1987). Records of achievement, for instance, are a much better means of conveying information about pupils (Broadfoot, 1987; Goldstein and Nuttall, 1987).

It is also suggested in the literature that any formal assessment scheme is going to have difficulties with operationalising a principle like differentiation (Dixon, 1985; Carhart, 1986; Kingdon and Stobart, 1988; Gipps, 1987b; Horton, 1987; Radnor, 1988). An examination which sets out to compare students using grades cannot then also provide positive expressions of their achievements (Scott, 1989c). There are finally, problems with describing subjects in hierarchical terms. Noss, Hoyles and Goldstein (1987) argue this case in relation to Mathematics.

Various suggestions have been made to counteract some of these criticisms. Murphy and Pennycuik (1987), for instance, argue that any description of achievement should be context specific,

thus inviting the readers to make their own inferences about the transferability of such skills. They further suggest that the GCSE, though billed as a criterion-referenced examination (Joseph, 1984), may have to accept grade descriptions as opposed to grade criteria, thus diluting the original intent. Attempting to solve some of the technical problems of criterion-referenced formal examinations has led many commentators to attempt a new approach - which is that we should be concentrating on qualitative 'soft' non-comparative methods of describing pupils and pupil achievements (Massey and Newbold, 1986). Broadfoot (1987) argues though, that such methods of assessment may encourage a situation in which,

the individual is powerless to resist the identification which is the end product of a continuous and benign surveillance. (p.176)

These and other policy related issues are explored in subsequent chapters in this thesis.

POLICY

Because the GCSE is such an important innovation, it is bound to raise key questions in the field of educational policy. One such area of concern is the control of the curriculum. Many contributors to the literature (Andrews, 1982; Macintosh, 1982; Bowe and Whitty, 1983; Torrance, 1986b; Salter and Tapper, 1987; Roy, 1987; Scrimshaw, 1987; Murphy, 1987b) argue that the inclusion of nationally prescribed criteria to

which any syllabus has to conform will have the effect of shifting power from the teachers and the Examination Boards to the DES (now DfE) and its attendant advisory bodies (S.E.A.C., N.C.C.). Bove and Whitty (1984), for instance, suggest that the Mode 3 movement will assume a lesser impact, both because it will have to conform to a more explicit set of external criteria and because the effort needed to go through the whole procedure of getting a Mode 3 syllabus accepted will not be considered worthwhile. Torrance (1987b) on the other hand, considers that the gains for teacher autonomy in the assessment of coursework will counteract any losses of autonomy in the construction of syllabuses, though he is equivocal at times:

teachers may find themselves in the position of unwilling conscripts, marking coursework against objectives and criteria defined and determined by others (p.136).

Scarth (1987) argues though, that central control over subject content does not necessarily mean loss of teacher autonomy, in that a teacher, as in the past, will still have local control over what goes on in his or her classroom. Furthermore the role of the Examination Boards is crucial to this debate. Bove and Whitty (1984) suggest, for instance, that it will be the old GCE Boards which will dominate the new system of examining. Scrimshaw (1987) argues however, that the real losers in the power battle will be the Examination Boards in that their role will henceforth be mechanistic and bureaucratic as opposed to creative. Murphy (1987b) suggests that there will in fact be

diminished teacher involvement in the work of the Boards, a claim that is hard to substantiate.

The new examination itself has been characterised as reactionary and regressive. Macintosh (1985) has said of it:

that it will turn out to be expensive to run, potentially divisive and largely irrelevant to the needs of the majority of those for whom it was intended (p.7).

Gipps (1987b), echoing such sentiments, argues that though teachers wanted a common examination, the model of differentiation built into it will ensure that this is not what they have got. The Waddell Report (DES, 1978a)¹¹, the White Paper (DES, 1978b) that followed it, the bulletin of the Secondary Examinations Council (SEC, 1980), and the Cockcroft Report (DES, 1982)¹² have all in their various ways endorsed a differentiated approach to examining, and the implications of this is that it will lead to a differentiated approach to teaching. On the other hand, certain commentators (North, 1987a; Hiskett, 1988) argue that the maze of examining technology (criterion referencing, subject domains and so on) is designed to obscure the fact that any examination should have as its primary function the ability to designate some students as being successful and some as having failed¹³.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This chapter has sought to place the GCSE within its historical context and to address the conceptual issues surrounding coursework and coursework assessment. The empirical research study that forms the central part of this thesis is introduced in Chapter Two with reference to ethnographic perspectives, case study methodology and the research techniques that were adopted. The research was conducted using the condensed fieldwork methods of multi-site case study (Walker, 1974; Stenhouse, 1982), and fits broadly within the ethnographic research tradition (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Burgess, 1984c; Woods, 1986). Case studies of the effects of coursework were made in six schools, across three different counties and two metropolitan districts. They were of an independently controlled, mixed, day/boarding school (Lampton); an independently controlled, single-sex (female), day school (St Thomas'); a single-sex (female) urban, comprehensive school (Lorton School for Girls); a mixed, urban, comprehensive school (Carseley High); a mixed, rural, comprehensive school (Tadford); and a mixed rural secondary modern school (Tidehill)¹⁴. They were chosen to represent a range of organizational and socio-economic contexts. Chapter Three provides fuller accounts of these schools.

The relationship between the initial writing of texts - 'The GCSE National Criteria' (DES, 1985a) for instance - and

implementation is likely to be fragmented. Chapter Four offers a theoretical account of this relationship and an analysis of one of the key GCSE documents - 'A general introduction to the GCSE' (DES, 1985b). Examination texts, it will be argued, are open to interpretation and re-interpretation at different moments of use. Textual reading, moreover, is only part of the process - construction, reading, meaning formulation, meaning re-formulation and implementation. Texts allow multiple readings (Eco, 1984), although some texts are more 'readerly' than 'writerly' (Barthes, 1975). These sources of meaning compete with previous examination technologies and with other discursive forms. They are practical documents and they are guided by specific sets of ideological meaning. They seek to provide apparatus for differentiating between candidates, and they play their part in the creation of individual subjectivities (Walkerdine, 1984).

Chapter Five deals with teachers' perceptions of the GCSE and contrasts their belief or non-belief in a particular examination agenda with their willingness or reluctance to follow those rules which support this agenda. It suggests that teachers take six different approaches to GCSE coursework. These are typified as conformist, adaptive, oppositional, ritualistic, transformative and non-conformist. This examination agenda has been constructed from a particular reading of GCSE texts, which emphasizes equity, non-arbitrariness, predictive validity, comparability, equivalence

of assessment environment, and improved pedagogy. Teachers' initial reading of GCSE texts or their initial confrontation with the ideas behind the new examination draws upon both those internalized rules which actors reproduce in their day to day working lives and those structural resources which position actors within set frameworks. Those elements of structure that are relevant to the matter in hand, condition but do not determine actors' responses. Initial textual readings give way to subsequent interpretations and re-interpretations of coursework processes, and all the various readings are implicated in the implementation and re-implementation of coursework strategies. This cycle of activity at different moments and in different guises influences actual practice. This chapter offers a time and place specific perspective on these events.

Chapter Six focuses on those structural and interactional influences which impact upon initial textual readings. Curriculum policy and curriculum practice within specific sites (and this chapter focuses on one of the case-study schools) is always the result of contestation. Within institutions that devolve power and decision-making, outcomes are never all the same; that contestation will have different outcomes at different moments within the history of each institution. The introduction of the GCSE has given teachers an opportunity to re-assess curriculum practice within their schools and within their classrooms, and to implement new organizational

strategies that best fit their conception of the curriculum. By focusing on a critical moment in that process of policy formation, we are in a better position to examine those conflicting and contested ideologies that, when seen in the light of structural constraints and personal histories, account for curriculum change within institutions.

Chapter Seven examines teacher practice as it relates to coursework. Exemplar material is taken from observations of Science and Geography lessons in the six case-study schools and teacher and pupil accounts of intra- and extra- school processes that involved the completion of coursework assignments. Five sets of polarized concepts - weak/strong knowledge framing, formative/summative modes of assessment, the production of reliable/unreliable assessment data, limited/extended amounts and types of teacher interventions in coursework processes and normal/irregular classroom practices - are developed to help analyse issues such as the influence of the GCSE on classroom practice, integration of assessment and curriculum, pupil-teacher relations, pedagogy and pupil motivation.

Finally Chapter Eight presents the findings from the study. Coursework practices were found to differ, with variation in the following: timings of coursework during the two years, where it was being completed, the type of exercises that students were doing, the amount and quality of teacher input,

the availability of resources and the extent of parental and 'other' help. This was acting to decrease the examination's reliability as a testing device, while at the same time increasing validity. Maturation issues were found to be a problem in the making of reliable and valid assessments. Teachers were finding it difficult to reconcile contradictory demands - the need to initiate a formative process of assessment and learning throughout the two year course, and the requirement to undertake a summative process of assessment and reporting. Coursework has allowed parents to play a fuller and more direct role in the completion of coursework assignments, but parental interventions were found to be limited. But though one form of reliability is threatened by the introduction of coursework techniques, there are pedagogic, learning and motivational gains. The GCSE was designed to integrate more productively coursework assessment techniques with programmes of study. But evidence from the case studies suggests that close integration of assessment tasks and learning programmes was not being achieved. Finally it was noted that some teachers were treating coursework in connected ways; whereas others, conscious of the need to assess in nationally equivalent environments, were formalizing the process and as a result disconnecting assessment from learning and thereby limiting its notional ability to act formatively. This chapter will also draw together the threads of the argument that has been developed in this thesis, and show how dislocated relationships between examination policy texts and

realisation have consequences for examination comparability, educational disadvantage, and the production and reproduction of educational knowledge in schools¹⁵.

NOTES:

1. GCE 'O' level was introduced in 1951, and was taken by the top 20 to 25 per cent of the school population in most subjects. The Certificate of Secondary Education was introduced in the mid 1960s, and was originally designed for about half the pupils who did not take 'O' level. Kingdon and Stobart (1988) argue that in fact the proportion taking it was always greater.
2. In fact the Waddell Committee (DES, 1978a) identified five strategies to achieve commonality: common papers taken by all candidates; common papers taken by all candidates with structured questions offering different degrees of difficulty; common papers with different tariff weighted questions which offer candidates a degree of choice; a common paper taken by all candidates, plus alternative papers which are not graded for difficulty; and a common paper taken by all candidates with easier and harder papers for different types of candidates. The third and fourth of these strategies were quickly rejected. In fact the most common model of differentiation used is the fifth method which combines common components with an extension paper to differentiate the highest grades.
3. The Secondary Examinations Council's Annual Report 1983-84 includes the following extract from Sir Keith Joseph's 1984 speech to the Northern Education Association: "the quest for an improved curriculum and higher standards of attainment will require changes in the examination system, especially at 16+, whether it is decided to merge or harmonize 'O' levels and CSE." To achieve this, he suggests a number of strategies: "the establishment of an accreditation council for initial teacher training; the decision on the future shape of the 16+ examination system based on national criteria; the formation of a curricular policy in each Local Education Authority for pupils of all abilities and aptitudes - Circular 8/83; a definitive statement on the objectives of Science in schools; a start on the formulation of grade-related criteria for the 16+

examinations; and the definition of a scheme of pilot projects on records of achievement for all school leavers." (p.68)

4. Criterion-referenced examinations seek to judge students against set criteria, which means that different proportions of students each year may be awarded the various grades. Norm-referenced examiners award grades to similar proportions of students each year.

5. Between 1988 and 1990 optional coursework components in Mathematics were to be provided by the Examination Boards. All GCSE Mathematics syllabuses now contain compulsory coursework components.

6. As Kingdon and Stobart (1988) acknowledge, coursework and teacher assessment quickly became established as an important part of the CSE; but though some 'O' and 'A' level examiners introduced coursework components, this was limited in scope and confined to subjects such as Technology and Graphic Communication.

7. Nuttall and Goldstein (1984) make a distinction between marker reliability and examination reliability: "with criterion-referenced graded tests, achieving agreement about the criteria for marking among all those involved might be simpler than it is within traditional public examinations, but the variation in the conditions under which tests are given and the variation in the tasks from school to school and occasion to occasion may wipe out any enhanced reliability of marking" (p.11).

8. For instance, nearly 1 percent more As were awarded in 1992 than in 1991, and 2.3 per cent more grades A to C, regarded as the equivalent of the old 'O' level pass.

9. Torrance (1985a; 1985b; 1985c; 1986b; 1986c; 1987a; 1987b; 1987c) has written extensively on teacher assessment in examinations, and much of his evidence comes from 'The Teacher Assessment in Public Examinations Project' (T.A.P.E.), the results of which are published in Torrance, 1986a (pp.57-58). He comes to the following conclusions: 1) the practices and attitudes of teachers and examiners vary enormously; 2) teachers interpret their involvement in examinations with specific reference to the Boards; 3) in contrast, examiners see teacher involvement in assessment as a means to influence pedagogy and curriculum; 4) at the time of writing, teacher assessment is poorly conceptualised; 5) "the evidence from this and previous studies suggests that where involvement in formal assessment is perceived by teachers to be part of a broad, continuing curriculum development exercise, it is likely to be undertaken with some enthusiasm. Where it is perceived as an unwelcome additional chore, divorced from any creative curricular element, it is not likely to be accomplished particularly well" (p.58); 6) teachers need guidance in

formative assessment, continuous monitoring and evaluation; 7) in-service education and training should be clarified as to whether it should be top-down or bottom-up; 8) moderation should be a focus of in-service work; 9) the visiting moderator model is recommended; 10) there should be interrelation of individual and consortium moderation; 11) there should be sufficient time set aside for teachers to explore and learn from disagreement about marking; 12) 'profiling' needs to be encouraged; 13) there needs to be a rationalisation of cluster-group organisation; 14) the focus for developing effective teacher assessment should be departmental; 15) in-service work should be subject-based; 16) initial teacher training should not be neglected.

10. Kenneth Clarke, a previous Education Secretary, has recently (1992) announced restrictions on the proportions of coursework counting towards the final grades to between 20 and 40 per cent of most National Curriculum subjects.

11. The Waddell Committee was set up to monitor the new joint 16+ examination. It favoured a common approach in some subjects, but differentiated strategies in subjects such as Mathematics and Modern Languages, where, it was argued, there may be too wide a range of skills to be effectively tested with common papers.

12. The Cockcroft Report (DES, 1982), 'Mathematics Counts' recommended three different levels at which Mathematics GCSE candidates would be assessed. This was incorporated into the Mathematics Subject Criteria.

13. North (1987a) in her polemic against the GCSE argues that real understanding is embedded in a framework of knowledge which has historical roots. The GCSE is criticised for being too concerned with relevance. For example, Coldman and Sheppard (1987) enthusiastically take on board the ideas of the philosopher Frege, who described Mathematics as a system which could not be justified or understood in terms of its empirical application: "the introduction of the GCSE examination in Mathematics does not, as its supporters (and some critics) claim, signal a major departure from the way the subject is taught in schools.... The process of decline has consisted of three clear stages: 1) the gradual intrusion and acceptance of empirical methodology into the curriculum; 2) the official legitimisation of such methods by the Cockcroft Report and the subsequent HMI document; 3) the institutionalising of the empirical approach with the GCSE examination" (p.63).

O'Hear (1987), in turn, argues that with the GCSE: "there is a more or less wholesale abandonment of the idea of education as an initiation into existing forms of worthwhile knowledge and understanding. Instead, stress is laid on the pursuit of goals of 'relevance' and of the acquisition of the so-called 'skills' of judgement, evaluation of data, and personal enquiry and

assessment. Such skills are bound to be empty and ill-informed if not based in any real immersion in existing forms of knowledge" (pp. 117-118). His intention is therefore to support Peters' (1965; 1966) and Hirst's (1965; 1969; 1974) claims for the existence of intrinsically worthwhile knowledge, though he has previously expressed doubts about the precise nature of the liberal education edifice that they constructed.

Cooper (1987), in a similar way, argues that multi-culturalism is a false dogma, in that a real attack on racism should be educational rather than political, social or vocational: "...the product of a traditional, humane and liberal education - the educated mind - is one which, at its best, is as unreceptive to racism as to any other kind of unreasonable discrimination and lack of sensitivity. An acquaintance with the best that has been written, thought and enacted is not easily transformed into a sympathy with what is worst in human behaviour. What is depressing, naturally, is that the educated mind is precisely that which is currently under threat" (p.150). Williams (1987), taking up the same theme, and directly attacking the idea of a skills-based examination, says, "the continued efficacy of a skill depends upon the maintained vitality of a relationship to a larger body of knowledge" (p.165). Finally North (1987) herself, suggests that the GCSE is politically biased.

North's critique rests on three foundational principles. First, our descriptions of the world correspond in some fairly exact way to what actually is, that the world exists in some sense as separate from our experiencing of it. Thus it is possible to establish descriptive categories which are 'true', in that any other form of categorization would be unreal - would be literally fantastical. Facts can therefore be established about the world; and ultimately these facts apply not just to the natural world, but the social world as well. The subjects that we teach in schools are therefore absolute manifestations of human knowledge. Second, the idea of 'political bias' can be construed as the slanting of content and method in a particular subject to serve particular ideological ends, when that bias is in contra-distinction to 'a truthful version of events'. Third, it becomes possible therefore to categorize human nature as fixed and immutable, and not dependent in any way on either our political and ideological position, nor on the norms and values of the society in which our categories are rooted. Thus the problem of ethnocentric description - that is portraits of other cultures using sets of concepts that those other cultures do not accept - is brushed aside by arguing that a real understanding of the mind, a mature understanding, can aspire to some form of rationality which would allow ethical decisions to be made about other cultures, because those ethical decisions are in some sense truly rational.

If one attempts to develop a different and contrasting epistemology; that is to acknowledge the rootedness of all

discourse in a tradition of meaning and to accept that we provide the conceptual apparatus, the category system, through which reality is filtered, then we have to face up to limits on our notions of objectivity and absoluteness. Our knowledge of the world is therefore relative to the particular social, economic and cultural conditions in which we find ourselves. The subjects that are taught in school - their boundaries and their content - reflect not a never changing reality, but a particular historical and social conjunction of relationships. In other words they could be different. Thus 'the child' is created in terms of a set of historical and social practices, and could be created differently. Psychology cannot provide us with absolute descriptions of human nature. Those social arrangements connote different possible ways by which reality is structured, by which that structured reality defines what is. Knowledge thus serves particular arrangements of power relations (Foucault, 1985).

But there are problems with this extreme form of relativism. Any statement or truths about the world, including those expressed as negative ones, imply some form of certain knowledge. The idea of what a fact is may be non-relativistic, but the fact itself certainly is. In other words the criteria which determine what a fact may be are not determined by particular social and historical conditions, but these criteria include relativist conditions for fact describing. That all truths may be social does not exclude absolutely the acceptance of certain basic rules of intelligibility. Accepting the idea of a contradiction being intelligible would make a nonsense of everything.

The problem lies with the locating of these rules of intelligibility. Bruner (1971) sets the limits of absolute knowledge very close to the whole infrastructure of knowledge, when he argues that the Wolof tribe have no conceptual understanding of the notion of the individual. Everything, every truth, is seen in collectivist terms. It has been argued that such a convention can not be described as a unique way of life, but can be described as an example of inadequate language development. But to judge the Wolof linguistic apparatus as inadequate, we would have to make ethical judgements, based on our own ethical criteria, about a culture which has adopted a form of life which we readily acknowledge does not share the criteria which underpin our way of life. The problem of building bridges between different 'forms' (Wittgenstein, 1953) remains. For North (1987) and her fellow writers (O'Hear, 1987; Williams, 1987, for example), it does not seem to be a problem. However, by accepting the rules of intelligibility, one is acknowledging a logical challenge to a pure relativist theory of knowledge.

The second way that a relativist theory of reality needs to be modified is in terms of how our conceptual understanding relates to the empirical world. Wittgenstein (1953), for

instance, uses the notion of measuring an object. The system that we choose - metric or otherwise - to measure the object is conventional; but the object has measurable features which exist antecedently to our choice or a form of life's choice of a unit of measurement. But grammar - and here Wittgenstein parts company with analytic philosophers such as Hirst (1975) - though rule bound, though not arbitrary, cannot be made sense of in terms of a set of pre-existing rules which define it, and which therefore define what reality is. Reality can only be known through the existing patterns of language in which we have immersed ourselves since birth. Wittgenstein (1953) says, "What has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say, - forms of life" (p.111). There is therefore on two counts a logical necessity to accept modifications to a pure relativist view of the world. But such modifications structure our sense of reality. They do not constitute its meaning.

History provides us with another example, and Beattie's (1987) pamphlet called 'History in Peril' sets out the argument initially formulated by North (1987). In History, an event which has a particular meaning for one of its participants cannot be said to have the same meaning for someone who collects evidence retrospectively and then evaluates it. The debate concerns historical method. The suggestion by Beattie is that all historians (marxist or otherwise), use the same method, accept the same canons of truthfulness. Beattie cites E.P.Thompson, who argues that we can understand the past without recourse to any theoretical sieve. I am arguing here that a colonial version of History or a patriotic version of History are legitimate devices. The debate can only be conducted at the level of theory. What piece of evidence we choose to examine, and how relevant it is are matters which can only be decided at a theoretical level.

Thus History cannot of itself be a-theoretical. It is imbued with particular human meanings. In other words, the criteria used to judge evidence, and this is not just logical but conceptual as well, is dependent upon the ideological stance one adopts. A Marxist Historian, for instance, adopts a framework of economic determinism through which he describes and analyses historical events. Thus E.H.Carr's 'History of Soviet Russia' (1979) would be a very different History if it was ever attempted by a different type of historian. Respect for and understanding of our national institutions such as the Houses of Parliament is dependent upon our conceptual framework, our value position. A Marxist would see parliament as a sham which preserves the outward form of representative democracy but covers up the real relations in society. Suggesting that a particular historical interpretation is above ideological and theoretical slanting is to give ones own version pride of place by disingenuous means.

The epistemological framework that North and others (1987) adopt leads them to deify objective fact. They argue that

children need to have their understanding rooted in such a factual framework. So children are encouraged to learn poems, recite mathematical tables, learn the capitals of the world in Geography and so forth. There are a number of problems with this. First, mechanical devices such as computers, calculators and of course books can do such tasks many times better than the human mind. Second, identifying such facts, and then separating those facts from one's own ideological interpretation of them is always going to be problematic. Are those islands in the South Atlantic: 'The Malvinas or the Falklands'?

Third, mechanical learning of this sort becomes a distraction from the real purposes of education which I would suggest are to deepen and enrich those personal structures of knowledge which all of us bring to the learning situation. Fourth, systems of facts or ideas are always directed towards some end, because they are essentially political. So for years in British Schools, History teachers taught facts about the British Empire from a viewpoint of the civilizing influences that the British brought to places like India and parts of Africa. North (1987) is arguing that the ideological message from schools is anti-colonial, anti-imperial, egalitarian and as a consequence biased. But this leads to a conceptual confusion. That message cannot be called biased when it is slanted one way and truthful when it is slanted the other way.

At the level of the examination syllabuses, North (1987) also suggests that the GCSE is politically biased. For every GCSE Integrated Humanities or Modern History Syllabus, there are a number of syllabuses which adopt value positions in favour of free market economic values (for example, Business Studies GCSE Courses). Economic Syllabuses represent a heavy investment in the theory of the market; and ignore in many cases the equally coherent economic theories of those who incline to a more corporatist attitude. I have argued here that the critique expounded in North (1987) depends on a realist and nominalist epistemological framework, and that as a consequence, it becomes possible to accept a theory of political bias which allows you to claim that one particular political position is biased, but that another - the one you hold yourself - is truthful.

14. In common with accepted practice (Ball, 1981; Burgess, 1983; Lacey, 1970; Hargreaves, 1967), the names of the schools are pseudonyms.

15. Material from the following has been used in this chapter:

Scott, D. (1989a), 'In defence of the GCSE', *Forum*, 31, 2, pp.53-56.

Scott, D. (1989b), *The GCSE: An Annotated Bibliography and an introductory essay*, CEDAR Occasional Paper 1, University of Warwick.

CHAPTER TWO - METHODS

CHOOSING CASES

The empirical study that forms the central part of this thesis is an investigation of GCSE coursework processes in six schools. Data collection methods were not predetermined. Research processes were guided strategically by the developing theory. This is at the heart of what Glaser and Strauss (1967) call 'grounded theorising'. A dialectical relationship exists between theory building and data collection. As fieldwork proceeds, the researcher's initial hunches, hypotheses and conjectures are gradually refined and reformulated, and this acts progressively to focus analysis and reorganise data collection methods.

Prior to this, there is what Malinowski (1922) calls the 'foreshadowed problem'. This involves clarifying and developing research ideas before fieldwork begins (Strauss, 1970). Two approaches to research design and data analysis have been formulated. Znaniecki's (1934) advocacy of 'analytic induction' (Cressey, 1950; Denzin, 1978) entails the use of constant comparative techniques for analysing data. It also acknowledges a period prior to the fieldwork to circumscribe and set limits to the area of study and to develop hypothetical explanations of the phenomena that concern the researcher. Glaser and Strauss (1967) on the other hand, argue that the researcher should avoid presuppositions, hypotheses and

previous research studies. Bulmer (1979) has criticised this tabula rasa approach in two ways. It is difficult to achieve and it ignores the way researchers conceptualise research problems. Furthermore all data and data collection methods include theoretical assumptions, the adoption of which occurs prior to fieldwork (Harris, 1979; Hanson, 1968).

Those initial hypotheses and suppositions that informed the initial stages of my research were influential in guiding the selection of cases (see Appendix 1). They were:

- (a) Children in rural schools may have problems with completing History and Geography coursework projects because they may have limited access to primary sources of information.
- (b) Parental interventions in coursework processes would be differentially distributed and were likely to be of greater intensity in middle class locales (Giddens 1984).
- (c) The amount of work students actually do may have gender implications. Coursework processes which are assessed over the two years of the course may favour the more persistent and hardworking pupil. Girls are therefore likely to benefit.
- (d) Coursework processes are of benefit to the taught curriculum, but reduce examination reliability and comparability. (fieldnotes, 6.6.1988)

Though some of these themes declined in importance as fieldwork progressed, initially they were influential in research design, and extra- and intra- sampling judgments¹. Six case-studies of school processes were eventually made. Choosing appropriate cases though, can never be an exact operation (Burgess, 1984c). Practical constraints limit researchers' freedom of action (Shipman, 1981; Burgess, 1983 - for further discussion of this issue see below). Even if pre-sampling is undertaken, there

are no guarantees that one's sampling judgements accurately reflect the research design. If such guarantees were able to be made, there would be no point in completing the fieldwork, since there would be nothing new to discover. Furthermore, since the research focus is in a state of constant flux, it is difficult to prespecify appropriate cases.

Sampling within each case is subject to the same types of constraints. During the fieldwork, I employed a number of data collection methods, though in the main, I used observations and interviews. This allowed me to reconstruct historical events through the eyes of key participants in those events. Interviews were conducted with senior members of staff in each school and with Heads of Department in all the major subject areas (see Appendix 2). Informal contact was maintained with other members of staff, and with large numbers of pupils both in class and outside. I interviewed at length six pupils in each school². They were chosen to give a gender balance, where this was appropriate³; and to allow a variety of responses from different ability levels within each school⁴ (see Appendix 3). In four out of the six schools one of these pupils was observed throughout their timetable during a full day. Other relevant lessons (assessed practicals in the Sciences, oral work in English) were also observed where I felt that this would contribute to further understandings of coursework processes (see Appendix 4). Interviews were conducted with the parents of the sample of pupils⁵, so that

the key issue of parental contributions to coursework assignments could be investigated. Each of these thirty-six pupils kept a diary over five weeks to record the extent of the work they were doing in all their subjects outside the classroom (see Appendix 5). Within each school a number of pupils that were identified as failing to complete coursework requirements in some or all of their subjects were interviewed. Finally all year ten pupils in each setting completed a short questionnaire, which asked them to list their homework (including coursework completed at home) during one full week in the summer term of the second year of the project⁶ (see Appendix 6).

Fieldwork visits were organised sequentially, though the more limited second phase fieldwork periods ran parallel to each other (see Appendix 7). This meant that due to progressive focussing, at later stages of the fieldwork I concentrated on different themes and areas of study. My fieldnotes record this change:

I started off thinking about amounts of work and student burdens, it now seems to me that this project is really about coursework processes - how different teachers make different readings of the same texts and how students respond to those different readings (7.11.1988).

Having previously assumed that students would be following courses which were roughly comparable, it soon became apparent that this was not the case, and that what in fact was significant about pupils' coursework programmes was their

diversity and lack of homogeneity. These changes affected interview and observation schedules, and re-focussed the types of questions I asked. Analysis and methodology operated here dialectically, as each in turn was responsive to the other.

In order to develop formal theory, the research programme can be used to build theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), or test theory (Hammersley, 1984, 1987; Hammersley and Scarth, 1986⁷; Hammersley, Scarth and Webb, 1985), or provide detailed ethnographic description which uses theoretical elements (Burgess, 1983, 1984c). Depending on one's purpose, different sampling judgments will be made. Cases are chosen either for typicality or for explanatory power. They are either representative of a wider whole or they illuminate theories which concern that wider setting. Hammersley (1985) describes three styles of case study research. The first style is where the researcher wants to study typical cases, which represent a larger whole or aggregate. Honigmann (1973), for instance, argues that ethnographers must identify their selection criteria to enable the reader to determine the relationship between the sample and its intended universe. In a similar way, Woods (1987) cites the need to make 'the case' as representative as possible to improve external validity. The second style of case-study research cited by Hammersley (1985) is where the researcher wants to use cases to test theories. He or she studies more and more cases until they are satisfied that the theory holds. The third style is where the researcher

is not concerned with notions of representativeness. He or she acknowledges the uniqueness of each case. But the researcher is interested in how the workings of particular processes are illuminated by single cases. Mitchell (1983) brings out the tension that underlies each of these three research styles:

The basic problem is the use of case material in theoretical analysis, however, is that of the extent to which the analyst is justified in generalising from a single instance of an event which may be - and probably is - unique. (p.189)

For Hammersley the fieldwork is completed to test a theory or theories (Hammersley and Scarth, 1986). Theory for him is explanatory in a retrospective sense, but it is not predictive. Testing theory allows generalisability, though as he admits in his discussion of the differentiation/polarization thesis (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Ball 1981), the theory may become so circumscribed by context that it loses much of its power to generalise (Hammersley, 1985).

This study of GCSE coursework differs from this approach in a number of ways. Though I formulated a series of tentative hypotheses (see above), these were used to guide the selection of cases. These cases were not representative of all schools in the country, though they did include schools which could be distinguished from each other by sets of identifiable characteristics - single sex/ mixed, independent/ state, urban/ rural, selective/ comprehensive, day/ boarding, high/low socio-economic status of parents, and compacted/ extended catchment areas (see Table 2.1). The theory that I subsequently generated

Table 2.1: SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Tidehill</u>	<u>Tadford</u>	<u>St Thomas'</u>	<u>Lorton</u>	<u>Lampton</u>	<u>Carseley</u>
Sex of pupils	Mixed	Mixed	Single -sex (girls)	Single -sex (girls)	Mixed	Mixed
Ownership	State	State	Private	State	Private	State
Location	Rural	Rural	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban
Academic organization	De-selective	Comprehensive	Selective	Comprehensive	Selective	Comprehensive
Type of pupils	Day	Day	Day	Day	Day/Boarding	Day
Socio-economic status of parents	High socio-economic status of parents	High socio-economic status of parents	High socio-economic status of parents	Low socio-economic status of parents	High socio-economic status of parents	Low socio-economic status of parents
Catchment area	Compacted catchment area	Compacted catchment area	Compacted catchment area	Compacted catchment area	Extended catchment area	Compacted catchment area

(see chapter eight) is not generalisable to every other case, because my six schools were not chosen for typicality. They were chosen because their distinguishing features (see Table 2.1) allowed specific investigation of those aspects of the research problem (understanding coursework processes) that my pre-fieldwork hypothesising had suggested would be important. The intention therefore, was to develop theories which illuminate processes in that wider universe. Formal theory emerges which has explanatory power but it is based on the uniqueness of each case. Furthermore it quickly became apparent that the case as an holistic entity could not be a school because coursework processes were subject bound. Thus a progressive refocussing of 'the case' took place as fieldwork proceeded and as it became clear that departmental processes were of greater significance than school processes.

NEGOTIATING ACCESS

Gaining access to research settings involves far more than simply being granted permission to begin research. It is a continuous series of negotiations and re-negotiations, with different personnel at different levels within the organisation. Indeed, though access may be granted by one's initial gatekeeper (Lofland, 1971; Goffman, 1971; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983), this may not reflect the interests and wishes of all members of that organisation. Having been granted

permission to conduct research at Lampton Independent School by the Headteacher, I was enjoined to:

Go where you want; go into any classroom. We are a completely open school. We have nothing to hide. Interview who you want. We will find the time for you.

Though I subsequently encountered little opposition, it was clear from one tentative enquiry that I would not be welcome in her classroom. Having successfully negotiated access with other members of staff, I chose not to pursue the matter. Gaining initial access therefore is only the beginning of a process (Woods, 1986) which stretches throughout the fieldwork and has consequences for both the research methodologies employed and the subsequent account that the researcher eventually submits. Burgess (1984c), for instance, argues that:

Accounts by researchers have revealed that social research is not just a question of neat procedures but a social process where by interaction between researcher and researched will directly influence the course which a research programme takes (p.23).

The researcher therefore, can not assume a neutral value-free position, but is fundamentally a part of the written account that is finally completed (Hammond, 1964; Shipman, 1976; Bell and Newby, 1977; Bell and Encel, 1978; Shaffir, Stebbins and Turowetz, 1980; Roberts, 1981).

The initial means of gaining access to the six case-study schools was by letter (see Appendix 8). Due to lack of time this was changed to telephoning and three schools were approached only by this method. There was no correlation

between method and success rate. Two schools that I telephoned, without sending an initial letter, subsequently granted access ('Austell' and 'Lorton School for girls', see Table 2.2). Another did not reply, so I telephoned to ask for an interview with the Headteacher, which was granted. Access was subsequently refused ('Highsmith', see Table 2.2). Once an interview had been arranged, and it was not necessarily with the Headteacher (at Tidehill it was the School Examinations' Officer - see Table 2.2), it was usual for permission to be granted at that interview. Clearly the decision had been made in those cases before the interview took place, using the information available in the initial letter (an example would be Carseley High School, see Table 2.2). In other cases Headteachers initiated consultation procedures with their staffs. This resulted in successful access in some cases, but failure in others.

The reasons given for my failure to gain access (in four schools) provide insights into the social organisation and operational state of particular settings. The Headteacher of Highsmith School refused entry because of pressure from the Unions (see Table 2.2). This was a single-sex girls' school in an urban area of high unemployment and extensive social deprivation. It had just gone through a period of sporadic union action, and was threatened with closure due to falling numbers. My presence as a researcher would have increased the pressure on participants.

Table 2.2: GAINING ACCESS

- A. Number of School
- B. Type of School
- C. Means of initial contact
- D. Subsequent means for establishing contact
- E. Means used for conveying rejection
- F. Means used for conveying acceptance
- G. Reasons given for rejection

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A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1. State Boys 'Abbotsbury'		Letter No reply	Telephone Head's Secretary	Telephone	N.A.	Inconvenient Unnecessary
2. State, Rural, Mixed, Comp. 'Tadford'		Approached by by Deputy Head	Letter to and Interview with Head. Site Brief left	N.A.	Telephoned by Deputy Head before meeting Head.	N.A.
3. State, Urban, Girls Comp. 'Highsmith'		Letter No reply	Telephone Head's Secretary. Meeting with Deputy Head. Site brief left	Telephoned by Head	N.A.	Pressure from Unions
4. Independent Girls 'St. Thomas'		Letter Reply recd.	Meeting with Head Site brief left	N.A.	Told at meeting with Head	N.A.
5. State, Rural, Mixed, High 'Undergrove'		Letter	N.A.	By letter	N.A.	"time and other commitments of colleagues"

6. State, Rural, Letter and Telephone N.A. N.A. Told at brief meeting with Head
Mixed, High 'Tidehill', Meeting with Examinations Officer and Head briefly with Head Site brief left
7. Independent Telephone to agree initial meeting N.A. N.A. Told by Head at meeting
Boys 'Austell' [Subsequently it was decided not to proceed with research at this school] Site brief left
8. Independent Letter N.A. No reply to N.A. initial letter
Boys 'Grove Priory'
9. State, Urban, Letter Reply recd. N.A. N.A. Told by Head at meeting
Mixed 'Carseley' Meeting with Head Site brief left
10. State, Urban, Telephone N.A. N.A. Telephoned by Head after consultation with staff
Girls, Comp. 'Lorton' Meeting with Head Site brief left
11. Independent Telephone to agree initial meeting N.A. N.A. Told by Head at meeting
Mixed 'Lampton' Meeting with Head Site brief left

Undergrove School (see Table 2.2) suffered from none of these disadvantages, except that teacher unions were taking industrial action in all schools at this time. I received a prompt letter explaining that: 'It would take me several hours to explain to you in detail the reasons, but if I say to you time and other commitments of colleagues, I am sure you will understand.' The Headteacher of Grove Priory failed to reply to my letter. The School Secretary of Abbotsbury telephoned to say that it was 'inconvenient and unnecessary'. Teachers may fear outsiders, because they could expose shortcomings in their professional practice. As Woods (1986) puts it: 'Teachers may fear disturbance of their own delicately balanced survival equilibrium. Outsiders can only be perceived as a threat to this'. (p.28) The extent of this threat is determined by the perception of the Headteacher in each of the schools. However as Wolcott (1973) acknowledges, there is no way that a school study can be done openly without seeking permission from the headteacher. But this has repercussions, as Wolcott indicates, since the level at which the researcher enters will influence the conduct of the fieldwork and the type of data that is gathered. Though Simons (1987) advocates a democratisation of research methods where research programmes are constructed to meet the needs of all the participants in what are inevitably stratified situations, in the initial stages of gaining access democratic goals cannot be met. Indeed this points to the importance of the key gatekeeper or gatekeepers in the initial stages of

seeking access, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) acknowledge: 'in formal organisations, for example, initial access negotiations may be focussed on formal permission that can legitimately be granted or withheld by key personnel.' (p.63)

The means by which decisions concerning access are made within schools are indicative of the organizational arrangements in each setting . Ball (1987) identifies four style types in the performance of heads. These are interpersonal, managerial, political-adversarial and political-authoritarian. Interpersonal headteachers are concerned to establish good relations with staff and rely on face-to-face contact while carrying out their duties. Managerial headteachers operate through committees and use formal procedures. The adversarial headteacher, on the other hand, enjoys argument and adopts a confrontational role with his or her colleagues. Finally the authoritarian headteacher avoids debate and rules by dictat. Ball is careful to provide two caveats to this schema. First 'performances, as interactional texts, are read differently' (Ball, 1987, p.87). Thus he makes the claim that both practitioner and audience would find it difficult to agree on a particular categorization. Second the adoption of headship styles may vary both with audience and over time.

Headteachers' responses to my request for access suggest three different management styles. These correspond to three of Ball's four categorizations - interpersonal, managerial and

political-authoritarian. Interpersonal headship with its more democratic ethos allows for greater devolution in decision-making, and the Headteacher will, as far as possible, seek agreement from his or her staff before a decision is made. Though it is highly unlikely that major decisions within the school will be subject to this procedure, decisions about granting access to a researcher may be safely left to the staff. Lorton School (see Table 2.2) followed procedures which seemed to fit this model.

The second management style that was noted corresponds to a greater extent to Ball's (1987) managerial model. Here the school is organized along clear hierarchical lines, with members of staff having specific terms of reference and clear job descriptions. Decision-making therefore may still be devolved, though there are in place well-defined systems of accountability. Granting access to a researcher is not within the remit of the headteacher. Their giving of assent is simply a formal procedure. The real decision is made by the most appropriate person within the school. The Headteacher of Tidehill School (see Table 2.2) decided that research access was the province of the Examinations Officer. At Tadford (see Table 2.2) it was the Deputy Head.

The final style of management that was identified was that of the Head as political - authoritarian. The decision to grant access was his and his alone. The staff were not to be

consulted. The research findings could be usefully incorporated into his strategy for managing the school. Lampton (see Table 2.2) was seen to have adopted this model. Furthermore those headteachers who more closely assume Ball's (1987) political-authoritarian style were also keen to exercise, throughout the fieldwork, a greater degree of surveillance and control than in other more democratic settings. One case-study school ('Austell', see Table 2.2) negotiated to retain control in a formal sense over what was to be published. For instance in my fieldnotes (cf. Mills, 1959; Burgess, 1981, 1982, 1984a, 1984b) on my first meeting with the Headteacher of Carseley High School (see Table 2.2), I commented that 'he saw the meeting as exploratory; but also to assert his authority over the investigation. It was important for him to be seen to be giving permission - to the extent that all communication, organization were to go through him'. The Deputy Head, clearly anticipating his wishes, arranged a series of times during school hours for me to interview those members of staff that I felt I needed to. Methodology and data-collection in this setting were structured by the organisational ethos that predominated in the school.

As a researcher, I used a number of familiarity devices to facilitate access. What I said, what I looked like, how I behaved - the ephemera of role - were all designed to establish trust and thus ease the process of entry (cf. Hammersley, 1979; Delamont, 1984). I deliberately used my extensive past

experience as a teacher as a device to reassure. As Woods (1986) argues 'negotiating access therefore, is not just about getting into institutions or groups in the sense of crossing the threshold that marks it off from the outside world, but proceeding across several thresholds that mark the way to the heart of a culture' (p.24). I claimed privileged knowledge about the research setting because I had taught in comprehensive schools for thirteen years. There are, though, dangers of over-familiarity. My fieldnotes record such an incident:

I notice two girls sitting outside the Headteacher's study, reading books. At my last school pupils sent out of classrooms for misbehaviour were sometimes picked up by the Head and made to work for the rest of the day outside his study. I assume these two girls have fallen foul of some teacher.

(Lorton School for Girls)

Later I am disabused of such a notion:

The Deputy Head tells me that they try to welcome visitors by always having on duty outside the Head's study two girls whose task it is to welcome visitors and ask them politely who they would like to see.

(Lorton School for Girls)

Burgess (1984c) argues that the degree of familiarity or strangeness found in research settings has been polarised in some of the literature. He suggests that in his research he found within the same social setting a series of situations which were both familiar and strange. Whatever the degree of real familiarity with the six case-study schools where I did my research, I assumed a persona that was familiar with the mores and codes of school life. Since gatekeepers operate

with expectations about the researcher's identity and intentions (Hansen, 1977; Barrett, 1974; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983), role-playing that assumes empathetic understanding of a school's culture is more likely to persuade gatekeepers to grant access. In the case of Austell School (see Table 2.2), an independent boys' school, I deliberately mentioned the fact that I had been educated in a fee-paying boarding school. The Headteacher asked me about its Headteacher whom he knew. Knowledge of particular settings has to be carefully and sensitively 'reached'. Gaining access to it therefore requires the adoption of strategies which are able to penetrate the protective skin which surrounds it.

One device I used to gain entry was the submission of a Research Brief (see Appendix 9) to the gatekeeper or gatekeepers. Commentators have argued against this approach for a number of reasons. Since it is usual to have only a limited understanding of the complete research programme at the beginning of the research and since methodology and data-collection operate in a dialectical fashion, the researcher is rarely in a position to provide a full account of his or her purposes to the relevant gatekeeper (Burgess, 1984c; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Furthermore as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) suggest, it may not be prudent to give a full picture because 'unless one can build up a trusting relationship with them relatively rapidly, they may refuse access in a way that they would not do later in the fieldwork' (p.71). On the other

hand, providing minimal information about the research design simply puts in writing what is said anyway at initial access meetings. The Site Brief that I used included a clear specification of the ethical safeguards I was prepared to build into the investigation. In all but one of the cases they were accepted without argument. In my fieldnotes after my initial interview with the Headteacher of St Thomas' School for Girls (see Table 2.2), I wrote: 'she seemed to trust that I wouldn't be insensitive to confidences, that I would build in a system of anonymity to the reporting'. The degree of frankness, even indiscretion, was high. The Headteacher of Lorton School (see Table 2.2) described her Deputy as someone who should have retired years ago. The Headteacher of Carseley High School (see Table 2.2) described his staff as willing, hard-working, but essentially apolitical; but he did say that there were one or two members of staff who were very outspoken, and gave an indication of who they were.

In one school, ('Austell', see Table 2.2), the issue of confidentiality and anonymity assumed a position of central importance in my initial discussions. Austell is an independent boys' school, and the Headteacher's fear was that unsubstantiated comparisons would be made between state and independent schools. In order to gain access, I had to negotiate further ethical safeguards, ones which I did not initially want to make. This involved agreeing to "submit to you (the headteacher of the school concerned) before

publication of any article or paper that I write, so that you may check for inaccuracies or bias; and so that we can, if it proves to be necessary, reach a compromise about what should go in the article. The article will of course not mention your school by name, nor any of the teachers in it by name; but the above stipulation will apply to any part of that article which concerns itself with your school" (see Appendix 10). In order to maintain momentum, I was prepared to relax the principle articulated in the Site Brief (see Appendix 9) of the researcher owning the data. In the end, for reasons not connected with the negotiated process of gaining access, I decided that the school would not be an appropriate place in which to work. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) argue,

negotiating access is a balancing act. Gains and losses now and later, as well as ethical and strategic considerations, must be traded off against one another in whatever manner is judged to be the most appropriate, given the purposes of the research and the circumstances in which it is carried out' (p.61).

Thus intra and extra sampling judgements reflect both the original research design and the contingencies of agreeing access.

ETHICAL CONCERNS

Having successfully negotiated initial access to each of the six case study schools and having done so with the aid of a site brief which contained certain ethical safeguards (see

Appendix 9), it was important to put these into effect during the fieldwork. In my fieldnotes, I listed those areas of the project which involved me in ethical undertakings:

1. Since I am dealing with children as well as adults, I need to set up mechanisms which allow teachers and students to say what they feel.
2. It is important that I don't misrepresent individual contributions in my final account of coursework processes.
3. I have a responsibility to protect particular individuals because insensitive handling of their data may harm them. This goes further than simply agreeing to negotiate the release of data, because such negotiations are always going to take place on an unequal basis.
4. I have an obligation to the public - to place in the public domain information I have gathered about coursework processes.
5. I have an obligation to the school - to protect its interests. Anonymity can partly fulfil this responsibility.
6. I have been commissioned by an external sponsor - The Midlands Examining Group. They have certain expectations.
7. Finally I have a responsibility to certain ethical principles of conduct; that I should tell the truth for instance (Fieldnotes, 5.5.1988).

This list was not able to serve as a working model, for a number of reasons. Some of these obligations are in conflict with each other. Telling lies may be necessary to maintain confidentiality. In granting anonymity to schools and research participants, I was involved in a number of small deceptions and evasions. When asked, for instance, by the Headteacher at Lampton about the identity of a particular teacher whose practice he disapproved of, I declined to answer. Moral obligations are always conditional; that is they have consequences outside of themselves which cannot be subsumed

absolutely under the aegis of any moral prescription. Burgess (1984c), for instance, writes that,

In these terms, fieldworkers are constantly engaged in taking decisions about ethical issues in both 'open' and 'closed' research; they are involved in arriving at some form of compromise, whereby the impossibility of seeking informed consent from everyone, of telling the truth all the time and of protecting everyone's interests is acknowledged (p.197).

Given the fluid nature of the principles that researchers can use to guide them in their endeavours, as a general rule therefore, ownership of the data resides with the researcher. This can be contrasted with more democratic approaches to data ownership in which research participants retain rights of veto over publication, and the narrative that is eventually produced is in effect a negotiated account between researcher and participants.

There are a number of problems with this. First, because the needs of different participants may not be known at the beginning of the research process, there are bound to be initial decisions made about methodology which will structure the type of data that is collected. Second, there is a temptation on the part of the researcher to present his or her negotiated account as a neat packaged coherent view of reality because he or she is operating in the public domain. Stenhouse (1975) writes that, 'Our minds are beguiled by systematic tidiness and by comprehensive breadth' (p.32). Third, negotiating with participants (especially with children)

can never be negotiating between equals. The researcher understands the consequences of release and publication better than the participant. Fourth, the manner of negotiation may be determined by the implicit structures of the institution. Burgess (1984c) reminds us that 'people respond to the structured situations in which they are located'. Finally there is a tension between telling 'it like it is' (Kemmis, 1980) and being fair to those people you have involved in the research project. Thus negotiation of the release of data in non-democratic research situations serves to generate more data, whereas for democratic researchers it serves to construct the reality of the situation.

From the outset, I was determined that my research should be as open as possible. There was never any intention on my part to engage in secret or covert research, where participants are unaware their behaviour is the subject of scrutiny (Lofland and Lejeune, 1960; Homan, 1980; Ditton, 1977). Even when researchers feel it is necessary to adopt covert stances, they may still express reservations (Bulmer, 1980; Homan, 1980; Ditton, 1977). The British Sociological Association in 1992 clarified their position on covert research:

As far as possible sociological research should be based on freely given informed consent of those studied. This implies a responsibility on the sociologist to explain as fully as possible, and in terms meaningful to participants, what the research is about, who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being undertaken and how it is to be disseminated (p.2)

However it has to be acknowledged that all research necessarily entails a hidden element (Roth, 1962). Since researchers are unlikely to have a clear idea about what exactly they want to research at the beginning of the investigation, they can only provide participants with a limited account of their purposes. The giving of consent by participants is always subject to the power/knowledge differential that exists between participant and researcher. As the British Sociological Association (1992) acknowledge:

Wherever possible they (researchers) should attempt to anticipate, and to guard against, consequences for research participants which can be predicted to be harmful. Members are not absolved from this responsibility by the consent given by research participants (p.2).

Protecting the interests of participants in research projects though, is difficult. Individuals and locations cannot be disguised completely, though it is easier to deceive outsiders than insiders. Anonymising individual responses enabled me to protect participants from external scrutiny and in a project such as this, this was important. For instance Sarah, a fifth year pupil at Tidehill, would not have wanted her remarks about her well developed work avoidance techniques to be heard by her teachers:

You can get away with not doing homework. I have got away with not doing a load of homework for certain subjects. They have a look at my homework diary and they see that I am getting work. Usually the teachers give you work and I write it in my book, and then in my homework diary I would another extra amount; so they were thinking I was getting enough. So after that if I didn't have any, I would put in something that I had been doing in lessons.

There are always tensions between confidentiality and portrayal. Burgess (1984c) writes: "it is evident that whatever precautions are taken to protect those involved in a field study, nothing is foolproof" (p.206).

FIELDWORK RELATIONS

Though I used a site brief which was read by the key gatekeepers in each school, this did not prevent a temporary breakdown in relations half way through the initial fieldwork period in one of them. This hiatus served to underline the need to negotiate and re-negotiate access at every level of the organisation. Indeed access may need to be negotiated with representatives from staff bodies, who may not even play a significant part in the research project.

Having initially been granted access by the Headteacher, to whom I had outlined a programme of action, I was passed across to the Deputy Head (Curriculum) who proceeded to organize a schedule of interviews with key personnel in the school. These were timetabled during free lessons and were located in the library. They included both staff and pupil interviews. Having assumed that the site brief would at this stage have been read, I accepted this pattern of working, and decided that I would use these interviews both as data-collection sessions and as opportunities to negotiate further access to classrooms and laboratories. I also, as I had done with the other

schools, asked pupils to keep a diary of activities that related to coursework processes (Pons, 1969; Willmott, 1969; Burgess, 1983; Finch, 1983). Allport (1942) has categorized the use of diaries in three ways; as intimate journals, as memoirs and as logs. Though these three uses are not mutually exclusive, I was interested in their capacity to log accounts of processes which I could not observe. Coursework completion involves extra as well as intra classroom and school processes. I was not able to be present at completion processes which occurred outside the school. I was therefore only able to gain access to them by dint of retrospective interviews and personal diaries.

Having completed a week of interviews which included gaining permission to visit a number of classes and the promise by my cohort of pupils to keep a diary over a six week period, I was then taken aback at the beginning of the next week to be told that I could not continue with my fieldwork, because "the unions are hopping mad and I can't afford to upset them" [Deputy Head (Curriculum)]. He went on to argue that in my initial planning interview with him I had not told him I wanted to visit classrooms, and I had not told him that I wanted "to snoop behind teachers' backs by getting pupils to spy on teachers". Considerably shaken by these events, I was on my way out of the school when I was stopped by a teacher who I had already interviewed who told me, "this has been brewing for months. He is using you to get the unions on his side. He's

under a lot of pressure at the moment". Lack of time meant that I was not able to pursue the micropolitical implications of this, but it does point to the potentiality of research projects to be hijacked for overt political purposes. There is within any research project a momentum for exploitation of the researcher by teachers within the school. Indeed in many cases the researcher is quite happy to accept a degree of exploitation. In this case it threatened to prevent further fieldwork in the school. I was only able to resume data collection by going back to the Headteacher and re-opening access procedures. In the end I was able to complete my fieldwork, though the Headteacher was persuaded to transfer gatekeeping duties from the original deputy to another.

INTERVIEWS

The primary data collection method that I used during fieldwork was interviewing⁸. Burgess (1983) offers three reasons for concentrating upon interviewing at the expense of making further observations. Interviews can allow the researcher access to past events (cf. Woods, 1986). They can allow access to situations at which the researcher is not able to be present (see above). Thirdly, they can allow access to situations where the teacher refuses permission for the researcher to be present (Burgess, 1984c). In a project that sought information about fieldwork trips, parental contributions to

coursework projects, pupil experiences over a two year period, it was never going to be possible to be present at more than a limited number of these important events. Interviewing and diary keeping were therefore used as substitutes to direct observations.

I did not use schedules during the interviews, but relied on the ebb and flow of conversation with the occasional use of pointers to focus the interview. This technique more closely corresponds to Stenhouse's (1984) notion of a conversation rather than interrogative questioning. My interviews though, were not unstructured. My specific time bound concerns and perceptions of coursework served to structure the interviews and impose an agenda on them. The way I was perceived by interviewees, the role they perceived me as playing, acted to give shape to their answers. Finally, data collection methods operate in a dialectical fashion with data analysis, and are thus constantly changing. Different themes, different areas of interest were pinpointed at different phases of the fieldwork. This acted as a principal structuring mechanism during the interviews.

Furthermore, interviewer and interviewee are not operating on a level plane. Despite arguments that the gap between adult and child can be bridged if the researcher adopts particular roles, it is doubtful whether the differences in age, size and status can be successfully overridden (Corrigan, 1979). It would be

false to assert that in the interviews I conducted with pupils, they were entirely open. Though some of them took me into their confidence and told me things they would not have told their teachers (see above), in the main they were only too well aware of the proper relations they should maintain with guests to the school. Even with teachers, "the asymmetrical relationship between interviewer and interviewee", identified by Ball (1983) acts to structure the type of data that emerges. He argues that:

the interviewee is asked to elaborate, illustrate, reiterate, define, summarise, exemplify, and confirm matters in his talk in ways that would be unacceptable in other talk situations. The interviewer controls the specification of topics and maintains a verbal monitoring of the speech situation The rules of conversational discourse are flagrantly disregarded in the name of social science.... The interviewer comes to 'know' his subjects without ever necessarily having to engage in a reciprocal process of personal 'social striptease' (p.93-95).

This is an inevitable consequence of the outsider seeking to discover meanings and understandings shared by practitioners within particular institutions.

OBSERVATIONS

I attended a variety of lessons which were relevant to coursework processes⁹, and this served to supplement data gathered from the interviews. My role in these lessons could

usefully be described as 'participant-as-observer' (Gold, 1958). Gold identifies four types of observer field roles. The 'complete participant' conducts covert observations of participants and settings. The 'participant-as-observer' accepts the inevitable contamination of natural settings as a result of their presence; but develops relationships with informants and makes no attempt to conceal their purposes. Researchers conducting classroom ethnographies anyway, are unable to conceal their role, and thus cannot make 'complete participant' observations. A third type, identified by Gold, is 'observer-as-participant'. Here the researcher formalises their role and sets limits to the amount and type of contact they have with participants. In classroom situations, the researcher makes little effort to interact with pupils and teachers, though he or she may use interview techniques to gather data about the processes they have just observed.

Finally, there is the 'complete observer' role, in which interaction between researcher and researched is limited to gaining and sustaining access. In some classroom situations it is difficult for the researcher to maintain 'observer-as-participant' roles, because teachers and pupils naturally and without being asked invade the researcher's 'space'.

My preferred style corresponded more closely to the 'participant-as-observer' role, as I listened, watched and took notes. I also at appropriate moments walked round the class and

talked to pupils about their work. As Burgess (1984c) argues:

this has the advantage of allowing the researcher to penetrate social situations in order to establish relationships with informants so that some understanding of their world may be achieved (p.82).

Though formal and systematic observation category systems have been developed (Flanders, 1970; Delamont, 1984) and used (Delamont, 1976; Galton and Simon, 1980; Galton et al., 1980; Galton and Willcocks, 1983; Simon and Willcocks, 1981), commentators (Wood, 1986; Burgess, 1984c) have suggested that pre-defining category instruments limit the data that can be collected, pre-specify the types of meanings that can be developed, and may easily misrepresent the complex social setting that is being explored. For these reasons, ethnographers (Fuller, 1984; Woods, 1986) either use such instruments in limited ways or abandon them altogether. I did not employ formal and explicit category systems, but simply took detailed notes of observations. This does not mean that my observations were unstructured. As theory was developed during the fieldwork, I focussed on different aspects of classroom activities. My time- and space- bound presence influenced intra-sampling judgements, which acted to structure observational data. At Tidehill for instance, some parts of the Geography coursework programme preceded my period of fieldwork. Finally my direct interventions in lessons (talking to pupils when they were engaged in writing up coursework projects) served to change the 'natural' situation, and acted as a means

of structuring the experiences that I was seeking to understand.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This thesis is about coursework processes in six schools, detailed accounts of which are provided in the next chapter. It sets out to chart the passage of a package of ideas from documentation to implementation. Methodologically, it seeks to portray that process in a number of ways. Chapter four analyses documentary material which influenced teaching, learning and assessment strategies. Chapter five offers retrospective and normative accounts by teachers of coursework processes, the data having been gathered from interviews conducted in each school. Chapter six describes one of these schools through the eyes of its teachers, as it sought to implement the new examination technology. Chapter seven provides an account of lessons that involved coursework processes, and relies almost totally on observations made during the fieldwork. Finally, chapter eight concentrates upon the consequences of these processes, and develops formal theory from the empirical data evidenced in previous chapters.

NOTES

1. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) use different terminology, but make the same distinction. Selecting cases for study (extra-sampling judgements) precedes sampling within each case. Each case study involves decisions by the researcher about where to observe and when, who to talk to and what to ask (intra-sampling judgements).
2. All the pupils were interviewed on at least three occasions.
3. Two of the schools were single-sex (girls) - Lorton and St Thomas. I had identified gender issues as possible themes in my foreshadowing of the research design (see above).
4. I was advised on this by teachers within each school. Again I had identified ability as a possible contributory factor in coursework completion in my initial contemplation of the problem of research design.
5. Parent interviews were always conducted at their homes.
6. The contrast between different homework schedules is instructive. Lorna, a pupil at St Thomas', recorded the following workload out of school over a five week period: English and English Literature - 9 hours and ten minutes, Mathematics - 11 hours, History - 23 hours and 45 minutes, Biology - 14 hours and 18 minutes, French - 6 hours and 30 minutes, Commerce - 15 hours and 30 minutes, Home Economics: Food - 11 hours, Geography - 21 hours and 55 minutes. Shirley, a pupil at Tidehill, on the other hand, recorded this schedule over the same period of time: English - 2 hours and 40 minutes, Mathematics - 1 hour and 20 minutes, Geography - 4 hours and 40 minutes, Drama - 6 hours and 30 minutes, Biology - 30 minutes, Typing and Office Practice - 0 minutes.
7. Hammersley and Scarth's 1986 study of 'The impact of examinations on secondary school teaching' sought to test the theory that examinations encourage teachers to concentrate upon the transmission of information and the memorization of that information by pupils. They admit to serious problems with their methodology, and they accept that this casts doubt on the validity of the findings.
8. Eighty-five teacher-interviews, one hundred and two pupil interviews and twenty-eight parent interviews were made.
9. I attended sixty-nine lessons in the six schools.

CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH SETTINGS

This multi-site project involved the study of GCSE coursework processes in six schools (see table 3.1). The reasons for choosing these schools were discussed in chapter two. The schools were chosen to represent a range of organizational and

Table 3.1 The six schools

School	Age-range	Status	Catchment area	Nos. on roll	Sex
Tidehill	11-16	state	small town, affluent area, socially mixed	521	mixed
Tadford	12-18	state	small town, affluent area, socially mixed	880	mixed
St Thomas'	3-16	independent	large town and surrounding villages, professional	380	single (female)
Lorton	11-16	state	major conurbation, multi-ethnic, working class	510	single (female)
Lampton	3-18	independent	extended area, situated in large town, professional	1091	mixed
Carseley	11-18	state	urban, multi-ethnic, working class	378	mixed

socio-economic contexts. Sociologists have encountered problems with establishing frameworks for understanding school organizations. Burgess (1984) writes, for instance:

The Sociologist has to come to terms with the fluidity of membership, the problematic nature of educational goals, the pattern of organization that exists in schools and the ideological differences that exist in the ways in which different members of the organization define education (p.165).

Indeed Bell (1980) has shown how schools do not easily conform to managerial models of organisation because rules and procedures cannot be easily bureaucratized. He argues in his study of mixed ability teaching (Bell, Pennington and Burrige, 1979) that schools are unpredictable organisations with teachers afforded high degrees of autonomy and discretion. This suggests that idiosyncratic and individual approaches are at least possible as teachers implement externally imposed examination initiatives. But they do so within institutional and structural frameworks. The accounts of the six schools that follow describe pastoral and academic systems, pupil and staff profiles, organizational arrangements, pupil recruitment, examination results, pupil destinations, curriculum choices, academic groupings and parental contributions in relation to the introduction of a new examination system.

TIDEHILL SCHOOL

Tidehill School is an 11-16 secondary modern school, which loses 64 pupils from its potential intake to the local grammar school each year. In 1988 this represented 16% of its notional catchment area population. Its intake includes a number of pupils who passed the 11+ examination, either because they came from other Local Education Authorities and places were not available at the grammar school, or because too many passed the examination in the first place. Falling rolls in the county have meant that the supply of high ability students who go to Tidehill has been further cut back, as the grammar school continues to take 64 pupils regardless of numbers in the primary schools. The Examinations Officer suggests that this may disadvantage certain types of pupils:

So their roll is preserved in terms of numbers. Obviously the intelligence of pupils going there is going to drop because they're taking a lower cut off point. It's concerned us from the point of view that our staffing suffers; but it also concerns us because we get some very good exam results. We feel that we do very well by our best pupils, and quite a number of our pupils go to the grammar school, and we are concerned that the people who now go to the grammar are going to be at the bottom of the heap rather than being here and at the top of the heap.

She argues that different concerns and different approaches to teaching at the grammar school mean that those pupils who narrowly gained entry may not have their needs properly met:

If they go to the grammar school, and feel that they are not as good as the others; and in fact get poorer results in the end than they would have done here, then I am concerned. I know from my experience that there is a different style there. There is a tendency for the staff to think the children are

bright and therefore don't need pushing; whereas we think they need pushing. They need encouraging all the time, and so we push them a bit harder. I think the ones who are not as bright and go to the grammar school will suffer unless there is a change in their understanding about what these pupils need.

Between ten and fifteen pupils (8-10% of the Tidehill School population) transfer each year to the sixth form at the grammar school. A further 5% join one of either two local colleges to start 'A' Level courses. Table 3.2 allows us to compare the proportion of candidates at GCSE achieving A-C grades against the total entry for each subject with the proportion reaching the same standard nationally against the number of entries in the United Kingdom. Despite its de-selected entry, Tidehill's results in the second year of the new examination compare

Table 3.2: Percentage of candidates who achieved grades A-C by subject in 1989 at GCSE level- Tidehill School

	No. of A-C grades	Total no. of candidates	%
English	47	102	46.1 (53.7)
English Literature	39	56	69.6 (59.1)
Mathematics	35	90	38.9 (41.0)
Geography	14	44	31.8 (45.9)
Physics	15	57	26.3 (53.0)
History	19	32	59.4 (49.2)
CDT: Technology	8	30	26.7 (39.3)
Biology	15	45	33.4 (47.7)

- Notes: i) Only subjects with more than 30 candidates included.
 ii) Percentages of pupils achieving A-C grades in the different subjects for 1989 - England and Wales (DES, 1990) in brackets.

Sources: Midland Examining Group and Department for Education

favourably with the national picture. Though there is a need at the school for remedial provision, this is restricted to one member of staff who teaches English and Mathematics to low ability sets. She is also responsible for the progress of these pupils across the curriculum and throughout the rest of their school careers.

The school takes its name from the village in which it is situated. It is located on the outskirts of a large conurbation. The intake is local with pupils either using the limited public transport services or Local Education Authority hired buses. Parental links are strong. There is a thriving Parent/Teachers Association that holds between seven and twelve fund raising events each year (these figures are for 1988-89, 1989-90, and 1990-91). With the majority of parents in agreement, the school has few problems with enforcing a tight definition of school uniform. A senior teacher comments that:

Most of the parents are supportive. You will, I'm sure, in any school, get some who you would dearly love to see; but I would think the majority, if the Head wants to see them, would come in. Whether he would then get satisfaction when they got here is another matter, but I think most would come.

About 60% of fifth year parents attend the final parents' evening in the Spring to discuss their children's progress. The rural nature of the catchment area and the amount of support that parents provide for their children have specific implications for the successful completion of coursework assignments. Kingdon and Stobart (1988) for instance, suggest

that coursework processes give parents the opportunity to provide extra input into their children's work which gives them an advantage over other pupils. In a similar vein, a teacher at Tidehill argues that her pupils are disadvantaged by their inability to locate and retrieve source material to help with their coursework:

I do believe that some of our children are either too lazy or in some cases have parents who won't help them find the appropriate resources, and this certainly is a problem, given that this is a small place.

At the time of this study, Tidehill organized its academic groupings on a stratified basis. Indeed, tutor groups until September 1988 were arranged along ability lines. The school now operates a system of mixed ability tutor groups in houses throughout the five years (cf. Burgess, 1983). The Examination's Officer explains why the change was made:

One of the reasons I think was a criticism that was in the HMI's report we had. There were so many different divisions of the kids; and HMI wondered how those kids ever knew where they were supposed to be. I'm not sure that it's made that much difference; but we were concerned that there was a sort of labelling of kids. If they went into 1F for instance, which was taken by the special needs teacher, they were sort of labelled as 1Fs, and they never had a chance to do anything else until they got into the fourth year. In fact, you know, when they got into the fourth year and went into option groups, then some of them suddenly seem to emerge as not being as bad as they were labelled. So that was one concern, I think.

Pupil option choices at fourteen have resulted generally in mixed ability groups, because the size of the school - year eleven in 1988 was a four-form entry - has meant that most

departments are only able to form one or at the most two groups from years ten and eleven. The core subjects of English and Mathematics are exceptions to this, and both set their pupils throughout the school. There is some movement between these sets (in Mathematics about seven or eight pupils change groups each year). The Head of Mathematics at the school argues that setted Mathematics groups with a degree of flexibility allow teachers to meet the needs of all their pupils:

There are wide discrepancies between pupils in Maths and we didn't feel we could cope with these differences in the same classroom. But we do review our groupings each year.

The school operates a system of guided option choices (Woods, 1979). The school's examinations officer explains how it works:

But also to try to make sure there are subjects with the boxes which fit all different levels of ability. So in some years we've had in a box something like basic Geography, which is an A.E.B, or basic Computer Studies; you know, to give something for those people that we feel they can achieve something, do something, rather than just not achieving anything in the other option. ... They are, you know, to a certain extent perhaps directed, but not pressurized particularly.

This differentiated approach acts as a form of setting, as children of similar ability are directed towards particular subject groupings.

In recent years there has been a re-formulation of the curriculum in response to initiatives from the Local Education Authority and from the Department of Education and Science (now DfE):

The nine areas of knowledge in which all pupils must learn as defined by the Local Education Authority is given below:

NO CHOICE REQUIRED AT PRESENT IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

1. LANGUAGE - English Language
2. MATHEMATICAL - Mathematics
3. PHYSICAL - Physical Education and Games
4. RELIGIOUS, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL - Religious Education
5. SCIENCE - Combined Science (Double Award)

SOME CHOICE REQUIRED NOW WITHIN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

6. TECHNOLOGY -
choose one of the following:
CDT Technology or
HE Food or
HE Textiles or
Rural Science
7. AESTHETIC/CREATIVE -
choose one from the following:
Art or
Drama and Theatre Studies or
Music or
CDT Design and Realisation
HE Child Development
- 8/9 HUMAN, SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION
A. choose one from the following:
French
Commerce
Office Practice
Geography
and B. choose one from the following:
History
Typewriting
Basic Geography
Literature

(Source: Tidehill School Fourth Year Curriculum Booklet 1988-90)

A further reformulation will be needed soon to comply with the requirements of the National Curriculum. The introduction of the GCSE was co-ordinated by the Examination's Officer, but in the main responsibility for its absorption into the curriculum was left to departmental heads:

I mean there was a certain amount of informal

discussion amongst us about when deadlines were being given to various groups, but there wasn't perhaps as much as there should have been. With hindsight it's quite difficult to know in the first instance how best to deal with it. What I've just done, and hopefully it's being printed now. I've seen all the Heads of Departments and found out the possible deadlines for work for present fourth years, next year's fifth years, for topics and projects and also if there is definite coursework being set for the summer and I've itemized all those things and given it to the Head, and it's being put into a letter. But we saw it as an individual departmental matter

This suggests that to identify a school approach to teaching or organizing coursework would be misleading. It also suggests that departments, and teachers within those departments, are able to adopt individual strategies when confronted with the need to implement externally imposed change.

TADFORD SCHOOL

Tadford is a 12-18 mixed comprehensive. It had on roll at the beginning of the 1988-1989 academic year 880 pupils and this included an academic sixth form of eighty. The full school roll, in line with the national trend (Stillman, 1990), is expected to decline eventually to about 700 pupils. It used to be a grammar school, but has been comprehensive for the last fifteen years. There has been great stability in terms of headship - the present head having been there for six years and the previous one for twenty years. The staff is long-serving - one member of staff has been at the school for thirty years and is now the Deputy Head. A senior teacher at

the school describes this as retrogressive as far as the introduction of the GCSE is concerned:

I think a lot of these people would rather things had stayed as they were and certainly as far as 'A' Level is concerned a number of Heads of Department who have been here a very long time would look for syllabuses that maintain the status quo rather than more forward-looking change, in line with GCSE.

Tadford accepts a comprehensive intake of ability, though as the headteacher argues, "there are lots of independent schools round here. We think we lose a top ability group each year." Tutor groups are mixed ability and that is how pupils are initially taught. Setting in half-yearly blocks takes place in English and Mathematics half way through the second year, and though in theory there is scope to move pupils from one set to another if it was felt that the initial assessment was misguided, in practice this rarely happens. The Mathematics and English setted groups correspond, approximately though not exactly, with each other. Modern Languages are set by ability at the beginning of the third year. Near the end of year nine all the pupils are tested in English, Mathematics and Science to allow the school to decide which band pupils will go into for their GCSE course, and as with Tidehill, the Deputy Head explains that, "it's a sort of guided choice". The Science Department, for instance, offers three separate Science options and a limited grade GCSE in Combined Science for lower ability pupils.

The curriculum in years ten and eleven consists of five core or foundation areas, and three optional subjects. Subjects which are offered in the core may also be offered in the option blocks. Besides Mathematics and English, pupils study Science, Humanities and Creative subjects. They are also required to do P.E. and Social & Religious Education, subjects which can be studied at examination level in the option blocks. If students so choose, it is possible for them to avoid a Fine Arts subject (Music, Art and Drama). English Literature which used to be part of the compulsory core has recently been separated from English and placed in the third option block. As the Head of English explains: "there was pressure on time for our brighter pupils. We wanted a clear place on the timetable for Literature." Though the timetable is undergoing continuous review, a further reformulation will have to take place in the next few years to bring it into line with the requirements of the national curriculum.

The catchment area of the school is predominantly rural with a large intake from the surrounding villages. Tadford itself is a small market town, with a light industrial estate. It has a population of nearly 10,000. It is situated on the edge of a large conurbation, which has a separate education authority. Parental support is strong though the Parents/Teachers Association consists of a fairly small group of parents, who very often have been long serving supporters of the school. A senior member of staff describes the relationship the school

has with its parents:

Parents are generally highly committed to the school. That is they are supportive of the way the school is run even if they are not actually involved, though a PTA event will attract ninety or more parents. Parents' evenings regularly attract between eighty and ninety per cent of those parents with an interest.

This high level of parental interest has consequences for the GCSE in that:

There's a lot of support for coursework, sort of thing from parents. I would say our parents, more than most schools, will go and actually try and find resources for pupils if it's appropriate to help them with their coursework. (Deputy Head)

To some extent this compensates for the difficulties of locating and obtaining resources in a predominantly rural environment.

The school has for years entered all its pupils at sixteen for examinations in all their subjects. The insertion of coursework into the examination system has given the school a clearer rationale for not entering pupils in certain subjects, though these numbers are 'tiny'. The Deputy Head explains:

.... that the only ones who are so to speak entered then withdrawn tend to be the people who have just consistently refused to produce coursework.

The examination results (see Table 3.3) achieved by the school in 1989 reflect both this policy of examination entry and the intake of the school in the first place (Gray and Jesson, 1987; Gray, Jesson and Jones, 1986; Goldstein and Woodhouse, 1988). They also reflect the arrangements made within each subject department for coursework, and the teaching strategies teachers

Table 3.3: Percentage of total candidates who achieved grades A-C by subject in 1989 at GCSE level - Tadford School

	No. of A-C grades	Total No. of candidates	%	
English	103	227	45.4	(53.7)
English Literature	88	192	45.8	(59.1)
Mathematics	62	215	28.8	(41.0)
Art and Design	57	101	56.4	(55.7)
Geography	43	127	33.9	(45.9)
History	44	111	39.6	(49.2)

- Notes: i) Only subjects with more than 100 candidates included
 ii) Percentages of pupils achieving A-C grades in the different subjects for 1989 - England and Wales (DES, 1990) in brackets.

Source: Midland Examining Group and Department for Education

adopt during the two years of the course. Kingdon and Stobart (1988) for instance, acknowledge the potential unreliability of the coursework element because different approaches by teachers may favour some pupils at the expense of others.

ST THOMAS' SCHOOL

St Thomas' School is an independent day school for girls. Despite its name it is not a Church school, though it is advertised as being founded on Christian principles, and the local Anglican priest is a member of its governing body. It covers the full age range with a nursery section, but no sixth form. At sixteen some of its pupils will join Local Education

Authority sixth forms; others will transfer to local independent schools. About 20% each year choose to continue their education at 'A' level. Others will do vocational courses such as nursery nursing diplomas at nearby colleges. The upper school (11-16) takes in about 200 girls, forty in each year. The school is selective in that it will not accept pupils with severe learning difficulties, though allowance is made for pupils who have come from the preparatory department of the school. The Deputy Headmistress explains the rationale for the school's entry policy:

I mean we do have exams, and if they really were weak, we just wouldn't take them, because we can't help them. Yes I mean we do get some weaker ones up, but they've come through the preps., so we feel we can't turn them away really.

At the age of eleven a number of pupils transfer to other local independent schools, which are able to offer bursaries and other such inducements, and which are also able to offer a wider curriculum. At thirteen St Thomas' attracts pupils from the state sector, whose parents have been happy to see them educated in L.E.A. middle schools, but do not feel that their local L.E.A. upper school can give their child the education they want. Numbers for each year are kept at forty because the school is unable to accommodate any more. Indeed the school has no playing fields and for games lessons pitches at the local council park are used. Its small size is used to sell the school to prospective parents.

Though the school has adopted a selective entry policy, this has in reality meant that only a small number of low ability children has been excluded. The school's intake, expressed in examination terms, is therefore loosely comprehensive. A small number of highly motivated and high ability pupils is on roll (for instance, one girl in the first year of the GCSE achieved four grades 'A's, two grades 'B's and two grades 'C's). A senior teacher expresses a commonly held view of the school's intake:

We don't get very many bright children here. They tend to be very average.

St Thomas' timetable is organised round a limited number of subjects. The school is able to offer all three Sciences (it has two laboratories), History, Geography, English, English Literature, Commerce, French, German, Mathematics, Typing, three types of Home Economics, Art & Design, and P.E. at examination level. The curriculum has been constructed along gender differentiated lines, and thus contributes to the way girls are socialised into a gender differentiated world (cf. Walkerdine, 1981; King, 1978; Pollard, 1985). So CDT and Computer Studies are not offered at examination level, though all pupils do one lesson of Information Technology a week. The Deputy Headteacher contextualises this process of curriculum-making in terms of the perceived rationale for this type of schooling:

And obviously since it became a day school, the numbers have grown considerably. It was a sort of school for young ladies as it were; and they

probably didn't do much in the way of examinations originally. But now we are just, except that we don't go onto sixth form, like any secondary school really. I mean, I've taught in state schools for a long time as well. Apart from the fact that it is a much smaller school so you know all the girls, and you don't get the same sort of disciplinary problems, it's the same. As far as exams are concerned, they've got all the opportunities. They can't do as many subjects as they can in a larger school; but the staff work very hard, and they don't mind looking after the girls if they're prepared to work for it.

There is no streaming or setting in year seven. Year eight and nine pupils in the upper school are set for Mathematics, English and French. If a pupil is considered to 'be a reasonable linguist' (French teacher), then she is encouraged to start German at the beginning of year nine. Though Mathematics and English are compulsory subjects throughout the five years of the upper school, French at GCSE level becomes optional. In the Summer Term of the pupils' third year in the upper school, the pupils are provided with a list of possible subjects from which they have to choose six. This means that the majority of pupils will take nine GCSE examinations (English would include English and English Literature). Typing is also offered but not at GCSE level. On the other hand, pupils of lesser ability may end up only taking seven examinations (they will not take English Literature and they will take Typing). The teacher responsible for the timetable explains how the system works:

And we send a list home of possible subjects for them to say which ones they might be interested in and then following the response to that, we then decide what option blocks we're going to have. And so if there's

only a few who haven't chosen it at all, we put it right across the year. With National Curriculum coming in, it might happen with more subjects. We might, for instance, in a few years time start balanced science and everybody does that science.

Thus Biology with the 1988-89 year eleven pupils became a compulsory subject because with two exceptions, all the pupils opted for it.

Though St Thomas' is a single sex school, differentiated responses to the various Sciences remain (Smith and Tomlinson, 1990). Biology always proves to be more popular than Physics which attracts small numbers of highly motivated pupils. Indeed this emphasis on pupil choice results in considerable disparity of number between different subject groups. The 1988-89 year eleven pupils opted in small numbers for Physics -9, German -6, and R.E -6. One of the English groups was as large as 25, and the Geography group numbered 22. The English, Mathematics and Biology departments set their pupils at examination level. Other departments are not able to set because of small numbers. There have been no changes in timetable arrangements which can be traced directly to the introduction of the GCSE. St Thomas' has therefore responded to this externally initiated project by 'containing' (Saunders, 1985) change, and absorbing the new examination into existing patterns of curriculum organization. However, there is some evidence (Davey, 1989) that schools are using the opportunity afforded by examination re-organization to fundamentally question and subsequently transform their curricular arrangements.

LORTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Lorton Girls' School is an 11-16 all girls' comprehensive in the outer ring of a large conurbation. The Deputy Head describes its catchment area in the following way:

I mean this is a deprived area. I mean we talk about inner-city deprivation; but this is outer-city deprivation. The number of children from broken homes, I don't know what it is this year because I haven't checked, but it must be about 60-70%.

It originally opened as a mixed secondary school with a large non-academic sixth form specialising in Business Studies and Pre-Nursing courses. In 1973 the Education Authority re-organised their provision and the school lost its sixth form and became comprehensive. There is a local boys' school in the same road which shares its name and which has forged extensive links. Physics and Home Economics are two departments that have in the past shared resources and teaching expertise. There is intense competition between Lorton and other single-sex schools in the area - this competition having been made more acute by the open enrolment provisions in the 1988 Education Reform Act. All the schools in the area have suffered from falling rolls and Lorton is no exception, to the extent that there is a question mark hanging over its future. It used to attract an eight or nine form entry, but in recent years this has declined to four or five. It has been suggested that the girls' and boys' schools should be amalgamated, to allow a viable sixth form to be established; but this plan is simply one of many and any plans for Lorton's future are as yet merely

speculation. The Headteacher explains that:

the LEA did say that schools of less than a five-form entry were not viable; so people have been putting two and two together, and saying well, if they were to amalgamate the girls and the boys together, they would have a sixth form entry. But that is only local gossip.

Though Lorton is an all girls' school there are a number of male teachers (both the Heads of Science and of Humanities are male). The senior management team (a headteacher and two deputies) is female. One of the deputies explains the advantages of single-sex education:

Well, you see you will find that in a single-sex school, a single-sex girls' school, they have a much fairer crack of the whip given in what we say are traditionally male-orientated subjects, because they don't have to compete do they? You see, in a mixed school for instance, you know, they put things side by side like H.E. and say C.D.T.

Indeed Lorton does not offer traditional girls' subjects such as H.E.: Child Development; but it does offer traditional male subjects such as C.D.T.: Design and Realisation and C.D.T.: Design and Communication at examination level. In the Sciences, Biology is still proving to be a more popular option than Physics, though the more able pupils are opting in equal numbers for all three Sciences. Thus the curricular model that has been adopted does not conform in some important respects to the traditional pattern in single-sex (girls') schools (Delamont, 1976; 1984).

Lorton has adopted a loosely stratified model of grouping. All the pupils when they first join the school undergo a series

of school-produced tests, which allows teachers to divide the intake into higher, middle and lower groups. In addition, all the pupils are setted in Mathematics, English and Modern Languages. This process of differentiation persists throughout the five years the pupils are at the school to the extent that pupils classify themselves in these terms (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970):

Oh, yes. I am a top setted pupil (Julie).

Well, we all know who are in the bottom sets (Rachel).

Within this framework there is a great deal of flexibility, as it is accepted that the initial testing procedures can only act as a tentative guide. The Deputy Headteacher explains what happens when pupils first join the school:

We give them a small English test and a sort of General Knowledge, a sort of intelligence test, now I don't mean a straightforward intelligence test But it gives us some idea, not of their present ability, but of their potential.... just gives us a rough idea, but there's nothing highbrow about this. It just gives us a rough idea to know where the best place is for the child. But there's a great deal of movement then I mean.

By the time they come to choose their options from those subjects which do not form part of the core (everything except English and Mathematics), they are likely to be taught in mixed ability groups. They are encouraged to choose a balanced series of options, so that they are not confined to Craft subjects, the Humanities or the Sciences.

The results that the school obtained in the second year of the new examination (1989) confirm the comprehensive nature of its

intake (see Table 3.4). Though Lorton is not a secondary modern, it is still affected by its close proximity to a large number of independent schools. Its intake is therefore skewed towards the middle and lower ability ranges. Despite this, it continues to attract a number of pupils whose achievements at GCSE allow them to transfer to local colleges to follow 'A' Level courses.

The academic structure of the school is departmental, though there are Heads of Faculty in the Sciences and the Humanities (the former is a Chemist, the latter an Historian). The

Table 3.4: Percentage of candidates who achieved grades A-C by subject in 1989 at GCSE level - Lorton School

	No. of A-C grades	Total no. of candidates	%	
Art & Design (Painting & Drawing)	18	37	48.6	(55.7)
Biology	15	68	22.0	(47.7)
Chemistry	13	39	33.3	(52.6)
English	52	88	59.1	(53.7)
History	21	50	42.0	(49.2)
Mathematics	22	97	22.7	(41.0)

- Notes: i) Only subjects with more than 35 candidates included.
 ii) Percentages of pupils achieving A-C grades in the different subjects for 1989 - England and Wales (DES, 1990) in brackets.

Source: Midland Examining Group and Department for Education

pastoral structure, on the other hand, is a year system with year tutors in charge. There is a Head of Lower School and a Head of Upper School. Disciplinary matters are considered to be

essentially the responsibility of the pastoral year heads (cf. Burgess, 1983). The links with parents at Lorton are strong, with the Parents/Teachers Association providing extra funds which are in part used to help those pupils who are experiencing problems with finding and locating the appropriate resources for their GCSE coursework assignments. The school itself is urban, the catchment area is local and transport systems are such that finding the resources has not proved to be a real problem.

What did prove to be problematic in the first year of the GCSE was the extra pressures it created on staff and pupils alike. A senior teacher suggests that though these pressures will still be there, they are likely to become less intense as the staff become more familiar with the GCSE:

The difficulty was that you had no one to refer to. You'd got nothing to measure anything by. It hadn't happened before. Well, now, I think, because we've had a year of it, and we can ask each other and other schools - a lot of cooperation in this area - I don't think the pressures will be so great. I mean the amount of physical work will be there the marking and the record keeping etc. that will still be there, but I think they will accept that.

Contingent factors, such as innovation fatigue, may inhibit the capacity to change existing practice. The initiative is consequently marginalized and makes little impact on curricula. However as teachers become more familiar with the new techniques, and more secure in their understandings of the new technologies, innovation constraints become less important and change less cosmetic.

LAMPTON SCHOOL

Lampton School is an independent day/boarding school which caters for pupils from three to eighteen years of age. The upper school which pupils join at thirteen has more boys on roll than girls (1988-1989 academic year): 271 boarders (142 boys, 129 girls) and 300 day pupils (200 boys and 100 girls). The lower school took in 340 pupils with the youngest eight years of age, of which about a third were boarders. Finally there is a preparatory school which caters for three to eight year olds which had on roll 180 pupils (1988-89). Lampton in the last five years has increased its roll by a third. The deputy principal suggests the following reasons for this:

The growing dissatisfaction with the state sector, and in particular teacher strikes means more parents want their children to have an independent education. The rapid expansion of the industrial base within the last five years locally has meant that more parents are able to afford the fees. Furthermore the Headteacher, who hasn't been here very long, has adopted more effective marketing strategies which have persuaded more parents to send their children here.

The school itself has certain advantages over its competitors. It is co-educational throughout its three levels. There are no other fee-paying co-educational secondary schools in the immediate locality. The equal stress on boarding and day-attendance means that provision for day-pupils to stay at school for the full working day is readily available. Furthermore as the Examinations Officer argues: "there are a lot of working mums in this area, more here than elsewhere.

Therefore the full day is very attractive to them." In the end the school has built its reputation on its academic record and its ability to achieve consistently high examination pass rates (see Table 3.5). The Examinations Officer comments on this while describing a visit by a team of HMIs doing a full inspection of the school:

The second time they arrived they said. 'You must have made a mistake in your 'O' Level results', and we said 'Well, why?'; and they said 'They can't be that good not with that IQ of intake, not with that quality of intake' we didn't think that we were that good, but we were very good at bashing kids through 'O' Level.

This is not to suggest that the school takes a full range of abilities. In the first place this is a fee-paying school. In

Table 3.5: Percentage of candidates who achieved grades A-C by subject in 1989 at GCSE level - Lampton School

	No. of A-C grades	Total no. of candidates	%	
Biology	35	56	62.5	(47.7)
English	105	109	96.3	(53.7)
English Literature	80	103	77.7	(59.1)
French	78	105	74.3	(47.3)
Geography	49	83	59.0	(45.9)
History	50	58	86.2	(49.2)
Mathematics	81	110	73.6	(41.0)
R.E.	44	124	35.5	(45.8)

- Notes:
- i) Only subjects with more than 56 candidates included.
 - ii) R.E. candidates from year ten.
 - iii) Percentages of pupils achieving A-C grades in the different subjects for 1989 - England and Wales (DES, 1990) in brackets.

Source: Midland Examining Group and Department for Education

the second place, various assessment procedures are gone through to sift out those pupils without obvious academic potential. The lower school tests for basic skills at eight and eleven. The upper school, having abandoned the common entrance examination many years ago, sets their own tests in verbal reasoning, Mathematics and English. As the Examinations Officer explains: "We are not equipped for remedial teaching." Though the school's results at GCSE and 'A' level compare favourably with the national picture, they do not compete with the performance of a small number of more highly selective independent schools:

Being an independent boarding and day school, its catchment area is wide. Many boarders have parents who live abroad. Other parents live in the immediate locality but still decide to send their children to the school as boarders. The catchment area for day pupils may extend to a ring of thirty miles; parents collecting their children on the way back from work. Some pupils use public transport, some live locally; the older ones are likely to drive themselves in. There is a small amount of cross-movement between state schools and Lampton, though it is minimal at sixteen - the most natural point of movement when parents may be tempted to move their children into state sixth forms. In fact the nearest institution which caters for sixth formers is some distance away, and this may have contributed to why the school loses so few pupils to it at sixteen. At thirteen, the age of transfer, the school loses a number of

pupils either because they are excluded on academic grounds or because other independent schools are able to offer inducements such as scholarships. Chapter six offers a more complete account of the way Lampton responded to the introduction of a new examination technology, and though various commentators (Kingdon and Stobart, 1988) have suggested that independent schools with their traditional examination structures would find the transition to the new system difficult to make, in fact its teachers encountered few problems.

CARSELEY HIGH SCHOOL

Carseley High School is an 11-18 Comprehensive School on the east side of a large city. It was purpose built thirteen years ago as a Community College, and though the Community Association which was set up to co-ordinate links between the school and the community has now become inactive, community courses and activities are still offered. The Deputy Headteacher explains that:

The Community Association has virtually folded and what the legal situation is I'm not sure.

The school itself was originally designed for ten forms in each year. Its numbers have declined to a two-form entry (57 first years - 1988-89 intake). Though national rolls have declined, increased competition caused by the open enrolment provisions

enshrined in the 1982 and 1988 Education Acts (Stillman, 1990) have also contributed to Carseley's falling rolls. As the Headteacher says:

You've got gross over-provision in the city now, and virtually every school in the city has got space; and the L.E.A. has always offered parental choice, long before parental choice became the banner. When the L.E.A. reviewed secondary education three or four years ago, then three schools were for closure, and this was one of them. Like it or not, if you are a thinking parent, a parent who is concerned about their child's education and future, then you might think, 'Oh well, this school is going down hill. I don't want to send my kid there. I'm going to send him or her to the school on the other side. Now that school tends to be more affluent, the brighter kids go there and therefore you get our catchment area skewed even more to the lower end.

Falling rolls have therefore affected the ability of the school to provide viable sixth form provision. Last year fifteen pupils were on roll in the lower sixth, organised in a consortium with other local schools. Though these pupils were nominally part of the school and indeed were tutored by Carseley teachers, they spent (depending on their choice of subjects) comparatively little time at the school. The Deputy Headteacher explains the disadvantages of this system:

Yes we do quite well on the amount of teaching we get in the sixth form, but the reality is that most of our sixth form spend most of their time off the site. So they lose any real identity with it.

The catchment area that the school draws its intake from includes pockets of urban deprivation (Census, 1981). The ability level of the intake is biased toward the less able, and with falling rolls the school has not been able to retain the

same proportions of high ability pupils as it used to:

The catchment area overall, it must be biased towards the lower ability. The number of high flying kids we get is very small and their proportion of the intake has got smaller as the intake has gone down.
(Deputy Headteacher)

This is reflected in the examination results recorded at GCSE level for 1989 (see Table 3.6). Though a small number of pupils achieve high enough grades to follow 'A' Level courses, the majority of pupils achieve average or below average grades.

Table 3.6: Percentage of candidates who achieved grades A-C by subject in 1989 at GCSE level - Carseley High School

	No. of A-C grades	Total no. of candidates	%	
Art & Design	9	29	31.0	(55.7)
Biology	3	29	10.3	(47.7)
Business Studies	3	28	10.7	(42.5)
Chemistry	8	35	22.9	(52.6)
English	22	72	30.6	(53.7)
Mathematics	10	53	18.9	(41.0)
Physics	8	39	20.5	(53.0)
Geography	4	32	12.5	(45.9)

- Notes: i) Only subjects with more than 25 candidates included.
ii) Percentages of pupils achieving A-C grades in the different subjects for 1989 - England and Wales. (DES, 1990) in brackets.

Source: Midland Examining Group and Department for Education

The low socio-economic status of the catchment area is again reflected in parental participation in school activities. Parents' evenings usually attract less than a third of all the

parents that are invited. The school has never had to call an election for parent governors. As the Deputy Head argues:

Yes, things would be certainly better if we had more support.

Some departments are able to set their pupils, though with small numbers on roll, most subjects at GCSE level are taught in mixed ability groups. The Mathematics Department set their pupils half way through the first year and pupils remain in these sets, with minor adjustments, throughout their five years at the school. The English department operates with mixed ability groups in the lower part of the school, though a support teacher will take out a small lower-ability set. At examination level, the department does create a top group. French is an example of a department that would like to set their pupils, but are restricted by the small numbers that opt for the subject.

Differentiated approaches to subject choice at 14+ are much in evidence at Carseley. As Michael comments, "we were told by teachers that there were certain subjects it was best that we didn't do because they were too hard for us (Technology and Physics)." In common with the national picture (Smith and Tomlinson, 1990), Design subjects (CDT and Home Economics) are divided by gender: "We've got a horrible boy/girl split We need to re-think Design" (Deputy Headteacher). At examination level some departments have begun to move away from

single subject curricular models. The Humanities faculty offers a modular Humanities syllabus which includes elements of History, Geography and Economics.

Though the intake at Carseley is of poor socio-economic status and of low academic ability, the low rate of suspensions and the low rate of expulsions, the Deputy Head argues, are testimony to the role the school successfully plays, both in the local community and within the city as a whole:

Because of the nature of the intake you sometimes get the feeling that this is more child minding than teaching, and I mean another thing we don't like is the number of kids we get shipped into here who failed in other schools for one reason or another, and it's much easier for an authority to do that now because they just put it down to parental request; whether the parent ordered that or whether it was suggested to them. So the staff are getting a little bit cheesed off with having to cope with other people's problems in the fourth and fifth years.

The staff itself are experienced and long-serving, many of them having been at the school since it opened twelve years ago. Contingent factors such as these play their part in the way a new initiative is received in schools. The Deputy Head argues that favourable circumstances at Carseley (the previous adoption of examination and teaching techniques which more closely resemble the GCSE model (SEC, 1985)) means that there was less need to change than elsewhere:

I mean it's variable across subjects and staff. I mean anything in teaching depends on the individual. In Geography it probably didn't make much difference because they were doing their coursework already. In English the coursework is part of the course, and it is not in addition to what you were doing before. What they were doing before has got to be adapted and fitted to the new criteria. We have certainly had

bits of overload in that area. Science we were fortunate. We do OCEA Science in years one, two and three which is much more practically based, and you have to assess kids in a lesson situation. That I'm sure proved very useful to our Science Staff when they got to a situation of assessed practicals in the upper school for GCSE. Areas like in the GCSE were always used to projects. So we haven't had to change a great deal here.

Teachers at Carseley therefore, can be seen to have adopted weak conceptions of the potentiality of GCSE coursework to transform practice, and as a consequence, the examination's impact is limited.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has sought to describe those structural and institutional frameworks which form the backdrop to the introduction of the GCSE in schools. Those frameworks act as both media and outcome (Giddens, 1984) of human actions. Thus teachers make decisions within specific and determinate settings which transform both contexts and agents, as each new cycle is set in motion. Livesay (1989), for instance, argues that:

systems have structures, that is, sets of generative rules and resources which social agents draw upon and instantiate in practice. So rather than representing the boundary conditions of action, structures are deeply implicated in social action as its very media (p.159).

Chapter six documents how teachers, in one of the schools (Lampton) described above, make decisions about coursework

within these institutional and structural contexts. The introduction of coursework into the public examination system allows us the opportunity to examine this crucial decision-making process as teachers construct, and then re-construct strategies and approaches that best fit their idea of good practice.

CHAPTER FOUR - TEXTUAL READINGS

EXAMINATION TEXTS

The GCSE National Criteria (DES, 1985a) issued by the Department of Education and Science in January 1985,¹ 'A General Introduction to the GCSE' (DES, 1985b) which was published in March of the same year, and the examination syllabuses (MEG, 1986 for example) issued by the Examination Boards in England and Wales are purposive texts designed to change examination practice and pedagogy. Reading texts though, are necessarily acts of re-creation (Eco, 1984; Crossman, 1980); and thus, within temporal, geographical and pedagogical contexts, these texts allow multiple readings. They are also interpreted and re-interpreted at different moments of use, as meanings and outcomes are contested (Giroux, 1983; Ball and Bowe, 1992; Scott, 1991a). As a result there is likely to be discontinuity between the original conception and the final outcome. This theoretical underpinning of the act of reading a text allows for the possibility of 'resistance' (Giroux, 1983) to the original ideological aims or purposes embedded in those examination documents or indeed any other documents. Understanding the relationship between intended outcomes and realization therefore, always involves making sense of competing sets of ideological meanings situated within specific events in the life-time of an institution.

Textual reading is only part of the process - a process that involves textual construction (the initial writing of the text), textual re-construction (formulations and re-formulations of sets of meanings by practitioners), and implementation (teacher strategies influenced by textual readings).² As Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) make clear,

Policy texts are not closed, their meanings are neither fixed nor clear, and the 'carry over' of meanings from one policy arena and one educational site to another is subject to interpretational slippage and contestation. (p.83)

Indeed the policy process is not uni-directional. Decision-making at the various sites impacts backwards and forwards along the chain, causing policy texts to be re-written and then re-positioned in the policy arena. Penney and Evans (1992) argue that, as a result, the "'flow' of policy is undoubtedly both complex and uneven" (p.8), both because there is this "two-way flow of text and discourse" (p.8), and because actors at different sites in the policy process have different degrees of influence and autonomy. Indeed actors make decisions in contexts not of their own making, though the decisions they make impact upon future contexts and arenas of decision making. The composition, length and direction of each relay (Bernstein, 1990) therefore, will vary with each episode of meaning transfer.

Examination texts are rule-bound. Teachers who choose to follow particular examination syllabuses are required to do certain things. For example, the Midland Examining Group's Physics

(Nuffield) GCSE syllabus (MEG, 1986), stipulates that, "each candidate must be assessed twice, once in each of TWO different terms during the year of the examinations, on each group of Assessment Objectives, A, B, C and D" (p.25). In Barthes' (1975) words, aspects of these texts are 'readerly'. The textual meaning is unequivocal, not subject to interpretation, non-writerly and therefore prescriptive. The reader is "left with no more than the poor freedom to accept or reject the text" (p.4). The text compels certain forms of action and proscribes others. On the other hand, examination texts are not uni-dimensional. So any text is likely to contain 'readerly' as well as 'writerly' aspects. In the latter case the text is so constructed that the reader is allowed interpretative space. His or her options are not foreclosed by the text. Paradoxically, Barthes' dichotomized view of reading ignores the reader. As Cherryholmes (1988) argues, "prior understandings, experiences, codes, beliefs and knowledge brought to a text necessarily condition and mediate what one makes of it" (p.12). Therefore the degree to which such passivity or industry resides in the text itself or in the decoder of that text can only be determined by addressing each particular case. What is certain is that the relationship between reader and text lies somewhere on a continuum between active interpretation and passive reception. The attempt to treat texts as pre-ideological,³ as sets of meanings which compel similar responses from readers of different ideological persuasion, is to treat texts as only capable of unitary

readings, and not to analyse or interpret those acts of textual interpretation in the light of the processes of which they are an essential starting point. Texts therefore, have properties which allow creative interpretation to a greater or lesser extent.

Examination texts provide rhetorical as well as directive meanings; that is they aim to give support and reinforcement to specific frameworks of meanings. These texts offer a medium through which policy makers seek to influence practice. Texts which set out the design and philosophy of a new examination are more likely to use rhetorical devices. Secondary examination texts, the actual syllabuses, attempt to strip bare the pedagogical discourse (Bernstein, 1990), and act as manuals of instruction. But primary and secondary GCSE texts allow multiple readings, and contain contradictions and disjunctions. The individual text is able to support a variety of discursive contents. The result is that the practitioner, who works within the textual framework, has to choose between these different meanings, because he or she cannot accommodate them all.

Examination texts, such as these, advocate new assessment technologies. The GCSE replaced GCE 'O' level and CSE because there was general agreement that public examinations were no longer able to reconcile, and were seen to be no longer able to reconcile, contradictory purposes and intents. Thus a dual examination strategy came eventually to be seen as unfair

(Gipps, 1987b; Macintosh, 1987). Candidates bring with them to examinations different life-experiences which determine whether they do well or badly. But the examination itself seeks to equalise the chances of candidates by acting as a neutral conduit. Forrest (1972), The Schools Council 1979), Broadfoot (1979), Fagg (1983), Mortimore and Blackstone (1981), Mortimore et al (1986) and Goldstein and Nuttall (1987) all provide evidence that formal examinations are not able to achieve this. Nevertheless, the intention is that examinations, with their emphasis on controlled settings, give all candidates an equal chance. As it came to be seen that the form the examination took actively discriminated against those candidates who were able to perform better in informally structured environments, and those candidates who have legitimate skills which are not able to be tested by end-of-course assessments, there was a move to change the format (DES, 1978a, 1980; Joseph, 1984). The new examination sought to correct these anomalies; but it did so in the context of and in competition with previous examination technologies.

Examination texts describe strategies which differentiate between candidates. They may do this in two ways. Norm-referenced examinations such as the GCE were organised so that the levels at which candidates were awarded grades were not determined year in year out by constant levels of expertise. Fixed percentages of students were awarded particular grades each year. Standards were therefore not comparable from year to

year. Examination Boards argued that of course the absolute logic of norm-referencing was never followed slavishly, but standards were determined to some extent from a normative base (Murphy, 1987a). The alternative, criterion-referenced examining, operates with the assumption that it is possible to test absolute levels of knowledge, skill, competence, etc., and that with a simple criterion-referenced test like a driving test, criteria for passing are predetermined. In theory the full entry may pass. The whole notion of criterion-referencing, though, becomes more complicated when grades are introduced, because this brings in the idea of different levels of passing. Grade criteria therefore have to be provided. In theory the full entry can achieve the highest grade; in practice, for all sorts of reasons, they are not going to. What is different is that prespecified percentages for each grade are ruled out. The danger is that because the system of graded criteria for each domain is formulated in an hierarchical way, then grades will be awarded roughly in line with how they were under a norm-referenced system. But both seek to judge students in grade-related ways, either in comparison directly with other students or in terms of graded criteria.

Examination texts are practical documents. They aim to avoid discontinuity between previous and present examination practice. Scarth (1984), for instance, suggests that teachers are primarily motivated by a 'distinct practicality' (p.100), as they develop pedagogic and subject knowledge skills.

Those survival skills have been characterised as 'coping strategies' (Lacey, 1977; A.Hargreaves, 1978; Woods, 1979, 1981; Pollard, 1982). The balanced equilibrium that teachers and students strive to maintain has also been represented as 'truce' (Reynolds, 1976), 'aided colonization' (Woods, 1979), 'negotiation' (Delamont, 1976; Martin, 1976; Woods, 1978; Ball, 1980), 'working consensus' (D.Hargreaves, 1972), 'bargaining' (Werthman, 1963), and 'avoidance of provocation' (Stebbins, 1976). Teachers' perceptions of the practical are also resource-based, and pedagogic strategies may be rejected on the grounds that they are too expensive to implement. The literature on effective In-Service Education and Training supports the notion that implementation of new pedagogies can only be achieved incrementally, and must take into consideration existing routines (Joyce and Showers, 1980; 1984; Fullan, 1982; 1985).⁴ Effective examination texts therefore are documents which incorporate a notion of the practical.

Furthermore the meanings generated by reading texts compete with other sources of meaning, which may support or deny particular interpretations. They compete with other textual meanings gathered from, for example, school and L.E.A. documents, academic commentaries, newspaper reports and so forth, and they compete with other texts which bear indirectly on the matter in hand - non-examination educational texts and non-educational books and pamphlets. Meanings held by individual teachers are influenced by spoken as well as written

discursive forms, and the everyday interactive processes that teachers go through confirm, deny, enrich, impoverish and certainly may change meanings which in turn will influence actions. This is to place textual reading within its proper context, and to argue that full understandings of endogenous and exogenous influences on actual practice cannot be achieved by textual analysis alone. The text or texts stand as beacons by which we can begin the study of processes in action, but the teacher does more than simply read official documents.

The implementation of a new examination policy therefore has to be understood as a complex social process, within which meanings and actions are fragmented at different sites during the passage of ideas from policy-making to realisation. Thus it would be misleading to conceive of the policy process as a linear chain with strategies and technologies made at one site and implemented at another. Examination texts and subsequent reconstructions of those texts are read differently at different moments of use. This conceptual framework will be used to analyse one of the key documents, 'A General Introduction to the GCSE' (DES, 1985b).

'A GENERAL INTRODUCTION'

The document (DES, 1985b) begins by setting out the main features of the new examination. These are as follows: it will

be administered by five examination groups which are amalgamations of GCE and CSE Boards and it will be monitored by the Secondary Examinations Council⁵; all syllabuses will be based on prespecified national criteria; differentiated assessment techniques will be used in all subjects; grades will be awarded on a seven point scale; and as soon as practicable those grades will be criteria-related. Its main aim is to:

improve the quality of education and to raise standards of attainment by stretching and stimulating pupils throughout the ability range. (DES, 1985b, p.2)

Furthermore the document reminds us that:

the Secretary of State for Education and Science announced in January 1984 the specific objective of bringing the level of attainment of at least 80 to 90 per cent of all pupils up to at least the level currently associated with the average, as reflected in CSE grade 4. In the Government's view the new examination system will have a crucial contribution to make to the fulfilment of this objective. (DES, 1985b, p.2)

The document continues by listing a series of subsidiary aims and objectives:

to produce a system which is fair to candidates, both in the award of grades and in access to examinations; to motivate teachers and pupils by setting clear targets and by the provision of stimulating and engaging courses; to enhance the esteem in which the examinations are held and make the results more intelligible to users; to promote improvements in the secondary school curriculum and the ways in which subjects are taught, particularly in years 4 and 5; and to use resources more efficiently, not least by removing the need for schools to enter candidates for O-level and CSE examinations in the same subject or to prepare pupils in the same class for entirely different examinations. (DES, 1985b, pp.2-3)

It will therefore promote fairness, accessibility, credibility, intelligibility, pedagogic effectiveness and parsimony.

Its target group will be wider than previous examinations because GCSE examinations:

will be designed, not for any particular proportion of the ability range, but for all candidates, whatever their ability relative to other candidates, who are able to reach the standards required for the award of particular grades in each subject (DES, 1985b, p.3)

As this document makes clear, the intention was for the examination to become criterion-referenced. The text is careful though to distinguish between a criterion-referenced examination and an examination which is moving progressively in that direction:

With the new system of criteria-related grading, grades awarded will be based more clearly on recognised standards and defined levels of attainment. As explained earlier, the national criteria will be extended to include grade criteria, which will define the main areas of knowledge and understanding and the main skills and competences within each subject which the examinations will be designed to test and the levels of attainment which candidates will be expected to demonstrate in each of them if they are to be awarded particular grades. It will not be practicable to define expected levels of attainment for relatively sophisticated GCSE examinations with the precision which is possible in a simpler instrument such as a driving test. Grade will however depend much more heavily than at present on the demonstration by candidates of defined levels of skills, knowledge and understanding. (DES, 1985b, p.9)

The text is also careful to signal that percentages of candidates awarded particular grades will not remain the same over time, but may well change as standards of performance

change. In furtherance of this aim, the document announces the setting up of working parties to draft grade criteria for all the subjects⁶.

In the body of the text, further details are provided about the composition, role and duties of the five Examining Groups. Schools are being given the freedom to choose syllabuses from the different Examining Groups to fit their individual needs. The groups meanwhile are asked to notify the DES about their working practices; and teachers, parents, pupils and employers about their role and function. The role of the Secondary Examinations Council is also defined. It is expected to advise the Secretary of State, ensure that syllabuses comply with the National Criteria and moderate standards across subjects and centres over time.

The purpose and function of National Criteria are set out in the document with the proviso that they

are not intended to place a straitjacket on the examination system or to stand in the way of new developments which are certain to be needed in the light of changing curricula or assessment requirements. (DES, 1985b, p.5).

General criteria which set out the main principles which structure all GCSE examinations and syllabuses, and subject-specific criteria which provide a framework for individual subject titles require that GCSE examinations should test not only:

memory and orderly presentation of facts but also

understanding, practical skills and the ability to apply knowledge. (DES, 1985b, p.6)

One of the most significant changes is the introduction of coursework. The text sets out the reasons for the change:

The setting and assessment of coursework can help teaching and learning processes by measuring and encouraging the development of important skills not easily tested in timed written examinations, including practical and oral skills and the ability to tackle extended pieces of written work. (DES, 1985b, p.7)

Three arguments are put forward here. First, coursework can improve reliability and validity in public examinations (SEC, 1985; Torrance, 1985a, 1986a, 1987a). Second, coursework is a useful pedagogic strategy, that is useful not as an assessment device, but useful as a means of learning. Third, that measuring important aptitudes and skills encourages the development of those skills and helps the learning process. A link is being established here between assessment and learning. This section of the text also signals the need for in-service training for all GCSE teachers, a move which was to prove less than successful (Radnor, 1987)⁷.

A guiding principle in the GCSE is the stress on differentiated assessment. Four technologies are suggested in the text: differentiated papers, differentiated questions within common papers, relating coursework tasks to candidates' individual abilities and differentiated outcomes from common tasks. Differentiated papers, it is suggested, are likely to be needed

in 'sequential' subjects such as Physics, Foreign Languages and Mathematics. Teachers are enjoined to:

prepare candidates to attempt papers, questions and coursework tasks which are suited to their abilities. (DES, 1985b, p.11)

It is acknowledged that overlap will be needed in the range of grades for candidates attempting different papers, an anomaly which has led to easy and difficult routes to achieving 'C' grades in Mathematics, for example (Gipps, 1990).

Four different examination modes are to be allowed: mode '1's where syllabuses and examinations are set by the Board; mode '2's when syllabuses are designed by the school with assessment conducted by the Board; mode '3's where syllabuses and assessments are designed and conducted by the schools, and moderated by the Board; mixed modes which cover examinations combining features of mode '1's and mode '3's. The text though, sets out the government's intention to reduce the number of syllabuses because the claim is made that compliance with the National Criteria will make it harder for many mode '3's to be accepted.

The document also announces that consideration is being given to Distinction and Merit Certificates. These:

should be introduced for candidates achieving good GCSE grades in a defined range of subjects. The object will be to encourage the abler pupils in particular to pursue a broad and balanced range of studies. The Government will announce firm decisions in the light of comments received on their proposals from the Secondary Examinations Council, the Examining Groups, Local Education Authorities,

teacher's organisations, schools and colleges, employers' organisations, and others concerned with examinations." (DES, 1985b, p.14)

Since these consultation procedures failed to produce practical proposals, the idea was quietly dropped. Finally the document gives details on: external candidates, candidates with permanent, long-term or temporary handicaps, timetabling of examinations, publication of results, fees, data protection and access, appeals and the timetable for implementation.

CONTRADICTIONS AND TENSIONS

The document seeks to reconcile four sets of opposing ideas: first, that criterion-referenced examinations employing differentiated assessment techniques can provide positive expressions of pupil achievements. Second, that the absorption of coursework into public examinations can provide both better (more reliable and valid) examination settings, and better learning environments - "Examination courses based on 'subject-specific criteria' will be better than most existing courses and will also have sufficient in common to be comparable with each other" (DES, 1985b,p.7). Third, that in principle criterion-referenced examinations are appropriate vehicles for providing grade-bound summations of pupil achievements. Fourth, that when a move is made from norm-referenced to criteria related examinations, "the standards expected of candidates" are "no less exacting" (DES, 1985b, p.1).

The idea of positive achievement, which is that all students are given opportunities to demonstrate their achievements, signals a move towards interpretative teaching methods (Rowland, 1984) or child-centred pedagogies (DES, 1967). Such an approach sits uncomfortably with other aspects of the GCSE, chiefly the move towards a system of grade criteria (DES, 1985b), and the intention to grade in a formal way (that is to retain ideas such as comparability and reliability). An examination which sets out to compare students in terms of graded performances is going to be in conflict with the idea of that examination also providing positive expressions of pupil achievements. Whether students sit criterion-referenced or norm-referenced examinations, they still receive an aggregated grade at the end of the two year course.

The claim is of course that criterion-referencing is a positive move not because credit is given for positive achievement, but because in theory anyway a more accurate measure of a pupil's abilities and performance can be recorded. The key phrase, used in this and other supplementary texts (DES, 1988a; 1988b) is that "differentiated assessment techniques would be used in all subjects so as to enable all candidates to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do" (DES, 1985b, p.1). A number of classwork and coursework devices have been marshalled to achieve this. In certain subjects, the coursework tasks are individualized, and thus allow the Craft, Design and Technology teacher for instance, to try to structure that assessment in

terms of his or her perception of pupil needs and interests (SEC/OU, 1986a). In other subjects such as Geography, though the task is universal, teachers generally have been able to structure the demands made by that common task to meet individual pupils' needs (SEC/OU, 1986b). In English predominantly, and this is a very different set of devices, the teacher encourages the pupils to collect together a number of assignments of which only a few - the best - eventually go forward to be assessed. Furthermore the process of drafting and re-drafting that is practised by some English teachers, but considered to be a form of cheating by others, means that the piece of work which is finally considered for assessment has had the benefit of a structured series of assessments and is the formal product of a co-operative relationship between teacher and pupil. Problems of fairness and comparability are of course different issues, but in this case such devices, even if only partially understood, are all attempts at showing what pupils are able to do, as opposed to a formal end-of-course assessment in which so much can go wrong (Dillon and Stevenson-Hicks, 1983; Wood and Power, 1987; Flavell and Wohlwill, 1969).

The purpose of doing this is to enhance performance diagnostically, which enables the student to move on to higher levels of achievement. The performance of that task and the assessment of it are formative and ongoing experiences. As soon as that assessment is treated as an opportunity to describe in a summative way what each student is able to do and then to

process that description in terms of an hierarchical system of grades and awards, the formative experience is negated. There is always going to be a conflict between the formative purposes of coursework assessment and the desire to summarise that student's performance in terms of a graded series of descriptions. Furthermore that tension is equally manifest between the formative purposes of coursework and the summative purposes of written examinations. Examinations can be structured so that perceived differences in ability are catered for by offering different and hierarchically structured experiences, but an examination to a student is a piece of work they do in controlled conditions, which results in the awarding of a grade, and which allows comparisons to be made between them and other pupils. Even if examination papers are structured so that a pupil feels they have been able to show what they can do, if they receive a low grade, and it is inevitable that some will, this will act as a negative influence on future learning, and on the future potential of that pupil to make progress.

Furthermore the document suggests that the GCSE is a substantively different examination from its predecessors. The claim is made that assessment procedures which include a measure of criterion referencing, will deliver both a different and better set of learning experiences, and a means whereby a more accurate and wider assessment of achievement is made. This underplays the tension between the two. Though the GCSE is an

examination which has improved, widened and made more valid the assessment of the learning processes of students, it has done so at the expense of the reliability and consequent comparability of those assessments. For example, coursework and its assessment by teachers opens itself up to criticism that teacher bias becomes more prevalent, and exposes itself to the possibility that parents and friends may be injecting an 'unfair' element into the production of those pieces of work. Kingdon and Stobart (1988) put it in the following way:

The relationship of reliability to validity is paradoxical in the GCSE, since whilst the variety of assessment techniques, and the clearer relationship of objectives and content, add to its validity (it is measuring what we want measured in a subject), this same variety of techniques may produce unreliability in assessment which in turn decreases its validity. (p.125)

The third tension within this document is the juxtaposition of criterion-referencing with the awarding of examination grades. Though the GCSE was originally designed as a criterion-referenced examination, it is doubtful whether its assessment techniques have significantly changed. Any testing procedure is going to be positioned somewhere along a continuum with norm-referencing at one end and criterion-referencing at the other. Both ideas are theoretical abstractions. Furthermore, if a move is made towards a more criterion-referenced system with aggregated grades being awarded for each subject, then when these graded criteria - the levels at which they operate - are formulated, they are going to conform to imagined levels of

ability in society. GCSE is therefore going to have many of the features of a norm-referenced examination; that is, it will operate in terms of pre-specified categorizations of levels of achievement which correspond to an idea of how any cohort of students is likely to perform. The definitional logic of a criterion-referenced examination is not, as this document claims, to describe pupil achievement in a positive way, but to record information about the achievements of pupils, of which such information cannot be procured from an aggregated grade (Nuttall and Goldstein, 1984). A final summative aggregated grade obscures rather than clarifies. If an examination consists of five assessment objectives which it wishes to assess, a candidate may be awarded a high grade overall, even though they have achieved a high standard in three of those objectives, and a low standard in the others. That high grade therefore tells us very little about pupil competences. There is also a limit as to how precisely assessment criteria can be formulated. Examiners still have to make individual judgements about whether a pupil's work corresponds to that objective or level of objective which is being assessed.

Finally the document asserts that though public examinations will henceforth be more criterion-referenced, standards will not change. If grade boundaries are norm-referenced, this means that numbers of candidates awarded particular grades do not vary from year to year. If subsequently, grade boundaries are related to set criteria, then either more or less candidates

will receive particular grades year by year. This means that it is possible for some candidates, on the borderline perhaps between 'A' and 'B' grades, to be awarded the lower grade when grades are related to a norm and the higher grade when they are related to criteria. In this case candidates under the new system who have not reached the standards that in previous years would have warranted an 'A' grade now achieve one. Standards have therefore declined. In a similar way, a candidate who achieved an 'A' grade within a norm-based system may not qualify for that grade when the examination is based on criteria. Standards here can be said to have improved. What cannot remain static and thus allow comparison are the standards achieved by candidates assessed with different examination technologies. The textual references to standards (DES, 1985b, pp.1, 2 & 10) act as a rhetorical device, as the document seeks to influence classroom practice and gain credibility with a wider public.

Practitioners, having to make sense of these contradictions and tensions, engage in processes of selection and discrimination; but they do so within specific conceptual frameworks. Both in the examination technology, and in the form of words used in supporting texts, a particular conceptual schema which embodies a notion of human nature is being propagated. A 'General Introduction to the GCSE' (DES, 1985b) and complimentary documents such as H.M.I. reports (DES, 1988a, 1988b) assume a heterogeneous and hierarchically structured view of human

nature and of human achievement. Indeed this idea of fixed ability conceptually underpins the key GCSE idea of differentiation (Gipps, 1987a; Radnor, 1988). For instance, in the text that concerns us here, the DES (1985b) argue that:

GCSE examinations will be designed to demand more of able than less able candidates and to award grades accordingly. The aim is that each subject should be taught and examined in a way which reflects the widely differing abilities of candidates. (p.10)

Examination texts such as these seek to conduct the debate within specific frameworks; and to this end they use devices which are both rhetorical and technical. In Chapter Five we examine teachers' responses to coursework in terms of a specific textual reconstruction, and show how even though documents such as these are situated within fixed conceptual and affective frameworks, they still allow 'plural' (Barthes, 1975) readings⁸.

NOTES:

1. The 16+ Joint Council which had previously been formed from among the GCE and CSE Boards, were entrusted with writing the National Criteria for the new examination. Its members constructed a blueprint for twenty subject areas. This included: a) the title; b) the general aims of the syllabus; c) the assessment objectives; d) the proportion of marks to be allocated to the various assessment objectives; e) the scheme of assessment including details of the examination components, and an explanation of how differentiation was to be achieved between candidates of differing abilities; f) descriptions of the standards that are likely to be achieved by candidates awarded grades F and C.

2. Ball and Bowe (1992) adopt a similar framework, though the categories they use are slightly different. They argue that 'moments' of legislation (the passing of an act or the issuing of a circular), documentation (from the Examination Boards for instance), and implementation (the work of the teachers) are only loosely coupled.

3. The term 'ideology' is used here and subsequently to refer to those perspectives that practitioners hold about their practice. In that these sets of belief are coherent and self-referencing, the term is usefully employed. However textual references to ideology should not be construed in a marxist sense, in which real and material relations in society are concealed from actors, and serve to secure the position of dominant groups.

4. Much quoted in the In-Service Education and Training literature is a study by Joyce and Showers (1980), which reviews more than two hundred studies into the effectiveness of various kinds of training methods, observing that "the question of transfer at the classroom level was addressed in relatively few studies" (p.381). They argue after analysing the studies that effective INSET should include: a) presentation of theory; b) demonstration or simulated demonstration of that theory; c) practice under simulated conditions; d) practice in real classroom situations; e) structured feedback on performance in both simulated and real conditions; f) coaching for application so that a real transfer of skills takes place. The INSET programme moreover, should involve four 'levels of impact': a) awareness-raising; b) acquisition of concepts and organized knowledge; c) acquisition of principles and skills; d) application and problem-solving. Joyce and Showers conclude by arguing that "only after the fourth level has been reached can we expect impact on the education of children" (p.380). In a follow-up to the original research, Joyce and Showers (1984) acknowledge that "the positive, cumulative transfer of learning teaching skills and strategies to classroom practice is enormously complex. Newly acquired skills must be integrated into an existing repertoire" (p.81). Their main conclusions are in agreement with Fullan (1982) in that they reinforce the notion that effectiveness is generally associated with not just provision of appropriate theory, but also materials, psychological support and specific coaching techniques (Connor, 1989). However it should be noted that various criticisms have been made of the original study. Galloway (1989) for instance, argues firstly that they did no new research themselves, and thus relied exclusively on secondary sources, and secondly that it is not always appropriate to transfer findings from one country to another because local idiosyncracies render the data invalid.

5. This body is now defunct, and has been replaced by the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC) and the National Curriculum Council (NCC).

6. In 1985 the Secondary Examinations Council set up committees to develop draft grade criteria within each subject. When they reported, their results were criticised for over-elaboration. Brown (1988) for instance, documents how the Mathematics Group produced eighty detailed criteria for one element at a single grade level. In the end, the draft grade criteria were dropped, to be replaced by performance matrices. However when the first GCSE papers were graded, the original (loose) grade descriptions were used, while the proportions of candidates receiving various grades remained generally stable across subjects (Gipps, 1990). It seems that little had changed with the introduction of the new examination technology.

7. Radnor (1987) concludes from her study of GCSE cascading that, "the introduction of the GCSE in accordance with the Government's timetable was problematic for most schools. This was because the time, training and resources for a proper professional preparation for the new courses were inadequate. The evidence also supports the notion that, even if it had been possible for the original training programme to have taken place as planned, many of the problems identified by teacherswould still have arisen" (p.72). She goes on to argue that, for cascading on this scale to have worked, a number of basic assumptions had to be made which later turned out to be false. First, it was assumed that all Heads of Department had reached a certain level of competence and efficiency, and had the ability to understand and interpret information following a two-day course on a complex educational innovation that contained a new and unexplored concept ('differentiation'). Second, it assumed that teachers had the capacity to make the necessary changes in teaching and learning strategies to realise the assessment and coursework objectives embodied in the GCSE. Third, it assumed that the concepts and ideas that were to be cascaded were coherent and did not contain internal contradictions. Fourth, it assumed therefore that teachers would not raise questions, take alternative stances, and interpret the ideas and concepts in radically different ways. It assumed, in other words, a passive role for teachers. Fifth, it assumed that Heads of Department had the necessary leadership qualities and experience to train and encourage their staff. Finally it assumed a high level of teacher commitment. Given the failure of the model in terms of these six points, it is not surprising that the cascading delivery system was adjudged by Radnor to have failed.

8. Material from the following has been used in this chapter:
Scott, D. (1988a), 'GCSE Integrated Humanities: A Response', *Forum*, 30, 2, pp.44-45
Scott, D. (1988b), 'Problems of Knowledge in the assessment of empathy in the GCSE', *Curriculum*, 8, 3, pp.31-37
Scott, D. (1989c), 'HMI Reporting and the GCSE', *Journal of Education Policy*, 4, 3, pp.281-287

CHAPTER FIVE - COURSEWORK PROCESSES, PLURAL READINGS

Key GCSE texts therefore, are not uni-dimensional, but contain contradictions and disjunctions which allow a plurality of readings. In the light of this, we reconstructed a text in its dominant form, which enabled us to suggest that the new examination would promote fairness, accessibility, credibility, intelligibility, pedagogic effectiveness and parsimony. As Bowe and Ball (1992) put it, there are "more powerful texts and weaker contexts" (p.98). This dominant agenda is not shared by all the teachers in the case study schools. Indeed many teachers subscribe to sets of beliefs which contrast with and are in opposition to it. This chapter then, contrasts practitioners' perceptions of this agenda with their attitudes towards examination rule-following. Table 5.1 (see below) provides us with such a typology and documents six different approaches teachers take with regard to GCSE coursework. These approaches are typified as conformist, adaptive, oppositional, ritualistic, transformative and non-conformist.

AN EXAMINATION AGENDA

This examination agenda emphasizes equity, non-arbitrariness, predictive validity, comparability, equivalence of assessment environment and improved pedagogy. Examinations with coursework elements are able to identify and reward ability. They

therefore operate as fair mechanisms of social selection (Satterley, 1981). This set of beliefs can be sustained with either possession or process views of intelligence. Those who subscribe to possession views argue that people have synaptic limitations. Burt (1917) for instance said, "intelligence was an innate, general cognitive ability which could be measured". (p.26). On the other hand, those who argue for process views see intelligence as a disposition, which can be learnt. Ryle (1949) argued that,

the intelligent man conducts his operations efficiently, and to operate efficiently is not to perform two operations. It is to perform one operation in a certain manner or with a certain style or procedure, and the description of this modus operandi has to be in terms of such semi-dispositional, semi-episodic epithets as 'alert', 'careful', 'critical', 'ingenious', 'logical', etc." (p.122).

Ability is here defined both as intelligent capacity, whether innate or learned, and as capacity to prepare oneself for examination. Technologies developed for examinations such as the GCSE enable them to match up accurately grade to performance.

Examinations, therefore, do not produce arbitrary classifications. Those classifications reflect either underlying capacity or immediately learnt capacity. Theorists (Wood, 1987; Wood and Power, 1987) have attempted to quantify such notions within a broad framework which would incorporate the following: each student has a theoretical capacity or level of competence; any assessment of that capacity is bound to

fall short of adequately describing it, but if that assessment is going to be useful, whether in a diagnostic or predictively valid sense, then the gap between competence and its description by the use of testing devices has to be made as narrow as possible. There is though always going to be a gap between competence and performance¹, and between performance and its description. Those who subscribe to the agenda that concerns us here argue that examinations can successfully bridge this gap.

The third element of our agenda is predictive validity. This addresses the time specificity of examinations and argues that examination grades are able to predict how students will perform at a future date. Introducing coursework into public examinations enables examiners better to assess those candidates who perform with greater skill in informally structured environments and who have legitimate skills which are not able to be tested by end-of-course assessments². Improving the predictive validity of examinations means that they are not just able to assess performance at a particular place and at a particular moment in time, but also to reflect underlying capacity.

Examinations, moreover, are able to provide comparative data about students. They allow us to make comparisons between candidates across time and across examination settings. As Goldstein (1989) argues: "this can only be done either by

postulating effectively equivalent environments or environment-free assessments" (p. 145). This has particular implications for an examination which involves coursework (Kingdon and Stobart, 1988), because, with the adoption of sequential, serial and continuous modes of assessment, it is more difficult to guarantee equivalent environments.

The final element in this package of beliefs is to draw a positive correlation between examination and pedagogy. It has been argued that examinations can: provide achievement benchmarks for pupils; fulfil the expectations of a majority of pupils (Rutter et al., 1979); provide objective confirmation of teachers' subjective opinions which increases the latter's credibility; increase teacher motivation because they allow teachers a set of benchmarks by which they can judge their own performance; be used as a source of positive social control; legitimise the authority of the teacher (Hargreaves, 1982); and serve as a source of motivation for pupils. But above all, they structure and support the courses of study. They act as a curriculum bulwark, and in the case of examinations which include an element of continuous assessment, they allow the possibility of direct feedback to improve learning strategies. The connection that is made between examination and curriculum is therefore a positive one.

Belief in this examination agenda then, rests on the following notions: examinations with coursework elements are fair and

equitable, not arbitrary, guarantee some measure of predictive validity, enable reasonable comparisons to be made between students by positing similar assessment environments, and allow improvements in curriculum strategies which maximize learning opportunities. Teachers in the case study schools conformed to this agenda in full or rejected parts of it. Table 5.1 contrasts belief or non-belief in this agenda with teachers' attitudes towards examination rule-following. Six situational stances have been formulated, and each is briefly described below.

Table 5.1 - Typology of attitudes about examinations amongst teachers teaching GCSE coursework

<u>Belief</u>	<u>Type of Rule-following</u>	<u>Situational Stance</u>
Belief in agenda	Rigid observance	Conformist
Belief in agenda	Elastic observance	Adaptive
Belief in agenda	Non-Observance	Oppositional
Non-belief in agenda	Rigid observance	Ritualistic
Non-belief in agenda	Elastic observance	Transformative
Non-belief in agenda	Non-observance	Non-conformist

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO COURSEWORK EXAMINATIONS

Conformist teachers believe that, public examinations with coursework elements are useful and meaningful devices.

Conformists attach great importance to observing rules and procedures, and are likely to treat texts³ in 'readerly' ways (Barthes, 1985). They will accept meaning frames as given and will not seek to discover alternative interpretations. They are likely to want to adjust their practice in line with such textual readings.

Adaptive stances are similar in that the teacher has confidence in formal examination systems, even if they do include coursework elements. They are different because such teachers are prepared to reinterpret examination rules so that they conform to their notion of good practice. They are likely to treat texts in 'writerly' ways (Barthes, 1985), and to protect pedagogical strategies if they feel they may conflict with examination rules.

Oppositional stances combine belief in an examination agenda which implies that certain rules have to be followed with an apparent disregard for those rules in practice. The stance therefore can be said to be oppositional because it counter-positions belief and rule following. Examinations including those with a coursework element, can provide fair, accurate and predictively valid accounts of pupil aptitudes, but if through non-observance of those rules other ends may be achieved, an oppositional stance may be sustained.

Those teachers adopting ritualistic forms of behaviour attach more importance to observing rules and procedures than in achieving the purposes for which those rules exist. This has been referred to as a form of goal displacement (Merton, 1957)⁴. Juxtaposing non-belief with rule following may create tensions at the level of practice and disillusionment for the teacher concerned. But the textual reading is still 'writerly' (Barthes, 1985), even if the practitioner is not prepared to translate such a stance into elastic rule-following or disregard for those rules.

Those teachers who do not accept that examinations can be fair and equitable, and who furthermore believe that they may damage the curriculum, may reinterpret but not reject the rules that underpin that agenda. This transformative stance combines a sceptical attitude towards formal examinations with an elastic approach to rule-following.

Finally, there are non-conformist practitioners who are prepared to ignore examination rules. Since they do not believe in the examination agenda that concerns us, they do not see the need to follow its rules anyway. Each of these six approaches will be examined in greater detail below using particular examples from the case study schools.

CONFORMISM

The Head of History at Tadford School, David Llewelyn⁵, teaches the Social and Economic History - 1700 to the present day - M.E.G. syllabus (no.1606). There is an ongoing debate within the department as to whether this is the most appropriate syllabus, since the sheer length of time-span makes it that much more difficult for his pupils to construct coherent historical narratives. Indeed the stress that the Head of Department lays on story formulation and narrative construction points to the methodological dilemma that all teachers and especially History GCSE teachers have to face. The debate has been polarised between evidence-based approaches and traditional narrative strategies (cf. Coltham and Fines, 1971; Hamer, 1982; Little, 1983; Armitage and Taylor, 1987; Deuchar, 1987; Hiskett, 1988)⁶. David Llewelyn describes where he stands on this issue:

I am a traditionalist, always have been. We've accommodated the new History as it is called - the approach that one uses evidence as a base for the study which denigrates the narrative and the story in History, which was the traditional approach. History is the story. History is the narrative, and that's what marks it off from almost all other subjects. I think they've gone too far in emphasising the use of evidence.

This approach to the content of History is reflected in the approach to assessment that he adopts. His primary concern with the assessment of coursework is to ensure that there are sufficient controls in place so that fair and reliable

assessments can be made (cf. Turner, 1984; Torrance, 1987). He argues that the only way he can be sure that the work is the work of the individual pupil is to control the content, setting and timing of each assignment so that an unequivocal judgment can be made:

We sat them down for three weeks in lesson time only because it said it's got to be pupil's work, and we had to sign a document which said that it had to be the pupils' work. We couldn't guarantee that it was if they took it out of school, and so they sat down for three weeks and did their coursework in lessons under exam conditions with us, and we could then in clear conscience sign the document and say it was their work. So it couldn't have been anyone else's. If we'd have allowed them to take it home, we couldn't have done that. (first year of the GCSE).

The strategy that he now adopts is structured and closed-ended. This means that pupils are not allowed a choice with the content, style and length of each piece. There are no loose deadlines, as David Llewelyn explains:

We set a deadline, we don't leave it open-ended.

To counteract the potentiality of coursework for exaggerating social disadvantage (cf. North, 1987; Kingdon and Stobart, 1988), resources are provided in equal measure for each pupil. He explains that:

No, it was all there, all the sources had been collected together so that every child was on the same footing.

Every assignment that is completed involves at the beginning a clear statement of its aims and the conditions under which it is to be written. Most of the writing is completed in lessons, though for occasional assignments homework is also set. He

explains what this involves:

We make sure that what we set can be done in the time, so there is no problem. We always give lesson time, they always have lesson time.

His input is limited, conditions of work are controlled. Paradoxically it is the higher ability pupils who find the time constraints daunting:

We structure them very tightly so we know what we're testing, the kids are clear what's going on, and they know that they've got a double lesson. One or two are extra sure that they are going to be pushed to get it done. The weaker ones, actually it works the other way round. The weaker a candidate the less time they need, because the less they see. The more able need more time, because they see more. That's usually the way it works.

This model of coursework stresses above all control and reliability. No attempt is made to integrate coursework into the fabric of the adopted teaching strategies. It is treated as a series of special events which take place at regular intervals during the two-year course.

His account is rule-bound and consists of strategies that are rigidly enforced. He is committed at the same time to an examination agenda which is able to make fair, accurate and predictively valid judgments about pupils:

Coursework does allow us to make useful comparisons between children, but it has to be done properly.

This commitment, allied to a rigid interpretation of those rules which underpin the agenda he is following, means that David Llewelyn has assumed the characteristics of a conformist in terms of the model that concerns us in this chapter.

ADAPTIVE APPROACHES

Adaptive approaches to the implementation of a new examination such as the GCSE combine belief in its positive benefits, with elastic observance of the rules that underpin it. Richard Smith, the Head of English at Tadford Comprehensive School, is enthusiastic about the new examination:

It really is the freedom, the main thing which I am enthusiastic about, is that I can choose the books that I want. I can choose the books that the children like doing and I can choose things or subjects that the children want to talk about. I like the oral components of it. I like having my kids in groups talking and discussing things amongst themselves and sharing ideas. I don't like the competitiveness of the norm-referenced examination where, you know, everybody's struggling because you've got to get better than the school over there. I like the idea of criteria-referencing, so we are trying to achieve a standard. You're not fighting against somebody else. It is a co-operative effort to try and achieve the best that we all can do, and I'm very much for co-operativeness, and acceptance and responsibility from the children's point of view, and yet the beauty of it is that we are actually saying something useful about our kids that parents and employers are interested in.

He identifies four advantages for introducing the GCSE: increased teacher choice, improved classroom practice, non-competitive technologies, and its ability to provide useful information. Though the examination was envisaged as criterion-referenced (Joseph, 1984), subsequent attempts to provide meaningful grade criteria have faltered⁸ (Rogers, 1987; Gipps, 1990). Despite this, here it is perceived as a criterion-referenced examination, and thus classroom implementation is

influenced not so much by what is but by what is perceived to be the case.

English and English Literature teachers have developed distinctive pedagogic strategies in response to the coursework requirements laid down in the syllabuses. Richard Smith has adopted a style of teaching fourth and fifth year English classes which places a greater responsibility for the production of work on the pupils themselves. The teacher is seen as a resource (Bruner, 1960, 1966). His direct intervention in the process is limited. His task is to guide and structure that process so that a final piece of work emerges. The emphasis is developmental, and it allows a number of different styles and modes of learning to take place (oral, written, aural, etc.):

A lot of the work we do in GCSE is developmental, like encouraging them to. You do a piece of work then you discuss some aspect of it where you might get some oral work out of it. You'll ask them to do a draft piece of work for it, which you're not marking as such. Then what I do with my children in my groups are - I ask them to work in groups of four to discuss the pieces of work they themselves have done, to comment on each other's piece of work, and I actively encourage the use of constructive criticism.

At first peer group criticism is bland, especially since pupils are told to look for 'positive' things to say. But their critical abilities develop. The emphasis is on learning processes - that is learning how to be critical - rather than on providing constructive feedback for the production of

particular coursework assignments. This is though, an important secondary consideration. This developmental process allows pupils to deepen their understanding of form, shape and structure in a coursework assignment:

But when you say, we'll talk about the planning, then you're getting people to say things like: 'It followed a logical pattern'; 'The conclusion reflected the main bulk of the essay'; or what have you.

Though small group work is the most important stage of the process, the Head of English likes to bring all the various strands together in a plenary session:

Once we've got them all in together in groups, and they've come up with points, we tend to have a plenary session, and we bring the groups together, and say 'OK, well, what other points are there which ought to have been raised in an essay of this type?, and we'll go through it on the blackboard.

Limited emphasis here is placed on fulfilling the needs of the assessment criteria. Pupils, for instance, are encouraged to share ideas. At the end they are told to restructure their original drafts and produce a final piece of work. The teacher will not at any stage of the proceedings mark the embryonic pieces of work. His contribution is spoken. His concern is to encourage a process which he describes as good classroom practice - in that ideas are discussed, drafted work is examined by the group, pupils learn from each other, and then produce a finished product. Only when each pupils' work has been through each of these stages will he then mark each piece.

He is prepared though to adapt the examination technology if, as is the case with lower ability children, it conflicts with his notion of good practice. The conformist approach prioritizes examination reliability over pupil learning processes. Adaptive approaches are more flexible. With lower ability children he is prepared to provide specific written help:

I had the lowest group this morning, sounds dreadful, I don't like using that term, but the group that needs the most help, the kind of sink ones that have been receiving additional help from the special needs department beforehand. What I tend to do with that, I will, if I don't have time to sit down with them and work through the things which they're doing. I tend to take the books home as I did last night, and I will mark thoroughly the first ten lines; and then I will say 'This is the bit which I've gone through, and I've pointed out the sentence faults that you've got there, spelling faults, punctuation errors that you've made in this section.' I'm not going to do any more.

His justification is pedagogical:

When you've got children that are of low ability, just to simply say 'Right draft this, then we'll talk about it and then go away and write it up again.' It's not going to help them, because they need an additional amount of help. There are those that achieve after a certain length of time, the ability in English I think you've got to encourage them. You say 'Well, this is excellent. There's certain bits that you've got in here which are wonderful, the description of the old women walking across there is lovely; but in that bit there, there are certain things you've done wrong see if you can work out what else is wrong in your piece of work by looking back at that point.' Now if that's considered to be unfair by the Examination Board, then I shall continue to ignore them because that's the way that I've got to teach.

This brings out the tension between formative and summative assessment⁹ (Kingdon and Stobart, 1988; Buckle and Ridings,

1988), and illustrates adaptive approaches to the implementation of coursework in the GCSE.

OPPOSITIONAL STANCES

Oppositional practitioners accept that there may be a divide between what they actually do and that set of beliefs to which they subscribe. Non-observance of examination rules is justified on the grounds that another and, in the eyes of the practitioner, more important end may be achieved. Scott, (1991a) identifies five ways of conceptualising curricula within independent schools - humanism¹⁰, elitism¹¹, pastoralism¹², professionalism and accountability¹³. Those teachers who focus on elitist and accountability forms view examination practice as a means to an end. This is in contrast to professional discourses where decisions about curricular and academic concerns are made in terms of a professional ethic, the key notion of which is fairness.

Mark Laport, the Head of History at Lampton, an independently controlled 5-18 school, acknowledges the centrality of elitist and accountability discourses to the way he conceptualises curriculum and examination matters:

We live or die in terms of satisfying parents and for many of them that means getting their children through their examinations. As an independent school we have a particular function. We are training those who will eventually have power in society. We can't just slough off our responsibilities. What we are good at here is getting unpromising kids through their

examinations.

To fulfil such an agenda, he is prepared to adopt coursework procedures that extend the boundaries of what would be considered fair practice, and are thus in conflict with our previously articulated notion of professionalism.

The History Department at Lampton School follows the MEG History Syllabus no.1613 - British and European History, 1867 to the present day - which asks each candidate to 'submit either one piece of work or two shorter pieces, on a subject related to the period they have studied. Each piece of work may be composed of several pieces related to a common theme.' (p.3)

The pupils are allowed a choice from five topics, all of which they are familiar with. Out of their five lessons a week, one double during the Christmas term of their fifth year is given over to coursework, and they are also allowed a homework that evening to complete it. Most do not need to, since they finish what they have to do in class. The work is divided into two sections. It is tightly structured and it does involve some library research. Mark Laport describes the extent of teacher input at this stage:

They get their pack of documents, books and told to use the library; and they've got to write on 'What did the Suffragettes achieve?' They've got four questions There is an enormous amount of teacher input at the very beginning. It's us telling them what the Board wants.

His pupils then complete section one. They hand it in, and he reads it carefully. He then reviews with each pupil their piece of work, pointing out faults and showing each of them how to improve. He explains how the process works:

They write section one, which is for 40 marks. They bring it in. We mark it. You sit down and say 'This has got 21 out of 40'. It has got 21 because of a, b, c, d, e. I will do this at the beginning of the double, and I will go through each one with each candidate. We have only got 20 in the set which is possible therefore, and you then say 'If you want to get 40, you've got to do this, this and this', and that is it. They may come back to you in the course of the lesson.

Having been re-drafted, the first piece of coursework is handed in and marked formally. The second piece of coursework is treated in the same way. Since the process is essentially classroom-based, involving controlled exercises with, in part, teacher provided resources, the problem of unfairness caused by inequality of resources does not arise. On the other hand, though the strategies adopted here preclude unfair and excessive parental input, they do allow the teacher to provide an excessive amount of help and they do place in question the reliability of the assessments being made.

Mark Laport adopts oppositional stances with coursework processes. He is prepared to reject the rules which underpin the examination agenda he supports. Syllabus instructions demand that 'specific steerage and interpretation by the teacher, the giving of information directly related to the work and the remarking of re-drafted pieces of work cannot therefore

be allowed' (MEG, 1988, p.22). His rejection of such rules is empowered by a need to fulfil other ends, those that are better defined by elitist and accountability discourses that we referred to previously.

RITUALISTIC FORMS OF BEHAVIOUR

Ritualistic stances combine attachment to rule-following with a deep scepticism about the merits of following the examination agenda that concerns us here. The History Teacher at St Thomas' School, Mary Larby, displays many of the characteristics of ritualistic forms of behaviour, including goal displacement. It has led, in her case, to a level of unacceptable disillusionment with what she is doing:

We are not happy with the new examination. It can't differentiate properly. But we go along with it. Sometimes we have to do things we don't really agree with. All this business about skills in History. It is not teaching History as I was taught it. Anyway I feel I'm not teaching as well as I used to. It restricts me. I'm extremely depressed about the whole thing.

She is concerned, though, to follow the examination rules in as much as she is able.

Her department is small, consisting of one full-time and one part-time teacher. They have chosen to follow the MEG syllabus (no.1606) - British Social and Economic History, 1700 to the present day¹⁴. Each student completes an extended project which

is divided into four parts. The History teacher explains what this involves:

Yes, we did our structured assignment, rather like this with four parts, and we tried to meet each of the criteria that they wanted you to meet. You know: historical recall, employment of information, empathy, and analysis of evidence.

The project itself is structured around a visit to the Black Country Museum in June of the pupils' year 10. Its theme is Industry, though this represents a change from the previous year when the theme was Suffragettes. The department changed in part because of the poor way they were received by the City of London Museum the previous year, thus emphasising the importance of the initial museum visit. The pupils are expected to work on their projects during the Summer holidays at the end of their fourth year. Time is allowed during the following Autumn term both in class and for homework. A loose deadline for the first draft is set for January. The first completed version is expected then to be handed in as soon as possible, as the intention is to leave the Easter term free for examination work. Throughout the project (from June in the fourth year to January in year 11), pupils are expected to continue, both at home and in class, with their other examination work - though for six to eight weeks of the Autumn term one weekly homework (forty-five minutes) and one lesson per week (forty minutes) is given up for project coursework. The length and scope of the project has proved to be a demotivating experience for certain pupils:

Last year we had trouble with motivating them. The first one was alright, but it became less of an exciting experience. Now we want to speed it up this year.

She suggests that, because it is the Board now which decides on the theme for the coursework, and because the work itself has to conform more closely to the syllabus criteria, the experience of producing a long piece of work is no longer as worthwhile:

They could choose, you know. They chose something they enjoyed, and it was their choice. It wasn't restricted to a syllabus, and so I had people getting high marks doing Ancient Egyptian, marvellous projects, wonderful things they would choose. Now we are restricted to a syllabus, so that restricts for a start.

The second suggestion she makes is that because project work is more highly structured and teacher directed - a deliberate move by the syllabus writers - to prevent copying and to introduce in a systematic form more analytical techniques, paradoxically it makes fewer demands on pupils:

.... but I just feel that when I look back at some of the very best of CSE projects, they were better. They represented more input from them; they were very much more interesting to read.

The third element of her critique is that because the GCSE has moved to a greater extent towards a skills-based curriculum and away from chronological narrative (DES, 1985), an essential part of the historical experience is lost:

It is getting away from History as a narrative and

History as a story.

She is operating through a different and conflicting notion of assessment (Broadfoot, 1986), while at the same time adopting rule-bound strategies.

THE TRANSFORMATIVE MODE

The chemistry teacher at Lorton Girls' School, Michael Bowen, combines a scepticism about the value of assessed coursework with a willingness to treat elastically those rules which underpin it. The school itself is an all-girls comprehensive in the outer ring of a large conurbation. The Science Department offers three different syllabuses - MEG Chemistry (no.1375), MEG Physics (no.1700) and MEG Biology Syllabus A (no.1325). In the lower school, a modular structure has been adopted with six-week single Science modules being taught one after the other.

At examination level, the three separate Science teachers organise their assessed coursework in similar ways, though there are important differences. All three subject teachers make sure that they do more assessments than they need to, though in the end the number they actually do is limited. The Chemistry teacher, for instance, will organise fifteen assessments, twelve of which will be used for examination. With all three subjects, pupils are not expected to have to do

much out-of-class preparation. Both Biology and Chemistry teachers spread the assessments they make at regular intervals throughout the two years of the course. The Physics teacher, on the other hand, tends to organise the bulk of the assessed practicals as late as possible, thereby ensuring that his pupils' skills are as developed as they possibly can be¹⁵.

Michael Bowen combines his duties in the Chemistry department with responsibilities for overall supervision of Science within the school. He is sceptical about examinations in general, and about the implementation and application of coursework as part of that examination agenda in particular. Coursework assignments were not meant to be separate from, in any distinctive way, the normal teaching and learning processes that go on in Science laboratories. They were intended to be fully integrated with the courses of study (DES, 1985a). Teachers therefore were to retain control of the process by being given the freedom to devise their own assessments. This allows a close match between assessment and learning strategies (Torrance, 1987a). But Michael Bowen explains why he feels that this has implications for examination comparability:

The first problem that we came up against is I would set some assessed practicals here and another teacher in isolation, at the local independent school for instance, will set theirs. We are working in isolation in many ways so if I set my assessments to the boys and girls of King Alfred's, they would probably laugh as they went through them. Our little girls sweat their way through them. Some find them easy but most don't. I would have thought he would set them harder ones because he's got higher level children, though he shouldn't set harder ones. He may well want to stretch them and push them a bit

to get more out of them, but this is where we come to the craziness of the situation. I've got control over what happens in the Chemistry in the school, but I don't think its valid in terms of the country as a whole.

Incommensurability of task between different environments affects the ability of the examination to make reasonable comparisons, and Michael Bowen further distances himself from the examination agenda that concerns us by indicating that the setting is bound to be different as well:

Teachers are going to be operating different rules. Some will work their children in silence. Others will allow lots of talking.

In order to assess fairly, some measure of comparability of experience between schools must be present; but if that comparability of experience is achieved, those assessments lose some of their usefulness as teaching devices.

He is equally dubious about the ability of the new examination to improve marking reliability or fit between grade and performance. Though it is doubtful whether the GCSE has adopted meaningful criterion-referencing techniques, it is perceived to have moved in this direction. The GCSE is therefore in theory better able to describe accurately what students can do. He is however sceptical about the application of these criterion-referencing techniques:

I mean that idea of criteria-referencing is excellent but how do you mark a child on their ability to use a test tube? The idea is superb, but then you sit down, a group of people, and: 'Look, alright, what criteria? how do you do it?' It's putting an objective thing on a subjective idea, and certainly in the Sciences you look at this criterion-referencing and the first initial idea is: 'Great, this is what

we want', but you actually try and do it and what they're asking for - you're looking at very subjective ideas quite frequently.

Finally he disavows the accepted connection between assessment and pedagogy, and argues that examinations take up time during the course which could be better spent on teaching, and that the coursework element in particular imposes unnecessary burdens on students:

I will get through it this year and I got through it last year, but the amount on the syllabus goes against the idea that you can develop things of interest within a class. You know they like the idea as you're going along in a particular subject. Let's say we're doing pollution and the children are showing an interest in say, the North Sea. No way, we haven't got time So we still haven't got the luxury of time to develop children's interests It's a wonderful idea, I am sure, to those who like it but I would avoid, at all costs, the amount of workload. And certainly with coursework it was absolutely appalling the amount of workload.

Here he expresses doubt about the examination agenda that coursework is a part of, in three ways: incommensurability of task and setting between different schools; a lack of reasonable fit between grade and performance; and a refusal to accept that coursework assessment is of benefit to the taught curriculum.

Those teachers who seek to transform the situation, actively reinterpret the rules that underpin that agenda. Michael Bowen is an example of this. The positive assessment of each pupil's work allows a number of theoretical and actual possibilities. Assessments are never treated as finished parts of the

examination. As a result a closer match between the actual performance and the theoretical capability of pupils can be achieved (Wood and Power, 1987). The performance is likely to be a better performance than one completed under examination conditions because the candidate may be in a more relaxed frame of mind, knowing that if she makes a mistake it will not necessarily count against her (Horton, 1987). Michael Bowen argues this point:

They know that if they make a total balls of one, I can say: 'Look, you went totally wrong but don't worry, I can explain where you went wrong, and you've still got another chance', so I like it.

Thus built into this model is a developmental and formative process. If a pupil is made aware of how well they have performed in a particular assignment, and allowed a second chance to improve on that initial performance, opportunities for learning are being encouraged. Though the Examination Board sets limits as to how much teachers should tell their pupils,

Strictly speaking we shouldn't tell the children the marks they get in that assessment, strictly speaking!

not to do so would negate the formative part of the exercise. He explains how he makes use of the feedback he gives to each pupil:

What I do in actual fact I've just been looking through my fifth year assessments, what I've done there, because we're getting a bit short of time. And I've been looking at the marks for the children. Now I don't strictly tell them what the marks are, but I say to them: 'Look if your marks are fine, you'll hear nothing from me. If you've made a total mess of the skill and I want to get better marks from you, I

will invite you to do another assessment in the lunchtime.'

His justification is two-fold. Practical assessments in Science should have a formative purpose. Equally they were designed so as not to disrupt normal processes of teaching and learning. He is prepared to reinterpret the rules to achieve his purposes:

We're not supposed to do that, but it's meant to be part of the normal lesson, and in a lesson if they do something, you mark it and give them it back I don't blame Science teachers for telling the children.

He thus combines an elastic approach to rule following with a sceptical attitude towards coursework as an examination device.

NON-CONFORMISM

Non-conformist practitioners, on the other hand, are prepared to ignore these examination rules. Furthermore, since they do not believe in formal examinations in the first place, they do not see the need to follow the Board's rules anyway. Geoff Regent is one such teacher. He teaches History at Lorton Girls' School, following the MEG Modern World History syllabus (no.1607). He has decided to adopt a particularly open style of coursework. Most of it is completed at home, with only the occasional lesson given up. He is aware of the constraints and problems associated with this approach, but argues that there is no need to stand over his pupils in order to confirm authorship:

What I'm saying is that, with it being a new exam., other teachers looked at the regulations more carefully the first time and in all honesty couldn't put their hands on their hearts and say that it was the pupils' own work unless they supervised it. Well I thought that putting common sense to it, this regulation meant the same as the old regulation, therefore I didn't see any need to change our practice.

His resistance to change is based on a belief in a particular pedagogic model which designates a limited role to formal assessment. Coursework as far as he is concerned should not be completed in examination conditions. Indeed he can see little point in this since all History syllabuses are assessed by coursework and end-of-course examination.

Comparability of experience between his pupils, and between his school and other schools, then becomes a problem. A weakened version of comparability has to be accepted, though there are curricular and pedagogic gains to counterbalance this. He explains what he feels about more controlled approaches:

If we were to do the coursework and just do it in class - two or three pieces of work - then I wasn't that sure. It's just like giving them a little exam. Well, why don't the Board just give them two little questions on each of the topics that we are going to have on coursework, if they want real comparability.

One such pedagogic gain is the real contribution parents can make. The style of coursework adopted at Lorton allows parents to assist with the analytical processes their children are required to go through, to reassure if the child is uncertain as to what they are meant to be doing, and to enter into a

dialogue with their child which will allow him or her to develop more interesting and more complex solutions to the problems they are asked to solve:

If in terms that they say: 'Well, what does this mean? What does the teacher want?' And it is discussed and they learn through it, then I'm not too sure that it isn't fine.

In rejecting those examination rules which place a responsibility on the teacher to both limit and control parental contributions, he argues that he is primarily concerned with a learning process which may benefit from input from a number of sources.

Such an approach also allows teachers to develop their own learning strategies, so that they best suit the educational preconceptions that they hold. This model of coursework organisation is in tension with a model that demands strict comparability. Geoff Regent argues that the important thing is not necessarily to standardise procedures, but to allow teachers a measure of local control over what they do (Bowe and Whitty, 1983):

We know what we can do here, so if the Board on the one hand want to leave the door open, they want the schools to be able to indulge themselves as much as possible and keep their interest; on the other hand, they want to insist on strict comparability between A and B. They can't have both.

The circle cannot be squared. He both rejects the examination agenda that underpins the introduction of coursework and those rules that are essential to its maintenance. He operates outside this examination discourse:

If it comes to what I consider is good for the child and what the examination board wants, then I will always do what is best for my pupils.

He is non-conformist then, both in belief and action.

CONTEXTUALISING THESE ACCOUNTS

It is important to place in context these accounts of processes. Phenomenological analysis gives priority to peoples' accounts of intentionality and subjective meaning. This is the phenomenological researcher's first and only point of reference. Those who dispute the adequacy of this seek to go beyond subjective meanings and argue that there is an important difference between "things seeming to be the case to the actor and things being the case" (Sharp and Green, 1975, p.21). In other words, those advocates of agential accounts of situations fail to come to terms with the societal structures that underpin and position actors' intentional behaviours. Society, as far as Bhaskar (1989) is concerned, "is the ensemble of positioned practices and networked inter-relationships which individuals never create but in their practical activity always presuppose, and in so doing everywhere reproduce or transform" (p.4). Bhaskar argues that social behaviour or activity may depend on or involve four conditions which are outside the consciousness of the individual actor. They are: unacknowledged conditions, unintended consequences, the exercise of tacit skills, and

unconscious motivation. Social practices therefore are never reducible to the content of human consciousness - an idea proponents of the hermeneutical tradition would seek to sustain - but must always incorporate a material dimension.

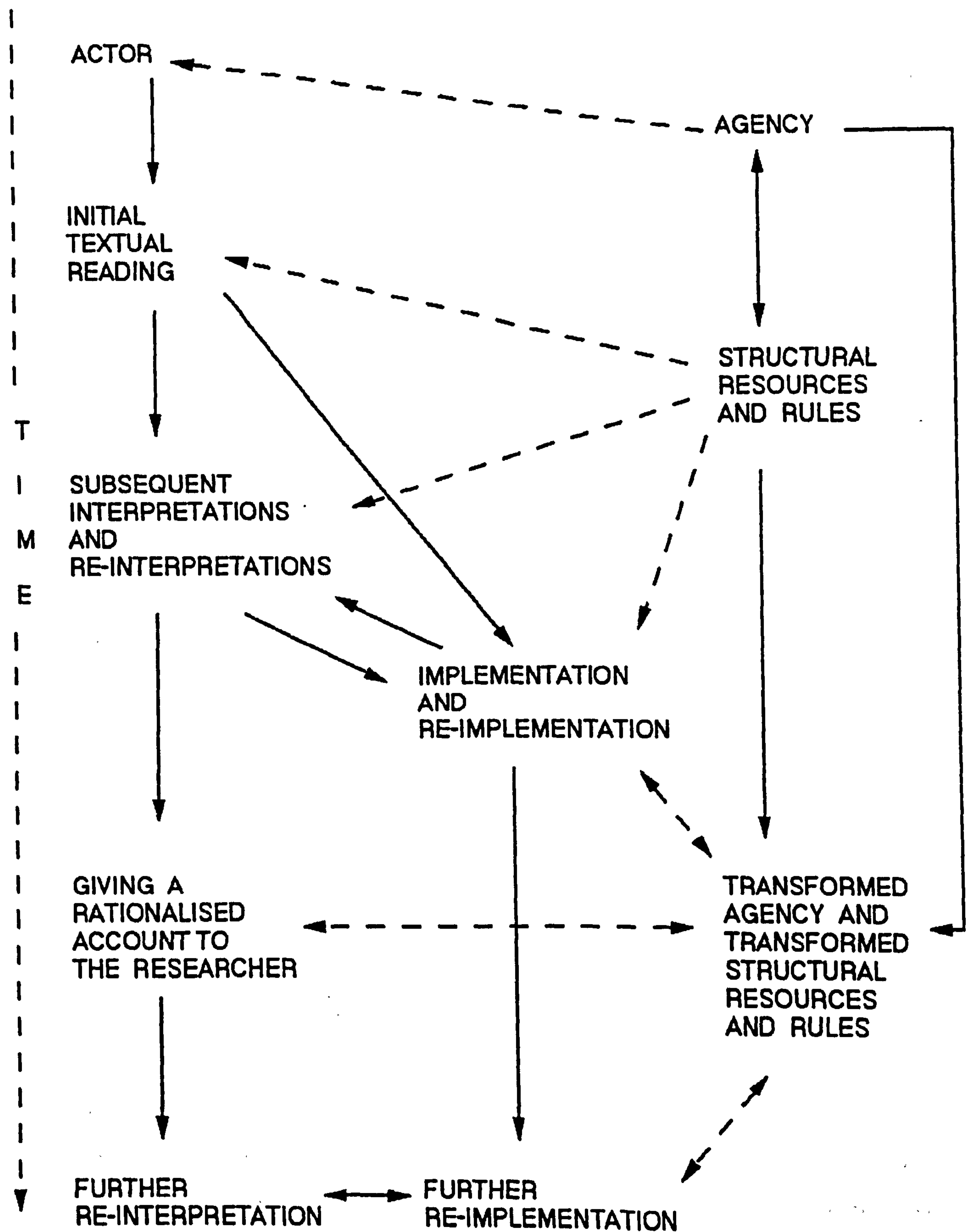
Giddens (1984) likewise has attempted through his structuration approach to reconcile structure and agency, so that human beings are neither the 'unwitting dupes' of structural forces beyond their control, or free unconstrained agents neither controlled nor influenced by those sets of external relations and conjunctions which constitute society. For Giddens actors continually draw upon sets of "rules and resources" which, once substantiated, allow social life to continue as they become routinized. Archer (1982) adopts a similar approach with her morphogenetic perspective, though she disputes the necessity of tying structure and agency so closely together: "Structuration, by contrast, treats the ligatures binding structure, practice and system as indissoluble, hence the necessity of duality and the need to gain a more indirect analytical purchase on the elements involved" (p.458). She also questions whether every human action, every facet of the particular human being, is involved in the ongoing moulding and remoulding of society that is implied by both structuration and morphogenetic cycles. She writes that: "there are a good many things about human beings and their doings (things biological, psychological and spiritual) which have a precious independence from society's moulding and may have precious little to do with

re-modelling society" (p.455). Most commentators now argue that human beings play an active and intentional role in the construction of their world, though that building activity is subject to structural constraints. Human beings make their world in the context of previous attempts to make that world, and at the same time transform those structures and radically change the conditions which influence subsequent moves to make that world. It is also important to recognise that while agency is responsible for structural transformation, in the process it simultaneously transforms itself (Archer, 1982, p.2).

The gap between actors' perceptions of processes and what actually occurred is further complicated by two important features: the time dimension of such accounts; and the place, role and temporal insertion of the researcher into that process. Table 5.2 describes the chronological sequence of events that concern us here.

The teacher's initial reading of GCSE texts or their initial confrontation with the ideas implicit in the new examination draws upon both those internalised rules which actors reproduce in their day to day working lives and those structural resources which position actors within set frameworks. Those elements of structure that are relevant to the matter in hand condition but do not determine actors' responses (Archer, 1982). Initial textual readings give way to subsequent interpretations and reinterpretations of coursework processes,

Table 5.2 Chronological sequencing in the implementation and research process



and all the various readings are implicated in the implementation and reimplementation of coursework strategies. The dialectical interplay between structure and agency is transformed into new forms of structure and agency, and produces, in Archer's word, 'elaboration' - that is, both elaborated structure and transformed agency. This cycle of activity at different moments and in different guises influences actual implementation of processes.

The researcher comes to the process after it has happened, though re-interpretation and re-implementation of processes is on-going, may happen after the rationalised account has been given to the researcher, and indeed may be influenced by that rationalisation. Thus what the researcher is doing is retrospective analysis. So he or she is not examining the phenomenological perspective that preceded the action. In other words, those teacher perspectives that have formed the main part of this chapter are not descriptions or formulations of intentions. They are actors giving accounts of how they feel they should have behaved, as well as how they feel they did behave. They are therefore likely to be normative accounts. It is not possible to argue that teacher stances on examinations (see Table 5.1) caused those actors to act in the way they did, because first, the chronological sequence of events makes this impossible, and second, since they are likely to be post-hoc rationalisations, they do not coexist in a simple nominalist relationship with the events they seek to describe.

They are also subject to the mediating effects of the research process. The researcher offers a time and place specific perspective on that slice of reality that concerns them. Their positioned account implies a gap between those sets of rationalised perspectives that have formed the basis of this chapter and the researcher's narrative report, in the same way as we have argued here that there is necessarily a gap between agential accounts of processes and what actually happened. The next chapter will seek to explain those interactive influences on initial textual readings, and will adopt a different position on the time specific sequence of events that this thesis is designed to explore.

NOTES:

1. Wood and Power (1987) categorize error types in relating performance to competence in the following way:

	"Success on Task	Failure on Task
Child has underlying competence (in sufficient degree)	Performance correlated with competence	False negative error. Failure due to factors other than lack of competence
Child has not underlying competence (in sufficient degree)	False positive error. Success due to factors other than competence."	Performance correlated with competence

2. See also Cohen and Deale, 1977; Horton, 1987a; Macintosh, 1987; Maclure, 1987; Morris, 1984; Torrance, 1985b; 1986a; 1987b.

3. 'Text' is used here and subsequently to refer to written artifacts. It is not used to indicate a set or sets of meanings. Bernstein (1990) uses it in the latter sense when he writes about the 'text' becoming separate from its original form, as textual meanings change in response to interactional processes. Thus the text itself, as opposed to practitioners' textual readings, is central to his pedagogic relay.

4. Merton (1957) juxtaposes conformity and four types of non-conformist adjustment - innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. The conformist for Merton accepts the cultural goals of the society within which they live and pursues them by legitimate means. The innovator accepts those cultural goals but may pursue them by illegitimate means. Ritualistic behaviours, and it is in this sense that the term is used in this thesis, involve a rejection of cultural goals but an acceptance of the means by which they are legitimately obtained. Retreatists reject both, while rebellion involves a rejection of the goals and means of the old order and an attempt to assert new ones. I have adapted his typology, which clearly had a wider frame of reference, to illuminate teacher responses to the introduction of coursework into the public examination system.

5. All names in the text are pseudonyms.

6. Coltham and Fines (1971) in their book, 'Educational Objectives for the study of History' embrace the behavioural objectives model of curriculum design advocated by Bloom (1956). They argue that much greater attention should be paid to defining the important skills and concepts of History, so that pupils can be encouraged to develop them. The Schools Council History Project was constructed along these lines, and this approach has clearly had an impact on the proposals for the National Curriculum in all subjects (D.E.S., 1990). There has been some disquiet about this, including opposition from a group of right-wing teachers and educationalists (North, 1987). Deuchar (1987) is typical. He writes: "At this point it is worth noting what has been lost. Firstly, there is the loss of a huge slice of our national heritage....The second thing which is lost is any attempt to give children any real understanding of our institutions and perennial problems.....The third loss is the life and colour of History.....The fourth loss is the acquisition of a broad perspective which traditional methods of teaching History tried to encourage....The fifth, and possibly most important loss of all, is the rigour and intensity of the subject" (pp.51-53). There is a further group of historians who reject such criticisms of GCSE History, but who do not fully subscribe to behavioural objectives models (Armitage and Taylor, 1987).

7. Quotations, such as these, come from interview transcripts, unless otherwise stated.
8. See Note 9 at the end of Chapter three.
9. For a fuller explanation of the differences between formative and summative modes of assessment, see Chapter seven.
10. cf. Hirst, 1965; 1969; 1974; Peters, 1965; 1966; 1967a; 1967b; 1969a; 1969b; 1973; Phenix, 1964; White, 1973; Lawton, 1975.
11. cf. Bantock, 1968; Arnold, 1932; Eliot, 1948.
12. cf. Kohlberg, 1963; Eisner, 1982; 1985; Blyth, 1984.
13. cf. Elliott, 1983.
14. Examination Boards make changes to syllabuses. All the syllabuses referred to in this thesis are those issued before July 1989.
15. Syllabus instructions in M.E.G. Physics syllabuses demand that "each candidate must be assessed twice, once in each of TWO different terms during the year of the examination, on each group of Assessment Objectives, A,B,C and D" (M.E.G., 1986, no. 1700, p.40).

CHAPTER SIX - STRUCTURAL AND INTERACTIONAL INFLUENCES

Textual readings are transformed at different moments and places within schools as teachers construct and reconstruct meanings. This fragmentation is only realisable because as Whitty (1985) puts it, there is within educational contexts a high degree of "tenuousness, dysfunction, interruption and possibility" (p.45). These meanings moreover, are in competition with meanings conveyed by other texts and by other discursive forms. They are tested in formal and informal forums in schools, and they are formulated and reformulated within situationally constraining and enabling contexts which may or may not be fully understood by participants. These rules and resources (Giddens, 1984) structure and condition (Archer, 1982) those discursive formations from which actions spring.

In the context of the implementation of a new examination system in schools, policy is determined in three ways: by agents' bodies and biographies; by agents operating in settings, which are not of their own making, but upon which they leave their mark; and within interactional arenas which draw together agents and settings, and stimulate change (see Table 6.1). These result in both intended and unintended consequences (that is, unintended by individual agents), and produce conformations and configurations of coursework processes.

Table 6.1 Biographical, interactional and contextual factors in decision-making

BIOGRAPHICAL FACTORS

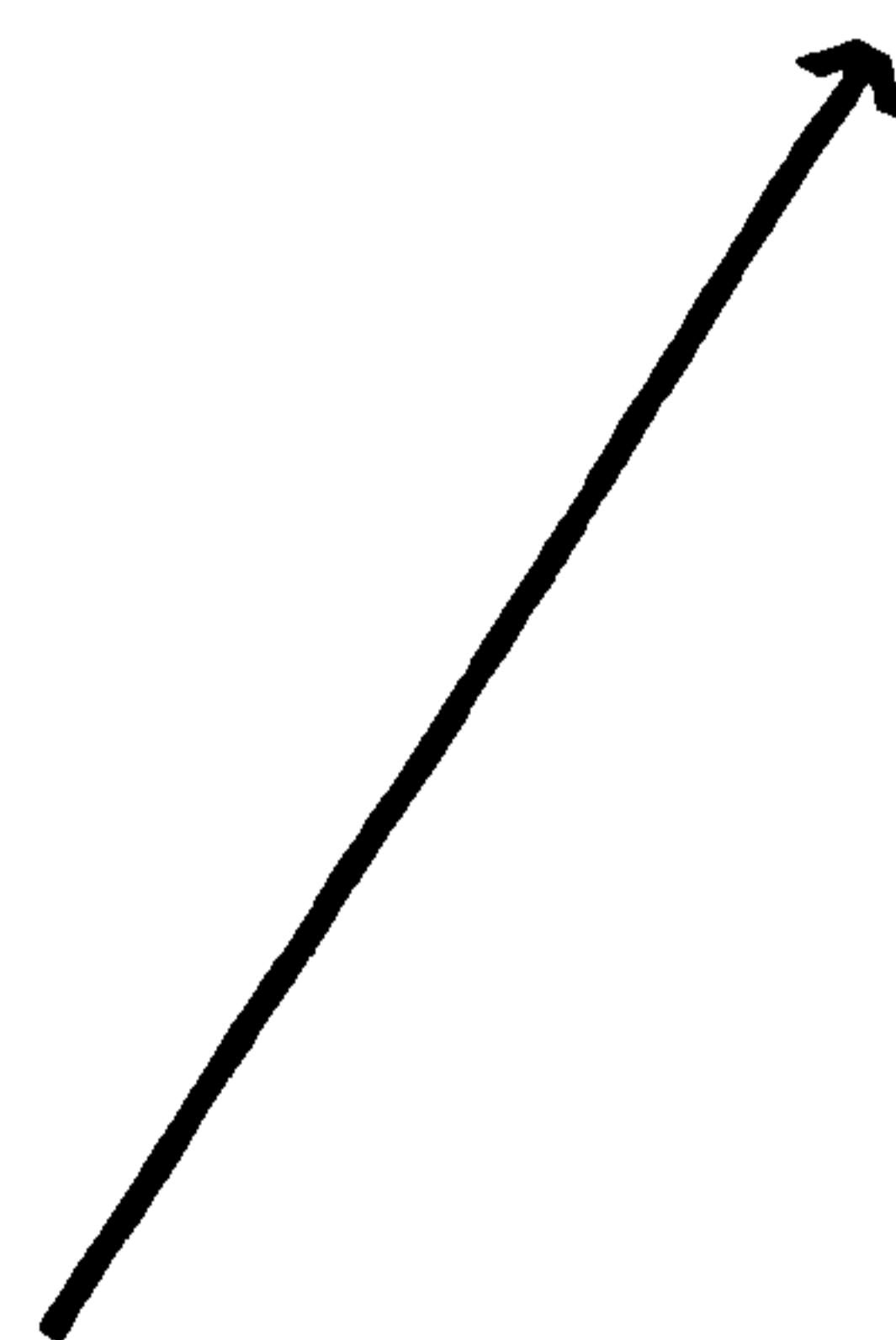
Background, Experiences,
 Expectations, Ideology,
 Goals, Negotiating Skills,
 Knowledge of Self,
 Knowledge of Context.



**INTENDED
 AND
 UNINTENDED
 OUTCOMES:
 COURSEWORK
 PROCESSES**

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Arrangements of resources; in particular, differential allocations of productive resources, and differential allocations of persons to functions and roles (Bhaskar - 1979). This results in material and structural constraints, and negative sanctions (Giddens, 1984).



INTERACTIONAL FACTORS

School and Departmental processes of negotiation and review; interactional exchanges between teachers, and between teachers and students.

Biographical factors include the background and experiences of agents; restrictions on individuals because of their time and space bound presence; and those expectations, goals and ideologies to which they subscribe. It also includes three important sets of skills: agents' abilities to interact and negotiate with other agents in policy-making arenas; agents' knowledge and perceptions of self; and agents' knowledge and perceptions of context.

Biographical factors provide one type of context, material and structural factors another. The latter may be categorized as: differential allocation of persons to functions and roles - school hierarchies for example¹ (Bhaskar, 1979); external constraints - examination technologies, the need to satisfy different audiences; teacher culture - subject hierarchies (cf. Goodson, 1985), professional codes and ideologies (Ball, 1982); conditions of work - resources, pupil resistance (Spradbery, 1976; Willis, 1977); and institutional properties - devolved or centralized systems of decision making (Ball, 1987).

These contexts act on individuals in constraining ways. Giddens (1984) identifies three types: material constraints, negative sanctions and structural constraints. First, there are constraints deriving from "the character of the material world and from the physical qualities of the body" (p.176). Second, there are constraints deriving from punitive responses on the

part of some people towards others. Third, there are constraints deriving from "the contextuality of action, ie. from the 'given' character of structural properties vis-a-vis situated actors" (p.176). An example would be gendered relations in schools impacting on and restricting coursework programmes for girls. The case study below provides evidence that all three forms of constraint influence coursework arrangements.

This framework allows us to examine curriculum change in one of the project schools in response to the introduction of the GCSE. Lampton is an independently controlled mixed day/boarding school (see chapter three). The issues that relate to the implementation of a new examination technology are more sharply focussed in this case, because, as Kingdon and Stobart (1988) suggest, independent schools that had previously followed traditional academic and examination paths would find the transition from the old to the new more difficult to make. We should though, be careful not to treat all independent schools the same, as there is within this sector a plethora of organizational structures (Walford, 1984). Decisions about curriculum and examination matters therefore, are an important determinant of the differences between the various institutions.

Curriculum policy and curriculum practice within specific sites is always the result of contestation (Giroux, 1983; Whitty,

1985; Ball, 1987). Indeed Foucault (1986) argues that "discourse is the power to be captured" (p.37). Furthermore, within institutions that devolve power and decision making, outcomes are never all the same; that contestation will have different results at different moments within the history of the institution. The introduction of the GCSE has given teachers an opportunity to re-assess curriculum practice within their schools and within their classrooms, and to implement new organizational strategies that best fit their conception of the curriculum. By focusing on a critical moment in that process of policy formation, we are in a better position to examine those conflicting and contested ideologies that, when seen in the context of external constraints and personal histories, account for curriculum change within institutions.

Teachers in independent schools view curriculum and assessment matters in five ways. These may be typified as humanism, elitism, pastoralism, accountability and professionalism. Those who subscribe to 'humanist' ideologies see themselves as guardians of a cultural heritage. They are elitist only in so far as practical and not ideological constraints restrict access. They advocate rationalist epistemologies and notions of intrinsically worthwhile knowledge² (Peters, 1965, 1966). Breadth, balance and depth of curriculum provision are considered important criteria. The conceptualization of the curriculum advocated here is a non-vocational entitlement version.

A major concern of 'elitism' is to effect the maximum penetration of an elite into the power structures of society (Arnold, 1932; Eliot, 1948; Bantock, 1968). Though elitist views of education have traditionally been humanist in orientation, Skilbeck (1976) for instance, argues that "the tradition has shown itself capable of change" (p.15). Curriculum-making therefore becomes a pragmatic exercise, since it is acknowledged that the means by which entry is gained to positions of power within society change over time. It is important therefore, to adapt and change to meet such new requirements. Elitists advocate policies designed to maximise examination results; attract large numbers of students into their sixth forms, and maintain the numbers of their pupils who go to university³. Thus the narrow recruitment base they serve is sustained in power regardless of the ability levels within their school. Academic knowledge is seen as a desirable goal, whereas the acquiring of practical skills is seen as less important.

'Pastoralists' on the other hand, focus on the specific concerns of small numbers of students whose needs are not being met either elsewhere in the independent sector or within the State system. Their focus is frequently on the social needs of their clientele (both parents and students) and academic success is not considered to be a priority⁴. At the micro-level, subject departments and subject teachers adopt policies geared to the social and pastoral needs of their pupils.

Those who advocate that schools should be 'accountable' argue that choice of subject, range of options, types of syllabus and other related curriculum matters, should satisfy parental approval. Education and accreditation are seen as commodities which have value in the market place. The consumer or client has to be seen to be getting full value for their investment. The emphasis is therefore on the maximisation of examination results and the acquisition of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1973)⁵. Access to sixth forms and higher education institutions is considered an essential goal, though many parents' aspirations may be satisfied at a lower level.

Finally, those who subscribe to 'professional' ideologies believe that decisions about curriculum and academic matters should be made in terms of a professional ethic. Thus coursework and examination settings are controlled so that no pupil is advantaged. Proponents of this view see their brief as being wider than the school they teach in or the sector they work in.

LAMPTON SCHOOL

Lampton offers a traditional academic curriculum (Stevens, 1960), with a wide range of options (see Table 6.2). It is subject-driven, though with senior managers in the school having made the decision to follow the National Curriculum,

Table 6.2 Choice of options by sex - upper fourth year at Lampton School, 1988-89⁶.

	Total % of sample	Male pupils (% of male sample)	Female pupils (% of female sample)	Male pupils (% of option)	Female pupils (% of option)
Latin	12.1	10.0	14.6	45.5	54.5
Geography	70.3	68.0	73.2	53.1	46.9
German	20.9	8.0	36.6	21.1	78.9
History	56.0	56.0	56.1	54.9	45.1
Roman Civilization	15.4	20.0	9.8	71.4	28.6
Physics	69.2	82.0	53.7	65.4	34.9
Biology	54.9	44.0	68.3	44.0	56.0
Business Studies	34.1	42.0	24.4	67.7	32.3
Chemistry	38.5	46.0	29.3	65.7	34.3
Art & Design	24.2	22.0	26.8	50.0	50.0
Music	5.5	2.0	6.7	20.0	80.0
Graphic Communication	6.6	8.0	4.9	66.7	33.3
Technology	3.3	6.0	0.0	100.0	0.0

- Notes:
1. Total sample was 91 upper fourth year pupils;
 2. Male sample was 50 pupils;
 3. Female sample was 41 pupils;
 4. English, Mathematics, French and R.E. are not option subjects;
 5. 89% (81 pupils) of the total sample have chosen four options;
 6. 9.9% (9 pupils) of the total sample have chosen five options;
 7. 1.1% (1 pupil) of the total sample have chosen six options.

there will be a move towards both the teaching of general areas of the curriculum (Balanced Sciences, Integrated Humanities) and the rationalization of option choices.

At present the school offers its examination pupils a core of four subjects (English, Mathematics, French and RE - the latter is examined at upper fourth year level). Pupils are also required at the end of their lower fourth year to choose four

options from a list of fourteen. No attempt here is made to balance a pupil's timetable formally by restricting choice, though balance of subjects between the Sciences, the Arts and the Humanities is one of the factors taken into consideration when choices are made. Indeed this emphasis on free choice is considered to be an important principle to follow: "That choosing the subjects in which they have prospects or interests or whatever is the main objective" (Director of Studies). Each pupil will take a battery of aptitude tests in their lower fourth year, which will help to guide pupils in their choices. The key figure in this process, as the Director of Studies explains, is their housemaster or housemistress who "retains a very important advisory capacity here".

A further element in the decision is the traditional relationships, as the teachers see it, between subjects and between subject and ability level. It would be suggested to each pupil that in order for them to do Physics, they would need to be reasonably adept at Mathematics. Likewise in order for them to choose History, they would need to have good writing skills. Furthermore, as the Director of Studies explains, some subjects are considered more suitable for academically inclined pupils: "I think (for) a bright child (it) would probably be suggested to them that they did Latin or Physics." Miles (1969) supports this interpretation by arguing that there is a correlation between examined subjects at 16+ and social class of parents. Parents in higher social/economic

groups - many of whom send their children to schools such as Lampton - favour non-practical subjects, like Latin, whereas the opposite is true in the case of parents in lower social/economic groups. Young (1971) also suggests that subjects that are weakly classified and weakly framed (Bernstein, 1971) - integrated fields of study - tend to be restricted to low-status pupils.

The intention is a differentiated curriculum. However table 6.3 provides evidence that, though some subjects (Latin, German, Music) at Lampton continue to attract the majority of their pupils from the higher ability levels within the school, such a differentiated approach is not as marked as one would expect. Physics, for instance, is chosen almost equally by pupils from the higher and lower core subject sets in the school (see Table 6.3)⁷. This emphasis on pupil choice has other consequences. Though the English, Mathematics and French departments are able to set at examination level, other subjects are not. The Examinations Officer argues that the eventual introduction into the school of a curriculum format based round the National Curriculum proposals (DES, 1990) would enable more departments to set and stream their pupils:

One of the advantages I think of Baker and the National Curriculum is that the choice will go just like that and we'll stream; so that we'll actually have something we've never had in my subject, History, here which is streaming.

Table 6.3 Choice of options by ability - upper fourth year at Lampton School, 1988-89

	Total (% of sample)	% of sample of higher- setted pupils	% of sample of lower- setted pupils	Higher- setted pupils (% of options)	Lower- setted pupils (% of options)
Latin	12.1	17.6	5.0	81.8	18.2
Geography	70.3	62.7	80.0	50.0	50.0
German	20.9	27.5	12.5	73.7	26.3
History	56.0	56.9	55.0	56.9	43.1
Roman Civilization	15.4	5.9	27.5	21.4	78.6
Physics	69.2	72.5	65.0	58.7	41.3
Biology	54.9	39.2	50.0	60.0	40.0
Business Studies	34.1	25.5	45.0	41.9	58.1
Chemistry	38.5	45.1	30.0	65.7	34.3
Art & Design	24.2	25.5	22.5	59.1	40.9
Music	5.5	7.8	2.5	80.0	20.0
Graphic Communication	6.6	9.8	2.5	83.4	16.6
Technology	3.3	3.9	2.5	66.6	33.3

- Notes:
1. Total sample was 91 upper fourth year pupils;
 2. Sample of higher-setted pupils was 51 (in at least one of the top-two setted groups for English, Mathematics, French;
 3. Sample of lower-setted pupils was 40;
 4. English, Mathematics and French are not option subjects;

Gender differentiation is a marked feature of the option-choosing process (see Table 6.2 above) and also conforms to the pattern experienced in both state and independent sectors of the education system (DES, 1989). Biology for example, proved more popular with girls, and less popular with boys. Girls also formed a larger proportion of the Biology sets. Conversely, Chemistry was a more popular option with boys than with girls; and boys in a ratio of two to one outnumbered girls in Chemistry groups. Smith and Tomlinson (1989) document the ratio

of boys to girls choosing option subjects at 14, and provide evidence to support this differentiated outcome⁸.

Reference was made at the beginning of the chapter to a number of different ways of perceiving the curriculum that, it was argued, are in constant competition with each other as the curriculum unfolds historically. The continuing decision to exclude 'girl-friendly' subjects at Lampton, and combinations of subjects that might prove more attractive to girls (H.E.: Food, H.E.: Child Development - see Table 6.2) reflects the inability of those advocates of such a change to provide a powerful enough expression of them to influence policy. The Director of Studies explains why:

The school was an all-boys school and the change to a mixed school was not sudden, but happened over a period of time. I suppose it was never felt that we should gear the curriculum particularly towards the needs of girls. We felt it was important to retain an academic ethos to the subjects we offered at 14, and there's been no pressure to change from parents. Our curriculum in most respects is traditional.

On the other hand, the recent introduction of Business Studies, and the continuing support given to 'male' craft subjects, shows how at different moments in the process of curriculum-making different themes are emphasized, different conceptualizations of the debate prevail.

The introduction of Drama into the examination timetable, which coincided with the introduction of the GCSE, shows how a

different examination ideology has strengthened the hand of those advocating the study of practical and expressive subjects in the curriculum. Goodson (1982) in his study of the development of Environmental Studies argues that subjects are not monolithic structures but shifting sets of sub-groups with a common name. He also suggests that the relative status of a subject may change over time, given favourable conditions. Similarly Ball (1982) traces the development of 'new' English in schools and concludes that at the time of writing it had only made headway in low status areas of schooling. Both cite academic and humanist traditions as key factors in their subsequent development or lack of development as parts of the school curriculum. With the introduction of the GCSE and consequent changes to testing arrangements, the relative status of different subjects has changed. Craft subjects for instance, have become craft, design and project orientated - with a consequent diminution of craft skills and an elevation of theoretical and written elements. They therefore more closely conform to academic notions. Drama, in a similar way, is now examined both by practical elements (coursework 50 per cent) and by investigative project (25 per cent) and examination (25 per cent). Furthermore the introduction of coursework into most examination syllabuses at GCSE level has in effect given greater status to those subjects such as Drama that more naturally may be assessed continuously throughout the course. Since traditionally high status subjects are now being assessed, at least in part in this way, subjects that have

always been assessed like this are no longer being stigmatized as practical or low status subjects. This destigmatization of practical subjects has, on the other hand, not come about exclusively as the result of the introduction of the new examination system. Historical conceptualizations of the importance of different subjects continue to exert a powerful counter-acting force. Jonathan, for instance describes his timetable in the following way: "generally academic. I have chosen mainly academic subjects in that I am not doing CDT or Art".

The introduction of Drama, then, into the curriculum at examination level provides us with an account of how subjects that are essentially pastoralist in orientation, and have been introduced as a counterbalance to the more traditional aspects of the curriculum, can gain a foothold in that curriculum. The Head of Drama explains the rationale for his subject:

In a sense we were quite early in introducing CDT and Drama and the less academic subjects, and the Headmaster was very supportive of Drama as a curriculum subject as opposed to Theatre and Performance, and we felt it had so many ways in which it fed into other academic subjects in terms of broadening experience and self-awareness, that they were very supportive of introducing it and still are.

But he also makes the point that the way practical and expressive aspects of the curriculum are now treated at examination level has made it more acceptable: "My subject is changing. It's not just theatre and play-acting. It's serious study in its own right. GCSE has helped." Curriculum policies

within the school itself then, evolve in response to internal and external influences and are in a state of constant flux. The introduction and encouragement of Drama is one example of this; but with the forthcoming National Curriculum - and Lampton is committed to its implementation - it is going to be increasingly difficult to find a place on the timetable for Drama at examination level.

It has been suggested that independent schools that previously followed traditional academic curriculums would have the greatest problems with adapting to the GCSE examinations (Kingdon and Stobart, 1988), and that schools that had previously run 16+ and CSE syllabuses with their emphasis on project work and assessed practicals would make the transition from one examination to the next without too many difficulties. Lampton is typically one of those schools without such obvious bridging potential. In fact, the change from 'O' level to GCSE was made without too much stress. The Director of Studies comments: "We anticipated major problems here and in practice there haven't been any." In some subjects GCSE actually meant a reduction in coursework. The 'O' level History syllabus the department used to follow was assessed 50% by coursework. The present GCSE syllabus's coursework is only weighted at 30%. Other subjects have had to make only minimal changes anyway: "Certainly I heard a lot of scientists say 'there's no difference between 'O' level and GCSE'. They think it's all very much the same as before." (Examinations' Officer)

One problem anticipated was overload of work on pupils. The Director of Studies devised a schedule which attempted to accommodate all the coursework demands individual departments would make on pupils. The scheduling ultimately had to be imposed on subject departments, as the Examinations' Officer explains:

Yes. What we do is: we've sent down and got all the departments who have coursework. Our Director of Studies said 'Right. What do you want? What are your ideas? When do you want the coursework coming in from kids?' We all put it down, and he got a chart and left it as it stood. No child is now going to have to hand in five pieces of coursework on the same day and all he's done is acted. First of all he tried to be nice, and then he gave up trying to be nice and said 'You may not change it; it stays like that.' And everybody accepted. There's been no grumbling. So we haven't had that problem which was anticipated.

The differential allocation of persons to functions and roles with the consequent creation of hierarchies within schools (Bhaskar, 1979) acts as a situational constraint on teachers operating coursework processes in their classrooms.

The negotiation process provides evidence of the micro-political nature of decision making within schools, and within departments in schools. This is nowhere clearer than with the English Department at Lampton. English syllabuses changed as a result of the GCSE in two main ways: the formal introduction of coursework devices (syllabuses allow between 30% and 100% of the total marks to be awarded for coursework) and the incorporation of an oral element which is graded separately from the main part of the examination. Thus English teachers

are required to make choices about when they set coursework, how much help they should provide, where students should complete their assignments, which strategies they should adopt to provide positive student experiences, the amount of work they should make their students do and the types of pedagogic devices they should employ to integrate oral assessments into schemes of work. A number of coursework devices are used in this subject. English teachers encourage and persuade pupils to complete a variety of assignments of which only a few, the best, eventually go forward to be assessed. Each assignment goes through a process of drafting and re-drafting which means that each piece of work which is finally considered for assessment has had the benefit of a structured series of formative assessments. The teacher furthermore, is encouraged to clarify the objectives of each assignment for each student. Finally teachers attempt to match up the demands they are making with the perceived level of capability of each of their students (SEC, 1985).

The English department at Lampton had to make a decision when the GCSE was introduced about coursework timing. They had a choice of three strategies. First, to treat each piece of work completed by pupils as part of a coursework portfolio, and then at the end of the course to pick the best pieces to submit for examination. This would mean that in theory what was finally examined represented work completed throughout the two years of the course, though for maturational reasons pieces of work

completed at later stages of the course were more likely to be chosen. Second, to limit the number of formal coursework sessions and to delineate clearly between ordinary non-assessed work and coursework. This would only allow a limited choice from the portfolio to be made at the end of the course, though it does mean that it is more likely that those pieces of coursework which are eventually chosen will represent work completed throughout the course. The third strategy chosen by some schools (Scott, 1991a) is where coursework during the two years is collected together in a portfolio with no attempt made to distinguish between non-assessed work and coursework. Near the end of the course though, a number of pieces are selected which then go through a further process of re-writing and re-drafting. This allows coursework to be closely integrated into courses of study throughout, but at the same time permits the final completed portfolio to represent a mature expression of each candidates' worth. In common with the majority of schools in this country, the department collectively agreed to adopt the first strategy (cf. Scott, 1991b; Jeffrey, 1988; Grant, 1989). The Head of Department explains how they made their initial choice:

We decided we didn't want to make a big thing out of coursework, so as far as we were concerned all the work our pupils were doing would initially count as coursework and we would decide which pieces of coursework to submit at the end of the course. I'm not too keen on this re-drafting, so we certainly didn't want to get them re-drafting pieces of work at the end of the course that they have re-drafted a number of times already.

But as has been made clear already that choice had to be ratified at a higher level.

In fact the English Department had chosen timing strategies which did not create a problem for the central organization of coursework schedules. They wanted to be considered as a department which did not set coursework; their reasoning being that to be described as a department that set a large amount of external coursework would put in jeopardy the strategy that they were adopting whereby coursework would be integrated as closely as possible into classwork and homework. Such a strategy has the advantage that coursework is not then seen by pupils as extraneous work, an extra demand that they have to face up to in addition to their ordinary work. It melds more closely together assessment and learning strategies, so that the formative process of drafting, reviewing and re-drafting of work can be genuine. It suffers from the disadvantage that coursework is then seen as an ordinary part of classwork and cannot act to motivate pupils because it is a special event.

By contrast, the Geography Department were persuaded to do the bulk of their work during an early part of the two year course. In retrospect the Head of Geography explains the advantages:

I am happy to get it out of the way and also the other thing is if there is some major disaster over the summer, there is always time to rehash it.

But at the time, the Head of Geography was concerned to emphasize the disadvantages of such a schedule - that pupils'

conceptual and affective skills would be less developed at an early stage of the course than they would be nearer the end. It needs to be reiterated here that intra-school policy may be formulated without policy makers - in this case the Director of Studies - necessarily appreciating or understanding all the relevant information available to them. The English Department at Lampton does set coursework. Indeed it is possible that they set more of it than any other department; but because they choose to adopt strategies which demand that pupils do not characterize work they do as coursework, this fiction is accepted at a higher level and determines policy. It should also be noted that the Head of Geography, having recently taken up her post at the school, was in a weak position to influence the scheduling of coursework and thus was only able to make use of limited productive resources (Bhaskar, 1979). Her understanding of the rules and allocation of resources which condition decision-making within Lampton was, by dint of her recent arrival, inadequate in this particular circumstance.

Three important local factors have further contributed to an amelioration of this problem of over-burdening students. The school itself offers a modified academic curriculum, in that certain subjects offered at GCSE level with large external coursework requirements are considered to be inappropriate to offer at examination level (the school does not offer HE: Child Development or HE: Food). Furthermore, other craft subjects, such as CDT: Technology which the school does offer at

examination level, have as yet proved to be unpopular and have therefore been chosen by only a small number of pupils (see Table 6.3). Further, large parts of the core curriculum are not assessed using coursework techniques (Modern Languages, Mathematics at the time of the study). The problem is therefore minimized in this instance.

The second important local factor is that the school is both a boarding school and acts as a base for day-pupils for a considerable proportion of the day. The extent of both control over and the provision of resources for the completion of coursework assignments is therefore greatly increased. Each boarder is required to study from 7.30 to 9.00 pm in all the houses and then from 9.30 to 10.00 pm in some. Also, the tutorial system that operates allows teachers to review and monitor progress for each pupil under their care. Each pupil has an individual interview with his or her tutor every fortnight. The greater penetration of school into the lives of pupils, in particular with boarders, allows the process of coursework completion to be better structured and more extensively monitored than elsewhere. A Housemaster gives an example of this:

I still find it necessary to keep the occasional pupil back at the end of term to complete coursework. Their presentation is awful sometimes. I had a boy where I know that it had been done the night before I think it's a naive idea that it's going to be the best because pupils know it will count towards the exam; it's a very naive idea that everything would be beautifully produced. Fortunately I keep an eye on how it's done.

Furthermore, the longer school day (there are timetabled lessons on Saturday morning) includes a period of activities (Games and the Combined Cadet Force). Some fifth-year pupils were using the opportunities provided here to do extra work on coursework projects. If coursework is fully integrated into the academic ethos of the school in such a way as it not to seem an extra burden, then it becomes less of a problem.

The third important local factor is the extent to which class time is used for coursework purposes. A policy of using classtime was given official backing by the Director of Studies: "I think all of them should be doing what History is doing", which is using the possibilities of class time to its fullest potential. The Head of History explains how it works by using the example of his son who is a pupil at the school:

But my son who is now in the fourth year does, you know, if he gets himself organized, he can do an enormous amount of it here. Certainly with my own subject, History, and I think with most other subjects, the smarter ones have discovered that if they use their classwork time intelligently, because my fifth, they have five lessons a week and two homeworks and a double lesson of that on coursework. If they work hard in that double lesson, they can get all their coursework done that they need to get done, meet all the deadlines and have an evening off.

On the other hand, teachers in the English Department are using classtime for coursework to different degrees, and the extent is negotiated between teacher and pupil. The Head of Department argues that:

the written work should arrive naturally and if that

means I think that it is better for my bottom group to do some of it in class, so then that's what happens.

Her decision is influenced by her perception of pupil capability, both in terms of their competence and their ability to work unaided, and by her conception of 'kids like this' who are more likely to produce the required portfolio of work if they are allowed to complete much of it in class. Coursework practices in this sense are therefore negotiated as pupils here and in the past engage in interactional exchanges which contribute to fixed perceptions of this type of pupil. Given the existence then, of these localized factors and policies, coursework has not proved to be as problematic as it has in other schools.

External constraints on curriculum making act to limit teachers' freedom of action. Lampton is an independent fee-paying school that survives only in terms of the goodwill of its parents and the potential goodwill of prospective parents. The need to be accountable in this way empowers the work and examination ethic to which pupils and staff subscribe. This manifests itself in three ways, and has become part of the accepted discourse or, as Foucault (1986) argues, it operates as a 'normalizing judgment': a clear divide between 'C' and 'D' grades is perceived by both staff and pupils alike; GCSE is seen only as a stepping stone to sixth form study and ability is conceived in stratified terms. The Head of the Classics Department makes the point that the notion of a graded

examination such as the GCSE offering equally positive results to all who enter is a misnomer:

Yes, people talk about GCSE as being positive achievement don't they? Now if, as people could have predicted if they had any sense, that the 'A', 'B' and 'C' is still referred to as pass grades and the others as fail grades; and the notion of positive achievements for someone who gets a 'G' seems to be rather stupid. Rather silly. I mean it doesn't make much sense. I mean if you get a 'G', employers would consider that to be hardly worth anything.

Pupils equally subscribe to such beliefs:

'D' is a failure No, I think the staff think that it is not true; well of course they want us to get higher than a 'D' and they all say it's not a fail; but to get into the sixth form here you've got to get at least 'C's'. (Michael)

'D's are a failure. I'm looking for 'A's in all my subjects. (Ben)

Though the GCSE was designed as a common examination (DES, 1985b), and though grades below a 'C' are meant to register positive success for certain pupils, pupil perception and the perception of teachers was that a 'D' grade registered as a failure. The Director of Studies warned against this though:

It is difficult to get the school to recognize 'D' as a success. They see very much 'A', 'B' or 'C' as a pass.

But with the pressures of accountability for teachers and with the much publicised relationship between 'O' level pass grades and the top three grades in GCSE (DES, 1985b), the distinction between 'C' and 'D' grades is perceived as a natural cut-off point.

Though the adoption of curricular policies designed to maximize examination results would on the surface seem to satisfy the needs of parents for certification, the process is more complicated. The English Department, for instance, had to make a decision, when the GCSE was introduced, about which examination scheme they should follow, and though the consensus view of the department was that better examination results would be achieved by the adoption of 100% coursework syllabuses in both English and English Literature, in the end a more cautious approach prevailed. Members of the department have in fact chosen the English 'B' syllabus, scheme 2 (M.E.G. no 1501) which is assessed 100% by coursework, and the English Literature, scheme 2 (M.E.G. no 1502) which is assessed by 40% coursework and 60% end-of-course examination. The reasons given shed light on the relationship between an independent school and its parents, and the constant need to be accountable to them. Too radical an innovation, such as an examination without any end-of-course assessment, may be misunderstood by parents, as the Head of Department explains:

We didn't last time and the reason why we didn't do it to start off with was that we felt, and it has indeed proved to be so, that in a school like this, particularly I am afraid the weaker ones, the parents sort of expect you to in other words, if they fail on 100% coursework, I think the parents vaguely think it's your fault because of course you are then judged. It did prove to be so in the parents' meeting.

The tensions expressed here highlight the disjuncture between consumer values and professional ethics, the conflict being fuelled by a belief on the part of English teachers at Lampton

that, if 100% coursework syllabuses had been adopted, better examination results would have resulted.

On the other hand, teachers who believe that success can be measured by examination results may choose to adopt coursework procedures that extend the boundaries of what is considered fair practice, and are thus in conflict with our previously articulated notion of professionalism. For example, this drive to achieve better examination results empowers the debate within the English Department about the extent of teacher input, a debate in the end settled by hierarchical imposition.

A central theme in the literature (Goldstein, 1989; Scott, 1991b; Gipps, 1990) is the irreconcilability of formative and summative modes of assessment. The Head of English and the other teachers in her department place themselves at different points along the continuum between formative and summative assessment; at one end the emphasis is on the need to redraft extensively; at the other, practitioners are more concerned to stress summative values of reliability and comparability. The Head of Department's perception of the most appropriate strategy to adopt is a negotiated one - in the first instance this is negotiated between teacher and pupil. She encourages a shortened process, as she is suspicious of too much re-drafting:

I think the children find it a chore. I don't think they are very interested in it. I think it is something to do with their temperament rather than their ability. What I mean is that there are some

children who work very quickly and they don't really want to look at that bit again; they would rather do another one. So I didn't encourage them to do too many drafts.

This is supported by her perception of what the Examination Board intends with regards to marking and re-marking:

Well I mean, the directive is, of course, that once you have given it a mark. Sort of mark at the end, that's it. So they know my symbols for spelling paragraph construction I write about at the end of their piece of work and so on. I write a lot of things on their scripts.

Clearly other members of her department have come to different conclusions about when it is appropriate to mark and how many drafts their pupils should be asked to do:

One of my colleagues is really hot on it. I mean he does make them work through several drafts, I know.

But the issue cannot be left to the discretion of individual teachers within their own classrooms. It is too important for that. She asserts her authority over her colleagues:

Well I honestly had to take two of my department to task last year because I thought they were cheating They had marked the pupils' work and then they had said 'take this back, do this, this and this, and then I will give you a higher mark.' As far as I am concerned that's cheating.

Whether they were or not, in terms of the far from watertight directive from the Board, is open to dispute. What this has served to show though is how teachers modified their classroom strategies both as a result of negotiated routines between them and their pupils, and as a result of their disempowerment as members of a department structured as a hierarchical unit.

In a similar way, the Biology department uses 'enhancement' which, though it can be justified on the grounds that it encourages a learning process, is also designed to produce better or enhanced assessed performances from students. The need to find a means of assessing in a positive way the skills and aptitudes of their pupils means that teachers within the Biology department deliberately set more assessed practicals than they need to. This allows a choice to be made at the end of the course, so that 'best' performance can be submitted for examination. There is also built into such a strategy devices for improving the quality of each one of those assessments. So 'worse' performances are discarded both at the end of the two years and at the time they are done. The Biology teacher explains what happens:

As an example I have just done one with the fifth form when they were asked if they could identify a key for twigs, you see. Now they all did it pretty satisfactorily except for these two girls who made a complete mess of it. So they came to see me and said they just didn't understand what they were doing. So we had twenty minutes in the lunch hour going over how to make a key. They happened to be boarders, and I am always in early, so as soon as they had had breakfast, I got an entirely different set of materials (I think I used shells and things), and put it out for them, and they did a key. They did it very well, so that was able to go on the top of their original assessments.

Thus this re-working of the original assessment acts in a formative sense, that is the original weakness was diagnosed, remedial teaching took place and pupils were then re-assessed and shown to have acquired skills they did not previously have.

The formative element in assessment is emphasized here at the expense of summative reliability.

This is in contrast to the Latin teacher in the school who will deliberately forego formative learning opportunities so that the reliability of the assessments being made can be maintained:

You definitely do hold back. You bear in mind you don't want to fall into the trap of giving them too much help because it would be obvious. That is, obvious to the moderator.

Furthermore, the professional ethic that this teacher employs means that he avoids any forms of teacher input that could be construed as unfair:

If you've got professional pride, you avoid it at all costs.

Curriculum development, especially when it is externally initiated, depends on the skills, knowledge, behaviour and attitudes that teachers have at different points in their careers. Three stages in particular have been noted (Fullan, 1982; 1985). First there is the survival stage of the first year or so as the teacher enters the profession. This is followed by the adjustment or mastery phase during which teachers develop planning strategies, organizational and curricular methods which best suit their personal educational preconceptions. This eventually gives way to the mature stage, during which the experienced teacher is confident and able to try new methods. Burden (1983) argues that each stage

also corresponds to specific teacher concerns. So at the survival stage teachers are self orientated. During the mastery phase they are concerned about themselves as teachers. Finally they become pupil-centred during their mature stage of development. Apelman (1978), in a similar way, describes three stages of teachers' needs: The beginning teacher considers class management, discipline and organization a priority. This gradually evolves into a new ideas and activities phase during which new resources are developed. Finally the teacher becomes particularly interested in curriculum development. The teacher is secure in his or her own abilities and is now looking for new horizons, depth and diversity. Teachers' career paths do not necessarily follow the variety of routes that are suggested above. Indeed such approaches have been criticised for ignoring ideological elements. Hammersley (1977), for instance, draws a distinction between paradigmatic and pragmatic strategies. Paradigmatic concerns are normative. Practitioners have a view of teaching which is influenced by an ideal model of what teaching should be like. Pragmatic practitioners are concerned "with what is or is not possible in given circumstances and with strategies and techniques for achieving goals" (Hammersley, 1977, p.38). Woods (1981) uses this conceptual framework to show how two teachers he interviewed had contrasting careers because for one ideals and principles were most important; for the other a pragmatic orientation to teaching was adopted. Thus designating stages or phases to explain teachers' careers can only be a partial

explanation. What this type of analysis can do is help us to understand how teachers at Lampton with their different histories, their different 'interests-at-hand' (Schutz, 1970) and their different career positions responded to the introduction of a new examination technology.

The Head of Chemistry at Lampton was about to retire at the end of the 1988-89 academic year. He makes the point that this affected both his enthusiasm for innovation, and his response to a new type of examination:

I have been here for thirty years, and I am going at the end of the year. You can't expect me to be very interested in changing my ways. Anyway I don't think that GCSE has changed anything very much. It's changed the syllabuses slightly, but I always did lots of practicals. This time next year it will all be over. I think I've earned my retirement.

Contingent factors such as retirement neutralise individual capacities for change. Capacity is being defined here as the ownership of skills and aptitudes which allow change to occur. Clearly low capacity inhibits change, high capacity allows for its possibility. External innovation in the shape of a new examination system is here 'contained' (Saunders, 1985), as it is absorbed into and makes little impact on existing practice.

Bowe and Ball (1992) argue that curriculum change in schools can be understood in terms of four key variables: capacity, contingency, commitment and history. They define the last two qualities in the following way: "The former (commitment) refers to the existence of firmly held and well-entrenched subject or

pedagogical paradigms within a department or (school)....the latter (history) refers to.....the innovation histories of schools and departments. That is the existence (or not) of a history of curriculum development or change" (p.24). They further develop two types of school or department ethos. In a dependency culture, there is low capacity, low commitment and no history of innovation. In a non-dependency culture there is high commitment, high capacity and a history of innovation. This chapter however, has sought to suggest that schools (or even departments), should not be seen as monolithic structures, but as loose collections of cooperating and competing sites. Curricula therefore, can only be understood as localised learning environments which are connected to each other by micropolitical processes and by student cross-subject movements. These localised curricula will be the focus of the next chapter⁹.

NOTES:

1. Burgess (1983) distinguishes between overt and covert hierarchical structures. He documents how at Bishop McGregor School, despite having greater numbers and despite similar salary levels, heads of department were in fact subordinate to heads of house. Headteachers of course, are seen to be at the pinnacle of school hierarchies (Banks, 1976). Burgess (1983; 1984d) argues that headteachers act as key reality definers within their schools; although Berg (1968), Mackenzie (1977), Auld (1976) and Gretton and Jackson (1976) cite cases to show how limited their power is in the final instance. On the other hand, with the demise of Local Authority control, the introduction of Local Management Strategies, and the general stress on management ideologies, headteachers may now have greater control over their schools and their staffs than in the past. But it is important not to assume that there exists a

single organizational structure in all schools. For example, Ball (1987) documents four different types of headship.

2. Peters, following in the philosophic tradition established by Immanuel Kant, explicitly reformulates the argument that rationality provides public presuppositions and concepts which it would be irrational to reject: "It has been assumed that a differentiated form of discourse has emerged which has the practical function of guiding peoples' behaviour by the giving of reasons. Men make use of it when they ask what they ought or ought not to do and when they judge things good or bad. The problem to which the classical ethical theories provided no satisfactory answer is that of justifying the principles which make such reasons relevant.....One of the obvious comments to be made about the classical theories is that they treat the individual too much as an isolated entity exercising his 'reason', 'feeling', or 'intuition' as if he were switching on some private gadget. What they ignore is the public character of the situations in which such exercises occur together with their public presuppositions in the form of abstract principles" (1966, p.114). On this basis, Peters is able to make claims about the proper selection of knowledge and subjects for inclusion in the curriculum. Hirst (1973) and White (1973) adopt similar positions.

3. Though there has been some decline in the percentages of public school educated members of elite occupations between 1939 and 1984 (Reid, Williams and Rayner, 1991), the figures continue to show how important their influence still is. For example, 78% of ambassadors, 84% of the judiciary, 66% of bishops, 70% of bankers and 49% of civil servants in 1984 were educated in public schools.

4. In Scott (1991a), I give a fuller account of St Thomas' School for Girls, in which I argue that it "perceives its role essentially in pastoralist terms and operates with a different notion of accountability" (p.68).

5. See also Bourdieu, 1971a; 1971b; 1976; and Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977. Bourdieu is primarily concerned to show how the academic curriculum serves to differentiate and exclude. Ozolins (1979), writing in this vein, argues that: "Bourdieu has amplified these views in two directions: first that the school works in a biased manner by demanding of every child what only some children can give - a certain orientation to the culture of the school and the academic curriculum, a certain 'cultural capital' that reflects the cultural level of the home and provides the children of some families with the essential skills and attitudes ('cultural ethos') that lead to success in school. It is these children who are rewarded in school when their social gifts are interpreted as natural ability and interest. Secondly, the curriculum of the school cannot be treated as a neutral object: some elements, particularly the letters, humanities and the social sciences, are peculiarly

dependent on the child's cultural capital. They are taught by a pedagogy which makes continual implicit demands on a child's own social and cultural skills of subtlety, nuance, taste and manner which some children acquire 'naturally' from their own cultural milieu and which are not capable of an explicit pedagogy" (p.46). The point I am making here is that cultural capital is not simply accumulated before schooling, but is acquired and re-acquired both at home and in school throughout the period of schooling by implicit and hidden pedagogies.

6. Table 6.2 correlates choice of options at 14+ with pupil sex. The first column shows the proportion of pupils expressed as a percentage of the total sample who chose the various options. So 12.1% of 91 upper fourth year pupils chose Latin, whereas 70.3% chose Geography. The second and third columns show the proportions of male and female pupils expressed as a percentage of the total male and female samples. So, 10% of male respondents (50) and 14.6% of female respondents (41) chose Latin. Columns four and five, on the other hand, show the proportions (expressed as percentages) of male and female pupils who opted for each subject. Thus the proportions of male and female pupils in the Latin groups were respectively 45.5% and 54.5%. Columns two and three allow us to examine the respective popularity of options amongst male pupils and female pupils. So we can conclude for instance, that Physics is very popular amongst boys (82%), but considerably less popular amongst girls (53.7). However, columns four and five allow us to examine the relative proportions of male and female pupils who choose particular options. So from these two columns, we can conclude that for every two boys studying Physics in the Upper Fourth Year, there is one girl.

7. The value of providing a statistical analysis of both subject popularity by higher and lower setted pupils, and group composition with reference to higher and lower setted pupils in the upper fourth year, can be shown by examining Physics. Though both higher and lower setted pupils chose Physics in nearly equal proportions (72.5% and 65%); because there are less lower than higher setted pupils in the sample, there are considerably fewer lower ability pupils in the Physics groups in the upper fourth years (58.7% and 41.3%).

8. Proportion (%) of pupils (n = 1839) taking selected subjects by sex at 14+:

	M.	F.		M.	F.
Physics	51	20	German	5	7
Chemistry	29	25	Typing	3	38
Biology	25	55	Home Economics	5	20
Computing	26	14	Graphics	44	5
History	33	36	C.D.T.	8	1
Geography	55	32	Art	27	30
Social Studies	14	16	Drama	10	12
French	19	32			

(Smith and Tomlinson, 1989, p.218).

9. Material from the following has been used in this chapter:
Scott, D. (1991a), 'The impact of GCSE on practice and conventions in private schools', in G.Walford (ed.), *Private Schooling: Tradition, Change and Diversity*, Paul Chapman Ltd., pp.51-69.

CHAPTER 7 - IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter examines the final link in a chain which stretches from the 'moments' of legislation (the passing of an act or the issuing of a circular), through documentation (examination syllabuses for instance) to implementation (the work of the teachers) (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992). Exemplar material is taken from observations of Science and Geography lessons in the six case-study schools, and teacher and pupil accounts of intra and extra school processes that involved the completion of coursework projects. These subjects have been chosen because they illustrate different and contrasting coursework arrangements. Science coursework is predominantly classroom based, whereas project based Geography coursework includes investigations of natural and human phenomena, and the completion either at home or in school of a written text. To analyse the empirical data, a conceptual framework based round five pairs of polarised concepts is developed.

The first set of opposing concepts which is used to explain the relationship between formal assessment and pedagogy is the type of knowledge framing (Bernstein, 1971) operating within the classroom. Bernstein defines framing as "the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organisation and pacing of knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship" (p.50). He goes on to argue that strong framing

reduces the options open to pupils and weak framing extends those options. Although Bernstein's complementary notion of classification is conceptually tied to framing, and allows him to develop typologies revolving round collection and integrated codes (Bernstein, 1971, p.55)¹, our use of framing will imply only a loose connection with its associated concept. It might be argued that pedagogic relationships are inappropriate forms to cite when dealing with formal assessments; but as will become clearer, coursework processes, depending on their correspondence with normal practice, are situated within teaching and learning strategies. In line with the approach suggested previously that schools should not be seen as monolithic structures, but as loose collections of co-operating and competing sites, it would be false to categorise schools as operators of specific knowledge frames. When reference is made to such frames, time and place contexts are assumed and indeed this chapter concentrates on specific classroom practices and extra school activities that relate to them.

The second set of opposing concepts focuses on the familiar notions of formative and summative modes of assessment. GCSE teachers are confronted with two contrasting tasks - the need to initiate a formative process of assessment and learning throughout the two-year course, and the requirement to undertake a summative process of assessment and reporting. The theoretical difference between formative and summative assessment is as follows: the formative sets out to provide

information for the teacher about the way pupils complete particular tasks, so that lessons learnt about these performances can be used in subsequent teaching and learning episodes; the summative is concerned with mastery of those tasks. Formative assessment is not primarily concerned with whether pupils can perform particular tasks, but with how they do or do not perform them (Buckle and Riding, 1988). Diversity of context, therefore, may be unavoidable because teachers seek information about the way pupils learn. The teacher needs to know where, when and how a piece of work is completed. The intention is to improve teaching and learning programmes for individual pupils.

Summative assessments, on the other hand, have to fulfil a number of criteria, which limit their applicability. Summative assessments aim to be both reliable and valid, though they are rarely able to be both at the same time. Homogeneity of context is important in a summative assessment, so that fair comparability can be achieved and so that no pupil is placed at a disadvantage. Moreover, summative assessment is inevitably artificial. When is it the most appropriate time to break into the natural, formative process of teaching and learning, which goes on irrespective of any need to compare pupils in a formal way? Two pupils, when asked to complete a piece of work without any formative input from their teacher, may be marked as though they have submitted an equally good piece of work. If those two pupils are then helped by their teacher, which enables them to

improve these pieces of work, and that input is personalised and formative, one of those two pupils may now produce a better piece of work than the other. At what stage should the summative assessment take place? Before or after the teacher has contributed to those pieces of work (Buckle and Riding, 1988)? Summative and formative assessment thus operate in opposition to each other².

Our third set of polarised concepts centres round the ability of any assessment system or part of an assessment system to produce reliable data. Nuttall and Goldstein (1984) suggest that the reliability of a test instrument (and coursework essentially is just this) depends on similarity of test conditions. They argue that dissimilarity of test conditions may occur in several ways: if the test is held over several sessions; if examination conditions are not maintained within the classroom; if teachers provide excessive and unfair amounts of help; if pupils are able to gain assistance from fellow candidates; and if pupils are allowed to retake parts of the test to improve their marks. Three further sources of unreliability or ambiguity should be noted - an unequal supply of resources available to the pupils for preparation and during the actual completion of the assessed piece of work; unequal degrees of parental assistance; and different types of exercises to do, even if they purport to test similar objectives.

A key element in coursework assessment settings is the quality and type of teacher interventions. Though other factors such as timing, location and contents play their part in the construction of assessment environments, the role taken by the teacher sets limits to the framing strengths of those assessment experiences. Strongly framed settings weaken the connectiveness of teaching and assessment, while weakly framed settings allow useful connections to be established (Goldstein, 1989).

Our fourth set of polarised concepts is closely related to our fifth. This seeks to compare coursework settings with normal teaching and learning environments. Teachers during their careers develop pedagogic knowledge which combines a theory of learning, a method of teaching and a model of contextualised practice. Consequently teachers develop ways of working which fit their idea of good practice. Externally initiated change poses a threat to those teaching strategies. Bowe and Ball (1992) suggest that teachers respond in three ways to such threats: adaptive extension, where the teacher changes their whole way of working; accommodation, where the innovation is adapted to fit existing practice; and containment, where the innovation is absorbed into current practice and makes little impact. Their different responses point to our fifth set of polarized concepts, with at the one end of the scale, previous and typical classroom practices, and at the other, irregular or abnormal practices.

Four examples of intra and extra classroom processes that relate to coursework are examined in the light of this five-set schema. The five sets of polarized concepts are weak/strong knowledge framing, formative/summative modes of assessment, the production of reliable/unreliable assessment data, limited/extended amounts and types of teacher interventions in coursework processes and normal/irregular classroom practices.

ASSESSED PRACTICAL SCIENCE AT TIDEHILL

The first example is of a Science assessment at Tidehill School during December in the second year of the course. It was designed to test skill six (Biology Syllabus 'A', no 1325, MEG) which asks each candidate to devise an experiment to test satisfactorily some aspect of the teaching programme. This Biology syllabus requires:

teachers to assess six skills at three levels of attainment - high, intermediate, low: 1) following instructions; 2) handling apparatus and materials; 3) observing and measuring; 4) recording and communicating; 5) interpreting data; 6) experimenting design/ problem solving.

The syllabus makes the following recommendations:

1) It is not necessary for candidates in a centre to be assessed on exactly the same work; 2) assessment could be carried out on group work; 3) the teacher must ensure that the individual contributions of candidates, even when they are working in groups, can be assessed; 4) each practical activity does not need to encompass all the assessment skills and abilities; 5) ideally only a few candidates within a particular group should be assessed on any one occasion; 6) in some cases, it may be relatively simple to assess the work of all the candidates on the

basis of a written record of a single exercise.

Candidates, furthermore, are to be assessed on a minimum of two occasions for each assessment objective, though teachers are allowed to make as many as they like.

The written brief that the pupils are given is as follows:

It has been discovered experimentally that there are more touch sensitive nerve endings in particular areas of the skin than in others. Using simple laboratory equipment available, design and, using your method, carry out an experiment to discover whether this is true (Head of Science at Tidehill).

The class, which consists of twenty-four pupils, are initially given a double lesson (one hour and ten minutes) to research the brief; and are then required to write out their aim, their apparatus list and the method they are going to employ. They are not allowed to add or change anything after that, though they are allowed access to their written work. During the next double lesson, which is immediately after lunch (the previous one had been before), they carry out their experiments. These consist, in the main, of drawing grids on the back of their partner's hand, and testing the sensitivity of different parts of the grid using a metal probe. For those who have the time, arms, toes and ankles are treated in the same way. One group experimented with cold (ice cubes) and heat (lighted pieces of paper). The practical work is not carried out in controlled examination conditions. For instance, at the beginning of the second double lesson the teacher stands at the front of the class and reminds her pupils that they should begin to think

about extension papers in Science subjects. Furthermore, as they gather round the teacher's desk to collect equipment at the beginning of the afternoon, they talk animatedly. Indeed during the lesson itself, talking is allowed, though the teacher emphasises that it has to be restricted to the groups in which they are working - "you are not to discuss what you are doing with any other group. You will lose marks if I come round and hear you discuss matters other than the experiment."

At lunchtime the teacher checks through their written briefs, and she starts off the afternoon session by announcing that, "everyone is more or less along the right lines". Having handed them back, her pupils work in their groups for the rest of the double lesson. None of them seem to find it difficult, though it was pointed out later by the teacher that one group of girls was not doing it 'correctly'. As a consequence they were given a 'low' score. With this exception, they are all doing experiments which roughly correspond with each other and with the standardized method set out in their textbooks, to which they have access. A task that on the surface allows considerable freedom of interpretation and is thus weakly framed, in fact during completion is structured (the teacher's firm conception of a correct method, the provision of a standard methodology from their textbooks) so that the knowledge base is strongly framed.

The extent of teacher interventions in formal assessments such as these are, as we have indicated already, an important aspect of the process. The teacher spends most of the second double lesson walking round the classroom, asking questions, noting down replies and, when needed, providing help and equipment. She is careful though to limit her contributions. As she says later: "It is very important for me not to give too much away. Though if they are really stuck, I am allowed to help them." She spends a long time with one particular group, both of whom she described afterwards as 'weak performers', and both of whom showed at the beginning of the lesson a reluctance to work with each other. Since the exercise required the help of a partner, and since no one else wanted to work with them, the teacher made them work together. The groups work at different speeds and, near the end of the second double lesson, the teacher is engaged in co-ordinating groups as they begin to write up their experiments. The pupils show no outward signs of being affected by the fact that this is not an ordinary lesson but part of their assessed coursework. By the time it takes place, all the pupils have completed a large number and are used to the classroom techniques involved.

Two issues are raised by this account. The first is that given the conditions in which the assessments took place, they cannot be considered entirely reliable. Pupils worked in self-selected teams which helped or hindered them, according to the composition of their group. Pupils with a poor grasp of the

skills needed in practical Science lessons were able to complete satisfactorily the required task by following and imitating the actions of their more able colleagues. Furthermore, though the groups were in theory self-contained, interaction took place between them. A pupil who took part in this lesson describes this dilemma:

It's impossible not to do, you just can't concentrate on your own work. I mean if you're walking over to get a piece of paper or a cup of water or whatever and you see someone doing, you don't actually look at their results or whatever, but say if you've got to set up a piece of apparatus and one person uses say a clamp and another person uses a tripod or whatever, then you're bound to go and do what the rest of the people are doing unless you know that you're right and you use your tripod.

Less confident pupils may be swayed by majority opinion within the class. The decisions that pupils make are therefore influenced by factors other than the composition of the task itself.

The second issue which this account of a Biology assessed practical raises is that though attempts have been made to ensure that such assessments correspond to everyday practice as far as possible (DES, 1985b), they are not in reality typical practical lessons. The needs of assessment predominate, as the Head of Science explains:

That's right, because when they ask whether they should ask or not. Now in the normal course of teaching, you set a problem, you set an experiment, you set some work that you want the kids to do. Some of them will go away and get started straight away. Some will pick up how to get started by seeing what other people do, and that happens in assessments as well and there's no way you're ever going to stop that. Now this is where I think the unfortunate

thing is and I don't know how you I don't think there is an answer to how you get round it. So I think that this is the unfortunate thing with assessments that as soon as you start thinking about helping them, you're into the business of docking marks, whereas in a normal lesson you would accept it as being quite normal, that you should help; and this has changed the relationship between you and the pupil. This is unavoidable.

She is suggesting that, if the setting is made as reliable as possible to meet the demands of summative assessment with limited teacher interventions, then first this does not correspond with the way she 'normally' organizes practical lessons, and second it does not correspond with her model of good practice, in which teacher interventions using formative strategies are an essential part.

A BIOLOGY ASSESSED PRACTICAL AT TADFORD

The previous account has made explicit some of the tensions inherent in GCSE Science coursework processes. These tensions correspond to the impulses within our five sets of opposing concepts: the antagonism between strong and weak knowledge framing, the irreconcilability of formative and summative assessment modes, the problems of reconciling local settings with the production of reliable data, the irrelation between meaningful teacher interventions and standardization, and the conflict between normal practice and examination settings. This second account, which also focuses on Physics coursework within the same school, highlights these tensions.

Biology teachers at Tadford follow the same syllabus as teachers at Tidehill. The skill that the Tadford Head of Science has chosen to assess in this lesson is skill four of the MEG syllabus (Biology 'A', no.1325), which examines the ability of students to record and communicate their findings after completing practical work. At the beginning of the lesson, his pupils are given a sheet of paper which explains the object of the exercise, and provides a list of possible apparatus they will need. By way of a contrast with the previous account, the knowledge chain between teacher and pupils is less highly structured, since the latter are asked to make a number of genuine decisions about the conduct of the investigation. Its framing is therefore weaker. The purpose of the experiment is listed at the top of the instructions:

You have available two samples of soil - one clay-based (labelled A) and one sand-based (labelled B). The object of this experiment is to compare the rate at which water will drain through each soil type.

Twenty-two pupils take part in the lesson - seventeen girls and five boys.

The teacher introduces the experiment, but talks only briefly. There is a slight groan when the pupils realise that they are going to have to do another assessed practical. By this stage of their course (October in the Christmas Term of their fifth year), they are already experienced at being assessed in Science. Furthermore, as will become clear, the conditions under which they complete these assessments are not too

dissimilar from ordinary practical classwork. Teacher interventions are commonplace. Pupils are allowed to talk and develop ideas with each other. However, pupils are, despite outward appearances, aware of the importance of the exercise, and conscious that what they say and what they do will contribute to the grade they are finally awarded at the end of the course. Lorraine makes this point clearly:

They are very important, my Biology practicals, even though coursework is only 20%. I know that if I do something wrong, it won't necessarily count against me, but it still adds up in the end to being part of the exam.

They are familiar with the ideas that underpin this experiment (testing the porosity of different substances), and the teacher keeps his explanation to a minimum. He makes no attempt to give them the answers, but simply reads out the detailed explanation of method they are given on their instruction sheets. His pupils are required to fill test tubes with the two mixtures, and then examine the different rates of absorption when they pour similar amounts of water over each. Since this exercise is designed to test their ability to record and communicate their findings (in writing), the method they are to use in this experiment is given to them. They are not though told how they should record and write up their results. They work together in small groups, exchanging information, comparing methods and devising strategies to solve the problems with which they are confronted.

At times their concentration wanders and some groups move off-task. There is some talk about that night's television programmes for instance. The teacher is occasionally asked for help. As he records what he sees, he probes particular individuals for explanations of what they are doing. This allows him to judge their expertise. He has enlisted the help of a technician, who organizes requests for equipment, freeing him from that time consuming role. A quieter atmosphere prevails as they begin to write up their results. Different groups and different individuals finish the different tasks at different times, so in the last quarter of an hour of the lesson a number of activities are going on simultaneously (writing up results, examining specimens under a microscope near the window, putting the equipment away). At the end of the lesson, the teacher sets them homework which has to be in by the next lesson.

Though used for assessment purposes, the lesson was also devised in part to resemble what his pupils have come to expect a Science practical lesson would be like. It thus meets the criteria for good coursework practice in that the setting allows and encourages pupils who perform badly in end-of-course formal assessments to show what they can do - to perform positively (SEC, 1985). As an exercise in formal assessment, it lacks reliability. Examination conditions are not maintained. A co-operative and non-didactic learning process is preferred by the teacher to a more controlled one. He explains the

tension, as he sees it, between the need to make summative assessments while at the same time providing formative feedback to help pupils learn:

Within certain sorts of limits, they can talk to each other just as they would in a normal practical. After all, this isn't just about making summative judgments about what they can do, it's also a learning situation. I know there are problems with identifying individual contributions. But as I see it you can get round that. It doesn't matter if they talk to somebody else. If it leads to having more confidence, what's the problem?

He judges that it is more important to recreate conditions which usually pertain in a non-assessed practical lesson, than to control the environment and as a consequence, achieve comparability between classrooms and schools.

One of the pupils, Michael, had also chosen Physics as an option. Michael contrasts assessment practices in Biology with those in Physics. He is 'tested' at regular intervals throughout the two years of the Physics course. He is given no advance warning and as a consequence he is unable to prepare, though practical assessments always test some aspect of the most recent classwork he has been doing:

They assess you over a year and you have occasional tests which they don't tell you about; they just say we are doing a practical test today to see if you are coping with the subject in a certain aspect of Physics We had done it before in class, and he wanted to see if we had understood what he was talking about and remembered it.

Test conditions are controlled. Assessments are made of individuals working on their own and no talking is allowed:

The teacher was walking around noticing what we were doing and waiting for us to finish, and making sure

none of us was cheating we were working singly. As there wasn't enough room, half the class did the work while the other half were doing some written work and then we swapped over, and it was all done in silence. This is very different from Biology, where we are allowed to talk, and it is much more like an ordinary lesson

The continuing tension between assessment practices and teaching strategies is made explicit by the comparison between these two conflicting accounts from the same school.

The Biology assessed practical is in part weakly framed, allows formative input from the teacher who is prepared to engage in lengthy interactive exchanges with his pupils, and is organized so that his pupils do not perceive it as a special event. This weakens its ability to produce reliable data. In contrast, the Physics teacher at Tadford is not prepared to use assessment sessions as opportunities for formative teaching strategies. The way he structures the lesson, the work is completed in silence, his contributions are limited, he splits the group in two to allow him to make more effective assessments, means that he wants to convey the impression that this is a special occasion. His intention is clear. He believes that his prime task is to construct assessment settings which allow him to make reliable judgements about his pupils. Any learning that takes place is incidental.

A GEOGRAPHY INVESTIGATION

Though Science coursework in the GCSE is predominantly classroom based, Geography coursework involves investigations of extra school processes, which means that much of the preparation and fieldwork is conducted outside classrooms. This has implications for the way knowledge is framed in the pedagogical relay, the extent and type of formative input by the teacher, the quality of teacher interventions in coursework processes, the role played by parents and other concerned adults, the reliability of coursework as a testing device and the extent to which the pedagogic procedures associated with project-type coursework can be said to depart from normal classroom practice.

Geography at Tidehill, a rural secondary modern school, has proved to be a popular option (in 1988-89 two GCSE groups with fifty-five pupils, and a lower ability basic Geography group following a separate syllabus of twelve pupils, were formed). Implicit in the construction of Geography GCSE syllabuses are a number of unresolved or partly resolved tensions (cf. Beddis, 1983; Bennetts, 1985; Fien, 1983; Hart, 1982; HMI, 1978; Huckle, 1983a; 1983b; Maye, 1984; Robinson, 1985; Slater, 1982). The first conflict is between physical and human Geography. The Head of the Geography Department suggests that this has been effectively resolved by the syllabus they have chosen:

You can't divide it now because, well I wouldn't like it if you could, because the physical part of the course is related to human needs. So, as far as I am concerned, if we look at Plate Tectonics it's the reaction of Plate Tectonics, and the reactions of humans to that disaster. So the two can't be taken apart now.

The second unresolved tension is between factual and conceptual Geography. An example of the former would be memorizing capital cities of the world; examples of the latter would be understanding the causes and consequences of demographic change. The department has chosen to do an intensive course of basic factual Geography (AEB, 1988) with the top two third year sets, and to continue with the basic Geography course for a low ability set in the fourth and fifth year. The Head of Geography explains the rationale:

The two top sets in the third year will do the exam, and for a term it will be intensive. Learn, learn and learn. They get a great kick out of learning facts, where places are; and so really, the old type of Geography.

The GCSE course is of a different type, being more concerned with ideas, concepts and the application of those ideas in terms of fieldwork.

The third tension is between didactic and investigative teaching methodologies, and though in Geography this has never been as stark as it has been in other subjects because investigation has always been a key element in Geography syllabuses, GCSE syllabuses have confirmed the trend towards the latter. The Head of Geography is conscious that the GCSE

can be taught using both styles, but her preference is for more active pedagogies:

I don't think, judging from what I have seen in other schools, and I have tried to go out and about to see what is happening in other schools. I can't say they are doing work in a very active manner as far as I am concerned. I think fieldwork and investigation has always been popular in Geography, but I don't think the teaching is particularly active. You can still teach investigation processes in static ways.

She describes her particular method:

I try to get the children involved in what they are doing and the spouting of knowledge doesn't always suit me I rarely stand and teach straight to the class.

The coursework element in the Geography syllabus that the Department has chosen (MEG No.1575 - 25% coursework) allows each school the choice of between one and three pieces of work, at least one of which should be based on fieldwork. Tidehill chose to do only one, since they felt that this provided greater opportunities for detailed, in-depth study of a particular area of the course. The syllabus stipulates the following:

Candidates' work should emphasise the different aspects of the enquiry approach viz:

- i) planning and implementation of an enquiry;
- ii) data collection and presentation;
- iii) interpretation of data including recognition of the role of values in decision making;
- iv) conclusions and, where appropriate, tentative solutions.

It also suggests that:

- i) Work presented for assessment must include evidence of purpose i.e. a clear indication of what the candidate sets out to do and why.
- ii) Geographical Enquiry must involve first hand investigations by the candidate collecting and/or

- using primary data. The investigation may consist of either a problem posed by the candidate or an enquiry planned by the teacher. Teacher-planned enquiries could be carried out by a group of candidates acting individually.
- iii) Secondary source material may be used to supplement the information obtained by first-hand enquiry, but a submission based entirely on secondary source material is not acceptable.
 - iv) Where a Geographical Enquiry is carried out as a group project, the candidate's own contribution must be evident.
 - v) Candidates should be encouraged to use a variety of methods of presentation: written, graphical, visual and audio-visual.

The enquiries are started in the summer term of the fourth year, with classtime and homework being exhaustively used. The pupils are introduced to the methods they are going to employ by a preliminary investigation into the location of a hypermarket. They then spend time in class preparing for their assessed investigation. The Head of Department is emphatic that the work they do is individual work, involving individual decision-making:

They then have a question on Leighmouth given to them, and they have to decide for themselves what things they are going to tackle, and how they are going to tackle them, and what kinds of questions they are going to ask, what maps and things they are going to need. They have about two weeks preparing all that work. I try not to give them too much. I try to advise them in an open-ended way, so I don't tell them what to do, and I don't suggest what to do I just help and advise, and push if they get behind.

Pedagogically the teacher acts in a non-didactic way. Within the framework laid down by the examination syllabus, opportunities are being provided for pupils to make a range of

genuine decisions about how best to conduct their investigations.

Three or four days are spent completing the fieldwork at a local town. This may be supplemented by other visits made by pupils with or without their parents. Writing is accompanied by a continuous process of discussion, drafting, checking and re-drafting until the project is complete. Her method is dialogic. She also gives them a pre-marking idea of how well they are doing at a formative stage of their writing. Andrew, one of her pupils, describes this process:

Yes. She helps you, to give you ideas - if your grades are falling down, if you are doing badly, you need a wider arrangement, presentation and stuff like that.

She is very conscious of the amount of time that is available. This, she suggests, acts to limit the extent of re-drafting her pupils can do:

I don't give them an actual mark. I will give them a good, medium or bad mark, either a 'G', 'M' or 'B', and they know what kind it is. They then discuss with me if they want to improve it, and what they think they ought to do. I don't think it's fair for them to keep having this work given back to be graded and improved, because I think they have got to have some kind of time limit.

The size and length of the project caused some problems for a number of her pupils, as the latter found it difficult to sustain their interest over a period of nearly nine months.

Progress reviews are organised on an ad hoc basis, but they are clearly considered to be an essential part of the whole process. This account of a review lesson brings out the tension between their use as individual formative lessons and their use as mechanisms for ensuring that coursework requirements are met. This lesson takes place just before Christmas with fifth year pupils. It is a double lesson (one hour and ten minutes) during which the teacher manages to see eight pupils. Most of her class have remembered to bring in their project work, and they spend the lesson, when they are not being seen by the teacher, in further drafting and re-drafting. Numbers are small (eighteen pupils) because a third of the class are away on a course. This allows the teacher greater flexibility and enables her to get on with the progress reviews comparatively undisturbed. Each short interview attempts to ascertain whether each project is progressing satisfactorily, whether coursework deadlines are being met, which sections are adequate and which are not, whether full use is being made of the available data, and whether presentation is satisfactory. More specifically the Geography teacher asked one of her pupils the following questions:

How much fieldwork did you manage to get done in the end?

Your graph lacks variety. You will have to do it again. Don't you agree?

Do your photographs link up with your other evidence?

How do I know what all those maps are about?

Your final conclusion should have more detail in it; you must re-write it. You don't want to get a low grade, do you?

To be realistic, what have you covered?

The teacher also makes use of a number of the interviews to explain what the various grades mean, to enquire whether each pupil feels he or she should be entered for the extended papers:

There are three different routes. The first allows you to get A-D grades, the second C-E grades, and the third D-G. I don't want to enter you for papers that you are not going to succeed at. You are going to have to think about this,

and generally to find out whether her pupils are working as hard as they should. Such interviews are not, as such, teaching occasions, though learning opportunities are presented to each individual pupil. A pupil who took part in the lesson explains their purpose and offers evaluative comment about them:

They are there for our use, but also so that we can be checked up on. It's such a long thing, the project, that I keep wondering whether I have gone wrong. She uses this grid and then tells us how we are doing in each part. I find them very useful. (Michael)

The 'grid' he refers to is taken from the syllabus:

Criteria for assessment of geographical enquiries.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| a) Collection of primary data, and where appropriate, supporting secondary data relevant to a topic. | 12 |
| b) Presentation of data using a variety of geographically appropriate forms. | 12 |
| c) Analysis and interpretation of data by application of geographical concepts and principles, including of values and their role in decision making. | 14 |
| d) Conclusions drawn from the findings of the enquiries, including, where appropriate, proposals, justifications and evaluations for solutions to Geographical problems. | 12 |
| | -- |
| | 50 |

Lessons such as these are monitoring sessions to allow the teacher the opportunity to help her pupils structure their coursework projects and to make sure they conform to her idea of what they should be like. They are therefore also occasions for pupils to clarify what is expected of them.

There is a further dimension to the completion of coursework projects in Geography. Much of the work is completed outside the school (fieldwork, writing up at home). The following account provides a perspective on those extra-school processes. Simon, a pupil at Tidehill, describes himself as "a little bit lazy and disorganised", and by Christmas of his fifth year he admits that "there's a certain amount of panic setting in". He has chosen a predominantly academic curriculum (Stevens, 1960) with three separate Sciences (see Table 7.1), though he has

Table 7.1: Simon's GCSE Curriculum 1987-88

English	-	Syllabus B, Scheme 2,	no.1501	MEG
English Literature	-	Scheme 3,	no.1502	MEG
Mathematics	-		no.1650	MEG
Geography	-		no.1575	MEG
Physics	-		no.1700	MEG
Chemistry	-		no.1375	MEG
Biology	-		no.1325	MEG
CDT: Technology	-		no.1451	MEG

also chosen subjects with considerable coursework loads (Geography and CDT: Technology). Both his teacher and his

parents suggest that he is the sort of pupil who would have done better with examinations which do not offer coursework options:

I think those who have been used to a certain system of being able to leave facts and figures and get it down in an exam. now stand to find themselves, in a lot of ways, disadvantaged (Simon's mother)

Simon is the sort of pupil who would have done very well at 'O' level. (Simon's Geography Teacher)

Simon accepts that success in the GCSE will require sustained work over a longer period of time than with 'O' levels:

I've had times when they've (his teachers) actually told that I'm not doing enough work, and they think that I should be able to do it, and I found that I'm good in my exams, and they've said to me that they themselves wouldn't have passed the GCSE exam if they took it when they were my age because they were like me. I'm good at examinations and it's (the GCSE) more coursework.

Simon's parents are supportive in two senses. They take an interest in, require information about and are willing to provide extra resources to further their son's education.

Simon explains:

Its not as if they push me My Dad's always trying to. He told me I can have anything I want to do with it (Geography Coursework Project). If I need some extra textbooks, he'll get them, and tutors and things like that. So he's very conscious of how I'm doing. Dad's always 'tried hard'. I used to have extra reports on me throughout the year to make sure I was keeping up on my work and that, because my Dad likes to see 'A's, so it's important I get on with my work.

The second way that Simon's parents are supportive is in a much more direct sense. Simon explains the role his family took in the completion of his Geography project:

So I should be able to get everything ready because my

Mum's got to type. My Mum's typing up you see because my writing is pretty awful of course My Mum's on an ordinary typewriter. She used to be a Secretary; and my Dad's getting all the photographs developed. Its a sort of co-operative effort at the moment among the family.

Parental interventions such as these favour certain types of pupils at the expense of others. Coursework performances have external referents, as resources are not evenly distributed between schools and between homes (Douglas, 1964; Douglas, Ross and Simpson, 1968; Bryne, Williamson and Fletcher, 1975; Halsey, Heath and Ridge, 1980; Fogelman, 1983). Here resources refer to both those skills and aptitudes which influence effective coursework performances and those factors which allow direct and indirect input into specific pieces of coursework.

Despite Simon's inability to organise himself systematically, he does have the capacity to sustain himself over project length pieces of work. Such a capacity is important in subjects such as Geography, as Simon explains:

And I'm glad now because I can actually see my topics starting to speed up and work, because right at the start when you are just drawing and working out what you are going to do, it begins very slowly. It is as though you can't see the end you can't see the end of the tunnel. Now because I've got a certain amount of work done, everything starts to fall together like jigsaw pieces, and now its really motoring.

This account points to the need for successful GCSE candidates to have acquired specific competencies, which do not have to be as well developed in terminal examinations. It also helps explain the higher drop-out rate reported in the first year of

the examination (P.A.T., 1988). Indeed Kingdon and Stobart (1988) refer to what they call "the shadow side of coursework demands", in which they suggest that, though coursework may have allowed students who do not perform well in terminal examinations to produce their best work, it may also paradoxically have de-motivated students who are unable to sustain their efforts over a longer period of time.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We are now in a position to draw some general conclusions from these four accounts. Weakly framed assessment settings allow formative teacher interventions, and are less reliable devices when used as parts of a formal examination system. They are also more likely to correspond with teachers' 'normal' ways of working, and are therefore better able to provide a reassuring environment to enable those pupils who perform better in informally structured settings the chance to produce their 'best' work. On the other hand, strongly framed assessment settings emphasize summative examination purposes, discourage meaningful teacher interventions and are more likely to be seen by pupils as extraneous tests.

Though a number of polarized ideologies about teaching, assessment and learning have been developed (teacher-centred v. child-centred (Plowden Report, DES, 1967); open teaching v.

closed teaching (Kohl, 1970); authoritarian v. democratic (Lippitt and White, 1958)), they have been criticised for simplifying a complex process (Meighan, 1986). The dichotomized approach developed in this chapter contrasted two styles of coursework, with teachers adopting different approaches to assessment and different approaches to teaching/assessment integration. But this chapter has also emphasized the loose coupling of teaching approaches and all forms of assessment arrangements. Though the latter undoubtedly influence the former, programmes of teaching and learning are not determined by assessment schemes, even if they extend throughout the course. The result is that teachers frequently adopt conflicting and contradictory positions on the five sets of opposing concepts we developed earlier (weak/strong knowledge framing, formative/summative modes of assessment, the production of reliable/unreliable assessment data, limited/extended amounts and types of teacher interventions in coursework processes and normal/irregular classroom practices). These themes are developed further in chapter eight.

NOTES

1. The strength of classification and the strength of frames can, for Bernstein (1971), vary independently of each other. They also determine the relative control teacher and pupil have over the transmission of knowledge. Strong classification reduces the power of the teacher because the boundaries between contents are inelastic, and he or she is not therefore free to extend those boundaries. Strong framing, on the other hand, reduces the amount of control pupils have over the delivery of knowledge, and as a consequence increases the amount of control exercised by the teacher. Collection and integrated frames

refer specifically to the type of classification. Strong classification indicates a collection code; weak classification refers to integrated codes. Both collection and integrated codes in turn vary in the relative strengths of their frames. Bernstein is therefore able to argue that, "it can be seen that the nature of classification and framing affects the authority/power structure which controls the dissemination of educational knowledge, and the form of knowledge transmitted. In this way, principles of power and social control are realised through educational knowledge codes, and through the codes they enter into, and shape, consciousness. Thus variations within and change of knowledge codes should be of critical concern to sociologists" (p.54). In effect, this means that even if the framing remains stable between different learning environments which are distinguished by different types of classification, then different manifestations of power and control are operating. So if a Humanities Department in a school changes from single subjects (History, Geography, Sociology, Religious Education) to integrated collections (Integrated Humanities, Social Education), there is necessarily a change in the educational knowledge codes being used. But, the problem is that curricula structured by weak classification may also be strongly framed, and in contradistinction to Bernstein, I would argue that it is the strength of the frame which determines the shape of the knowledge relay. Integrated collections of subjects may be taught in ways which allow pupils little control over the selection, organization and pacing of the knowledge that is being transmitted and received.

2. Gipps (1990), in the context of National Curriculum Testing arrangements, makes the point that formative and summative modes of assessment are irreconcilable within the same assessment system: "there is a debate about the extent to which any assessment system can serve both formative and summative functions without the summative overwhelming the formative. The received wisdom at the moment amongst educationalists is that the two cannot co-exist. Whether the dichotomy is put in terms of: educational/selective; diagnostic/grading; or formative/summative, the summative role will always ultimately overwhelm the formative" (p.98).

3. The Biology syllabus (M.E.G., 1986) that is referred to in this chapter has been changed. Teachers are now only required to assess pupils in four skill areas.

CHAPTER EIGHT - THE PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN SCHOOLS

This thesis has attempted to capture and conceptualize the complexity of the policy process, when a new examination technology is introduced in schools. That policy process is characterised by discontinuity, dysfunction and intermittence, with the result that fragmentation of practice occurs. Policy moreover, is not made at one site and implemented at another, but is better understood as a continuous two way flow between different sites at different moments. Since actors at these sites have different degrees of autonomy and influence, the flow of policy is uneven and splintered.

Teachers read policy texts in different ways, and this contributes to their adoption of different positions on the assessment issues that are central to an understanding of coursework: timings, locations, contents, teacher inputs, resources and parental contributions. Furthermore, teachers' interpretations and re-interpretations of policy texts, and their conceptualisations of policy issues are not made in conditions of equal autonomy. Teachers understand and implement policy within a framework of structural rules and resources (Giddens, 1984), and this framework includes biographical constraints, differential allocation of productive resources, differential allocation of persons to functions and roles, institutional properties of devolved and centralised systems of

decision-making, and the degree of flexibility or 'readerliness' in policy texts. This chapter will draw together the threads of the argument that has been developed here, and show how dislocated relationships between examination policy texts and realisation have consequences for examination comparability, educational disadvantage, and the production and reproduction of educational knowledge in schools.

COURSEWORK TIMINGS

The issue of time is central to our understanding of coursework and reflects its growing importance in social theory (Adam, 1990; Provonost, 1989; Young and Schuller, 1988). As Morrison (1992) argues, "Time is seen both as a resource for planning, teaching, learning, assessing and administration, and as a problem of allocation, scarcity, co-operation and control" (p.13). It is possible to identify a number of different approaches to time in the case study schools. The degree of management influence varied from school to school (Grant, 1989), with Lampton an example of a school in which coursework timings were heavily influenced by pressures from above departmental level (see Chapter Six). In general, it is the syllabuses that determine timings, although teachers and schools still retain some control over how they organise their coursework. Four different strategies were identified. Coursework assignments are being set as near the end of the

course as possible (for example, the Physics teacher at Tadford - see Chapter 7); throughout the course with equal regard paid to early and later assessments (for example, the Head of English at Tadford - see Chapter 5); throughout the course with unequal regard paid to early and later assessments (for example, the Biology teacher at Tidehill - see Chapter 7); and throughout the course with early assignments being re-worked at a later stage before they are submitted for examination (for example, the Head of Art at Lampton - see below).

Many teachers delay setting coursework for as long as possible so that their pupils are more familiar with the skills they need, as a teacher at Lampton argues, "Yes, we do them as late as possible, because then the pupils are better at them". This model of coursework organization is closer to the terminal assessment model, in that classwork is used as preparation for end-of-course assessment. This has the effect of narrowing the curriculum (Mortimore et al, 1986), because the skills that are taught during the course become, in effect, skills that are needed for doing well in formal assessments. Inasmuch as formal procedures have been introduced into coursework settings, there is an increasing danger of limiting the examination's ability to test all its objectives.

Other subject departments set work at regular intervals during the two years of the course, though the first and last half terms are rarely used. This allows coursework assessment to be

more closely integrated into normal practice within classrooms. English teachers in particular have adopted strategies such as these (Jeffrey, 1988; Grant, 1989). Good practice is not, therefore, dominated by the needs of assessment. On the other hand, coursework procedures were devised partly in response to a demand to raise the motivational level of pupils (DES, 1985b), in particular the lower ability and those who find external examinations difficult. If coursework is too closely integrated and becomes indistinguishable from normal classroom practice, motivational gains may be lost.

A number of variations on this approach were identified. Assessments conducted at an early stage of the course are treated as of equal worth to assessments conducted near the end. If summative purposes are emphasized, then coursework assessments may not represent what pupils are able to do at the end of the course (Horton, 1987b). We should though, be careful not to assume that later performances of pupils are always superior to early ones. As the Head of English at St Thomas' puts it: "sometimes they feel under pressure towards the end and it gets to them and you do actually see a slackening off". In general pupils' skills and aptitudes mature during the two years. Therefore, if a more accurate assessment of a pupil's worth is to be made by discarding 'worse' performances, early assessments are unlikely to be treated as equal to later ones. On the other hand, teachers in the six case study schools differ in the amount of choice they allow. At Lampton, the

Chemistry teacher organizes thirty or forty assessed practicals from which the best are chosen for summative assessment. At Tidehill, pupils taking Chemistry only complete a bare minimum.

A further variation on this sequential approach combines formative aspects of coursework assessment with the need to produce a summative assessment of a pupil's work, that at the same time represents a mature performance. The Head of Art at Lampton organizes coursework so that all the assessed project work is completed by the end of the Christmas term of the fifth year. But each project is at this stage considered to be incomplete. Pupils are allowed to use the remainder of the course to go back to work they had started at the beginning of the course, to develop and re-work each piece, and to prepare it for examination. He explains what he does in the Easter term of his pupils' fifth year: "All they had to do in that fifth term was to polish up what they'd got, so in fact they finished the course at Christmas, and we then worked on their projects marvellous relaxation". Each piece of coursework is therefore a product of embryonic as well as mature skills as pupils improve their techniques during the course.

Assessed coursework allows new relationships to be developed between preparation and performance. Within any terminally assessed syllabus there is a period of time used for preparation. Indeed the 'O' level model was that the course

prepared students for the examinations, both in the long term - the acquisition of general skills - and specifically - the acquisition of examination techniques and revision of course material. Coursework has added a third type, which is that repeated attempts at performing particular skills have now become part of the assessed course. Indeed the boundary between preparation and performance has become blurred. In that this allows a more accurate assessment of pupil capability, there are advantages; but as different teachers are adopting different timing strategies, some pupils are at a disadvantage in comparison with others¹.

COURSEWORK LOCATIONS

Subject departments, and indeed teachers within those subject departments, are making different decisions about where coursework is completed. Since examination syllabuses allow different readings (see Chapters Four and Five), this is to be expected. A variety of coursework locations were identified: the home environment; 'other' extra school environments - public libraries for instance; unsupervised or unspecifically regulated school locations - school libraries for instance; teaching rooms; even examination halls (cf. Phtiaka, 1992). The amount of control that can be exercised over coursework assignments correlates with the degree of proximity the teacher

has to their students, though examination halls with their stress on individual desk locations operate restrictive regulatory regimes.

Even when coursework is completed in classrooms, different amounts of control were being exercised. In theory, the following are controlled: teacher input into coursework assignments; pupil-to-pupil contact; time taken to do coursework assignments; the amount and quality of resources available for students; and the type of preparation that precedes it. In practice some teachers emphasize the importance of maintaining examination conditions, whilst others encourage small group work and a more relaxed atmosphere. Earlier we described the work of two History teachers (Heads of History at Tadford and Lorton). In the former case coursework assignments were completed in controlled conditions in the classroom. No attempt was made to integrate coursework into the teaching programmes. It was treated as a series of special events that took place at regular intervals during the two-year course. In the latter case, coursework was completed either at home or in loosely controlled classroom settings.

In particular, different coursework locations allow different amounts of teacher input, and different amounts and types of regulation by teachers. In some subjects, like English Literature, pieces of work completed in controlled conditions are statutory requirements to enable comparisons to be made

with pieces of work completed in less controlled circumstances (MEG, 1986). In other subjects, such as History, decisions like these are made by the teachers. Controls are established so that in theory the teacher is able to guarantee that the work they assess is the work of the individual and no one else (DES, 1985a). On the other hand, evidence from the case study schools would suggest that in many instances this is a theoretical control which does not serve its intended purpose. At Tidehill, the Head of History allows her pupils to prepare work outside the classroom and then bring in notes or completed versions which they copy out in class. Control is therefore manifested over a skill that is not being tested, the skill of copying. Even if the process involves transcribing notes into completed prose, this is not the skill that it is intended to be assessed. As she admits: "... they just copy, some Some do. And it is not a very useful exercise." Furthermore work completed in class allows control over the supply of resources. But preparation may not be evenly resourced, since parents contribute unevenly to coursework assignments. Some consider it important to help their children, others do not.

Controlled pieces of work or controls over coursework are designed to increase both the reliability of the examination and its credibility as a reliable examination. These controls may also act to diminish the importance of parental and other contributions, despite the positive benefits this may bring,

and despite the fact that a pupil may be able to produce their 'best' work in a more relaxed setting than their classroom. On the other hand, it was also found that controlled conditions in some cases allow certain pupils to perform better than at home or elsewhere, because the conditions in which they live do not allow effective learning or the production of their 'best' work. Aziz, a pupil at Carseley High School, explains:

I don't have any space at home. All my brothers and sisters, they get in the way. Sometimes I stay on after school, but my father expects me to get home and help in the shop."

As Giddens (1984) notes, space should "be regarded as of very considerable importance for the conduct of empirical research in the social sciences" (p.111). Regulatory and completion patterns with regards to coursework therefore have spatial elements.

TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS

Two broad coursework models can be identified from the evidence presented in the case-studies. Open-ended coursework allows pupils the chance to choose their own projects (for example, see the account of Geography coursework at Tidehill in Chapter Seven). Pupils are to a greater degree responsible for collecting their own resources and completing their own fieldwork. There are few time constraints and a looser word length is stipulated. It tends to involve the teacher in

serial review because the length of each assignment imposes particular problems on pupils. Most of it is completed at home, although teachers do allow use of lessons. It is usually preceded by a time for preparation, and in some cases teachers organise practice runs. In Bernstein's (1971) words, it is 'weakly framed' as it allows pupils the chance to structure their own work.

It has a number of disadvantages. Pupil load is a collective term made up from a series of subject coursework and homework demands (Kingdon and Stobart, 1988). Conscientious and hard-working pupils treat the open-endedness of such assignments as opportunities to write at length (despite syllabus stipulations). As a result they place extra pressures on themselves. Since there are fewer controls on assignments such as these, coursework reliability is more threatened. Exogenous influences may disadvantage certain pupils (teacher reviews - see Chapter Seven - tend to operate in their formative capacity and not as mechanisms of control). Because these controls, both temporal and spatial, are more loosely enforced, the length and time spent on these open-ended coursework projects may operate to demotivate pupils. Furthermore, because they are less structured and thus demand a correspondingly greater structuring from the individual pupil, they may be that much harder to complete, and this again may operate to demotivate certain types of pupils. The Head of Geography at St Thomas' School describes the problems some of

her pupils have: "they have got all this bumph in, and they are not sure how to put it together". Because they are intended to be more free-flowing and open-ended, they are harder to mark in a precise way. Open-ended approaches are better able to differentiate between more and less motivated pupils because they take longer to finish and usually involve the completion of a lengthy text.

This is to be contrasted with closed-ended coursework assignments (for example, see the account of History coursework at Tadford in Chapter Five), which tend to be structured to a greater extent by the teacher - resources are controlled, little pupil choice is offered. As a result, they are likely to be more strongly framed (Bernstein, 1971). Indeed this is seen as a positive virtue because it allows a tighter definition of achievement. The Biology teacher at St Thomas' originally offered her pupils a degree of choice over which assignments they should do. She changed her mind because she felt that she was not able to make proper comparisons between them: "It was quite hard then to compare things between people, because some people used different methods and I couldn't really see who had achieved what". Time constraints are imposed. In many cases this is not just for practical reasons, but as part of the test itself. Limits are placed on the number of words; indeed the activity is more likely to involve short answers than essay-length pieces of work.

This model is more reliable, because it is ultimately concerned with controlling the various factors that allow unreliability (Nuttall and Goldstein, 1984). It thus attempts to neutralise those factors which lead to unfairness between pupils. On the other hand, it is less likely to encourage good learning and teaching practices, and it allows assessment to dominate courses of study. It is therefore less likely to be a valid test of the objectives of the syllabus.

TEACHER INTERVENTIONS

Variation in the type and amount of teacher input into coursework assignments was identified in the case studies. Good assessment practices demand that the gap between the capability of students and its description by the use of testing devices should be made as narrow as possible (Wood and Power, 1987). But in order to achieve this, there is a danger that the context of the assessment becomes so varied from school to school that comparability of performance becomes difficult. This is especially true with the issue of teacher input. If one school allows extensive drafting and re-drafting of coursework assignments in English, and another school only allows a limited amount, then one set of pupils, given equal conditions, will produce better work.

The amount of help that a teacher feels that they can give to their pupils was quantified in different ways by different teachers in the case-study schools. The Head of English at Tidehill, for instance, comments that: "You can't get them to write something out and then correct it and they go away and write, and you mark it. That's cheating." In contrast many teachers marked draft copies of assignments which pupils then took away and re-wrote (see the account of History coursework at Lampton in Chapter Five). What is considered fair practice by one teacher is considered unfair by another. Different teachers in the different schools were interpreting the regulations about teacher interventions in different ways.

Since the extent and type of teacher contributions to formal assessments is central to this dispute, and since it is accepted that the newer forms of assessment allow greater variation in teacher interventions (compare for instance the important role taken by the teacher in the negotiation of a record of achievement with the limited role a teacher takes when supervising an examination), issues of fairness and social justice need to be addressed at both ends of the assessment spectrum.

At the formal end² are examinations conducted in controlled conditions. The principle behind an examination agenda such as this is not that there should be no significant contributions to students' performances during the period of

assessment, but that students, wherever they are, should be receiving the same amount and the same quality of interventions. In other words, students should perform in equivalent examination or testing environments. In reality this is easier to achieve when teacher interventions are kept to an absolute minimum. But when the scope of formal examination is widened to include the assessment of work completed during the course, and work which could not be completed in formal settings (much practical work for instance), then the principle of equivalent teacher interventions across different settings is more difficult to maintain. This is because in contradistinction to some reproduction theories (cf. Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bowles, 1976), and given the relative independence of classroom processes from government interventions, teachers make local decisions especially when complex settings are being used for assessment purposes.

It is moreover difficult to quantify equivalent amounts and types of interventions, because the same intervention may be valued differently by different students. Our notion of equivalence is therefore breached, even if this is not the intention. Furthermore each intervention is unique because it is likely to be initiated by the student, and because it will be time and place bound. What it will not depend on therefore is the task itself. Students, for instance, completing coursework in Science GCSEs are required to do a

series of practicals during which they forfeit marks if they ask their teacher for help. They therefore have to balance this against the possible mark loss they may sustain if they spend too long on any one part, and as a result fail to complete the task. This is one problem with the formal assessment of coursework. There is a further problem. If the assessment device is constructed deliberately to elicit 'best' performances from students, to show what those students are really able to do, then in order to prevent the recording of a false negative experience (Wood and Power, 1987) - students not performing to their theoretically capable maximum because the instructions for the assessed practical fail to trigger off the right message to enable them to complete a task which they are quite capable of doing - it may be necessary for the teacher to explain what they mean before a satisfactory assessment can take place.

It is worth looking at the dilemma in another way. Teacher interventions in classroom activities are a natural and normal part of teaching strategies. Equivalent conditions between schools and between classrooms are not considered important. The overriding principle here is what is the most appropriate action for the teacher to take to help students learn and to lay the groundwork for future learning experiences. This is clearly in conflict with the first principle we articulated, and the difference between the two corresponds roughly with the distinction between formative and summative assessment.

Perhaps it is at this point that the irreconcilability of the two modes of assessment is at its clearest (Goldstein, 1989); the argument being that teacher interventions in problem solving exercises cannot both fulfil formative purposes, and at the same time be quantified and used as moderating devices in summative assessments.

We thus have three possibilities: a) no teacher interventions in formal assessments; b) teacher interventions in formal assessments with penalties; c) teacher interventions in formal assessments without penalties. With the first we can say that equivalence of examination setting is better fulfilled than with the last two; but no allowance is made for formative assessments. Indeed, it is likely that formal coursework strategies such as these will be in conflict with normal classroom processes. The second scenario allows for feedback from the teacher to improve learning experiences, though it places restrictions on that feedback in the minds of students by allocating penalties of unknown worth to each intervention by the teacher. It cannot be considered a normal or natural part of classroom life, as the teacher continually has to remind his or her students that their performances will be valued to a greater or lesser extent as parts of a formal assessment process. Our third possibility, where teacher interventions occur without penalties, allows a closer match between performance and capability, is specifically designed as

a formative exercise and corresponds with most though not all typical classroom practices.

We are now in a position to understand more clearly the relationship between equal treatment in formal assessments and fairness. The issue is complicated. Indeed, contrary to accepted practice, assessments conducted in equivalent environments (terminal examination papers for instance) may be unfair, because if the setting is too formal - and we have already established that the more formal the setting the easier it is to achieve equivalence of examination setting between schools and students - some students may not produce their best work (cf. SEC, 1985; Scott, 1991b). If our purpose is to allow students the opportunity to perform as best they can, it may be fairer to assess in informal situations, which inevitably means that equivalence of assessment setting is difficult to maintain. Sameness of testing conditions and judgments about fairness are not inextricably linked.

PARENTAL INFLUENCES

Two forms of parental influence were identified. Parents have always sought to influence the course of their child's education by providing important resources (mathematical calculators, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, trips of historical, geographical and sociological worth), by acting as a source of

help and encouragement, by initiating their child into a set of norms that act to support school processes (Sharp and Green, 1975), and by helping with specific pieces of work when asked. The introduction of coursework into the public examination system allows parents to influence examination success in a more direct sense. Teachers are convinced that this has increased the advantages some pupils have. A teacher at Carseley High School makes the following point:

And it does certainly favour the pupils from the more advantaged homes quite definitely. More so I mean. Before they used to go into the exam and you know they'd get on with the exam; now with all this work that they're doing at home, quite a few of them have brothers and sisters who have gone through, you know, who might have done the course last year. They're doing the same books. Some parents are far more helpful. They have far more resources to provide at home, so in the coursework, certainly quite a proportion of children are at a disadvantage.

This direct input was found to be taking a number of forms: providing specific resources for coursework projects in craft subjects, writing and rewriting English assignments, providing detailed answers in History coursework, allowing practice sessions at home in Home Economics: Food, revisiting with their child fieldwork sites in Geography, and being in a position to buy appropriate books in a number of other subjects.

But these practices were not widespread. The evidence suggests that most parents are providing little direct assistance with specific pieces of coursework:

She doesn't come to us any more because we couldn't help her. (Parent from Tidehill School)

She says she can cope, but I can't help her because what they're up to now - I can't do in my case, and a lot of the things. (Parent from Tadford School)

But to sit and actually say: 'Well, we'll do this for you', or 'We'll tell you the answers', with coursework is not on, because I think when it comes to the main exams it's no good me telling her the answers now, because she's not going to remember them. I'd rather she'd try to remember them herself, or if they looked through the books. Help them by all means, but don't tell too much or else they're never going to learn. (Parent from Lorton School)

There are a number of reasons for this. Many parents do not feel competent or confident enough to help with work which appears different from and more advanced than work they did when they were at school. They have decided that they do not have the necessary technical and information skills to provide an appropriate input into coursework. Furthermore, they do not believe that it is equitable for them to provide extra help so that their child has an unfair advantage. The child him/herself operates through similar norms and is therefore unlikely to seek direct help. Parents equally may be concerned that directly helping their child will not contribute to long-term developmental and maturational progress; and as coursework in many subjects is worth only a small percentage of the total marks, they feel that directly contributing to it will make little difference to the final grade. In other words they do not rate it as important or understand its actual worth to involve themselves in it so that their son or daughter gains an unfair advantage. Indeed, the dividing line between appropriate and inappropriate help from parents is difficult to gauge. Schools and their teachers encourage some parental input to

reinforce learning processes that they have set in motion. In that direct answers are given to questions that form part of a coursework exercise, this may render that exercise not a true test of a pupil's aptitudes and capabilities because the setting constitutes an unreliable experience; but at the same time it might also serve as a learning experience for that pupil. To nullify parental contributions by an insistence on the reliability of the testing device is to lose an opportunity for learning to take place, and at the same time to render that coursework experience less than useful.

INTEGRATING ASSESSMENT AND TEACHING

The GCSE was introduced to provide different experiences for pupils and to influence directly classroom practice by more closely integrating assessment with learning (DES, 1985b). Previous chapters have highlighted the different amounts of integration of coursework assessment techniques with programmes of study. These range from practices in Drama (see Chapter 6) in which coursework assessments are made throughout the two years of the course, with early ones being treated equally with later ones (no special preparation is made for them), to History coursework where the bulk of the work may be completed in class in controlled conditions, with extensive preparation and as near the end of the course as possible (for example, see the account of History coursework at Tadford in Chapter Five).

The exercises the pupils are set do not even arise naturally out of the content of the course, but are extraneous tests of skills that have to be assessed. Thus the different styles of coursework adopted mean different degrees of integration.

Closely integrated coursework strategies have a number of clear advantages. Though they suffer from the loss of direct motivational gains in that special assessment occasions are not treated in a special way by pupils, the close integration of assessment and learning may increase motivation by allowing a better match of work with the interests and capabilities of pupils. Close integration between the two means that teaching strategies are no longer dominated by the needs of assessment - or in other words there is no teaching to the test at the expense of other objectives (Mortimore et al, 1986). The courses of study are more coherent in that less attention is paid to the demands made by the need to test pupils reliably and more attention can be paid to the overall aims and objectives of the course. Furthermore, closer integration of learning and assessment does away with the need for concentrated periods of revision, which is both time-consuming and detrimental to the assessment of higher-level skills. Revision is concerned with memorisation of knowledge and skills which can then, in the short term, be used for examination purposes. Indeed this closer integration between learning and assessment places an emphasis on skills that cannot be assessed

by end-of-course examination or in a formal setting, thereby increasing the validity of the examination (SEC, 1985).

Evidence from the case studies suggests that this close integration of assessment task and learning programmes is not being achieved. English teachers were reluctant to intervene in the completion of coursework assignments in case their contribution was considered to be unfair (for example, see the account of English teaching at Tadford in Chapter 5). Science teachers have found that conducting assessed practicals in ways in which their definition of examination comparability is satisfied has meant that they have had to make a number of artificial arrangements within their classroom - testing half the class while the other half are given a nominal task to do (for example, see the account of a Physics assessed practical at Tadford in Chapter 7). Teachers of Home Economics: Food have argued that coursework should be completed under examination conditions so that they can be sure that the work that is completed is the work of the individual candidate and no one else. As one teacher remarked:

I think this is where it (coursework) is open to abuse. Parents tell children what to do. I would control conditions to a much greater extent (Food teacher at Tadford School).

This produces a less integrated approach, with subsequent losses in curriculum and assessment compatibility.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Variability of timing, setting, teacher involvement, content and parental input into coursework assignments has been noted. Variation was found between different subjects and between different teachers teaching the same subject. This chapter has provided evidence of dissimilarity of conditions for coursework, and it is appropriate here to provide a summary of those findings. Coursework assignments are frequently conducted over a number of sessions. Some schools conducted their coursework in controlled conditions; others allowed their pupils to do it at home. Teachers in some of the case study schools were providing extensive input into coursework assignments; in others the input was minimal. The degree of inter-pupil assistance varied between coursework settings. The six schools differed in their ability to resource (teacher-pupil ratio, provision of materials) coursework assignments. Furthermore open-ended and closed-ended coursework tasks may offer pupils different and non-comparable experiences. Finally the extent of parental assistance varied from pupil to pupil, though in general this was not considered to be a significant factor³.

But though one form of reliability is threatened by the introduction of coursework techniques, there are pedagogic, learning and motivational gains. Assessment techniques that are being developed allow a different type of assessment to

take place. This is the assessment of enhanced performance (Wood and Power, 1987). Repeated attempts at assessment tasks with appropriate formative-learning strategies mean that first, assessment is focussed on individual pupils' learning needs, and second, it approximates to a greater extent to a description of what the individual is really able to do. It can thus increase the examination's predictive validity, and is a more useful descriptive device for employers and other interested parties.

EDUCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The introduction of coursework into the formal examination system has allowed us to examine empirically the relationship between formative and summative assessment, and to judge the feasibility of allowing forms of assessment that were intended to be connected⁴ to be used as selective mechanisms. It has been argued here and elsewhere (Broadfoot, 1987; Noss et al, 1987) that formative and summative assessment are incompatible and that connected assessments cannot achieve proper equivalence both between different parts of the same examination and between different populations. Goldstein (1989, p.145) argues this case in the following way: 'The reason is that in order to achieve equivalence between assessments which are linked to different learning environments (curricula), it has to be possible to separate an assessment

from a particular environment, and this can only be done by postulating effectively equivalent environments or environment-free assessments.' Coursework in the GCSE, therefore, for it to be credible as a connected, comparative device, has to be able to suggest that students are being assessed in equivalent conditions.

This thesis has served to show how, in effect (even within a small sample of environments), variation in settings - temporal, spatial and pedagogical - occurs. It occurs because curricula or learning environments, within the constraints of a formal examination system, are being constructed at the classroom level. Assessment is therefore, when it occurs, connected, because it takes place in contexts that maximise the students' ability to produce their best work, is appropriate as a formative device, relates specifically to what has been taught, and is realised within suitable time-scales. Though some teachers were treating coursework assessment in connected ways, others, conscious of the need to assess in nationally equivalent environments, were formalising the process, and as a result disconnecting assessment from learning and thereby limiting its notional ability to act formatively.

Two consequences flow from this. Though the introduction of coursework into the public examination system has on the one hand strengthened the mechanism by which knowledge is produced

and then reproduced in schools, it has also paradoxically allowed a greater variety of outcomes. With terminal examinations, it is possible to argue that a lacuna exists between curricula and assessment. Though terminal assessment technologies and their related examination syllabuses exert a powerful controlling influence on curricula, there is room, by virtue of the time-scale of the examination, for resistance to its original aims and purposes. In other words, this lacuna sanctions the possibility of weakly framed curricula (Bernstein, 1971). It needs to be made clear at this juncture that 'resistance' is not being used to suggest a particular moral agenda. Walkerdine (1990), for instance, argues that: "while an understanding of resistance is clearly important, one cannot read every resistance as having revolutionary effects; sometimes resistances have 'reactionary' effects. Resistance is not just struggle against the oppression of a static power (and therefore potentially revolutionary simply because it is struggle against the monolith); relations of power and resistance are continually reproduced, in continual struggle and constantly shifting" (pp.3-4). The introduction of coursework, though, seemed to signal a radical change, as formal assessment - one of the key elements in the reproductive process that concerns us here - was now extended throughout the two years of the course.

Foucault, for instance, has argued that knowledge and practices drawn from the human sciences enable modern societies to

classify and as a consequence control populations. Examinations, in particular, play their part in the creation of individual subjectivities (Walkerdine, 1984). They create identity. They position students within specific sets of meaning. They hierarchically arrange and sort individuals during formative parts of their lives. The examination for Foucault (1986), with its controlling and classifying mechanisms produces the truth of a situation. Indeed Foucault has been criticised for establishing an indissoluble link between power and knowledge (Habermas, 1985)⁵. Foucault argues that:

truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth, that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each one is sanctioned, the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth, the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as truth (p.63).

Here Foucault is placing human beings at the centre of a nexus of power relations, dissolving the cartesian 'I' and describing human beings in terms of a framework of discourses. An examination such as the GCSE which includes coursework allows the surveillance mechanism described above to become all-embracing, as examination is now not simply terminal but extends throughout the course.

But this is only part of the story. I have attempted to show that chief amongst those 'recontextualising contexts' (Bernstein, 1990), which are located between "universities engaged in the production of knowledge and schools engaged in the reproduction of knowledge" (Whitty, 1985, p.120), are school processes of interpretation and re-interpretation. The end result is a variety of curricula and a variety of knowledge framing episodes, with some teachers choosing to connect, and others to disconnect, assessment and learning. If the relations between primary, recontextualising and secondary contexts are fragmented, it is more difficult to accept the idea of a monolithic relay. Furthermore, connective assessment mechanisms, though they produce less reliable comparative data about students, do allow teachers and as a consequence students greater freedom to develop curricula. The reason for this is that it is the type of knowledge framing within particular assessment technologies which impacts upon curricula to a greater or lesser extent, and not the timing of that assessment or series of assessments during the two years of the course. Since continuous assessment allows for the possibility of informal and connected assessments, there is now a greater chance of teachers controlling and developing curricula, and thus ultimately of operating through weakly framed contexts.

The second consequence of my thesis is that a new category of disadvantaged students has been created. Mortimore and

Blackstone (1981) identify two types of disadvantaged groups:

- 1) those who are denied equal access to educational opportunities because of the type of school they belong to, or because of the way that school is resourced or because of the quality of teaching they receive - 'endogenous' factors; and
- 2) those who underachieve or are unable to perform well because of a variety of social and environmental factors, which means that they are less likely to take advantage of the educational opportunities they are provided with - 'exogenous' factors.

There are now students who are neither incapacitated by their home circumstances, nor denied access to educational opportunities, but are still handicapped because the methods used to assess them - in part GCSE coursework - place them at a disadvantage in comparison with their contemporaries. Variation of assessment settings between schools and classrooms makes this inevitable.

Finally I want to turn to the issue of the production and reproduction of knowledge within the policy process. In contradistinction to some of the major reproduction theories that have been developed, this thesis has sought to give actors a central role in that process. Social theorists such as Bowles and Gintis (1976), for instance, have argued that society reproduces itself through schooling by training students differentially for their subsequent roles. They also suggest that schools reproduce those forms of "consciousness, dispositions and values necessary for the maintenance of

institutions and social relationships which facilitate the translation of labor into profit" (p.129). This model has been criticised by Whitty (1984), amongst others, for assuming too passive a role for actors in the reproductive cycle, for underplaying the possibilities of resistance to these forms of subjugation, and for failing to provide an adequate account of the specificities of the mechanisms of power and domination.

In a similar vein, cultural theorists, such as Bernstein (1977), argue that class relationships are culturally transmitted through the forms of educational knowledge that predominate at important sites of reproduction:

How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control. From this point of view, differences within and changes in the organization, transmission and evaluation of educational knowledge should be a major area of sociological interest (p.85).

Bernstein has been criticised by Giroux (1983) for ignoring the way social actors create meanings through their lived experience, albeit not in conditions of their own making, and for providing a weak and one-sided notion of consciousness and human action. This thesis has sought to correct this and to treat as problematic the monolithic relay of reproduced knowledge, in so far as that knowledge is defined by the way society chooses to evaluate it. Since fragmentation of practice occurs, this allows practitioners the opportunity to adopt

weakly framed pedagogies, and to construct teaching programmes that allow alternative assessment strategies to emerge⁶.

NOTES

1. Maturation and aggregation problems with the GCSE apply equally well to the National Curriculum proposals (DES, 1989). If continuous teacher assessments are delayed to the end of courses, then they merely duplicate examination, provide no new information and are badly integrated into courses of study. If, on the other hand, they are continuously made throughout the course, those assessments are not comparable and maturational issues are artificially ignored.

2. At the formal end of the assessment spectrum are tests such as the 11+. These are time-specific, allow comparisons to be made between different populations, are disconnected from curricula and are conducted in controlled settings. 'O' level examinations, on the other hand, are time-specific, summative, comparative across different populations, connected to curricula and are conducted in controlled settings. Terminal assessments which include coursework, such as some GCSE examinations, combine formative and summative functions, are connected to curricula, and may include assessments conducted in loosely controlled settings. 100% GCSE coursework syllabuses prioritize formative purposes and contextualised assessment settings. Finally Records of Achievement are continuous, developmental, formative, multi-dimensional, non-comparative, connected to curricula and always operate in contextualised contexts.

3. Teachers frequently over-estimated the extent to which parents were able and willing to contribute to coursework assignments.

4. Goldstein (1989, p.140) explains the difference between connected and separated forms of assessment: "A basic distinction underlies what I shall have to say between assessment connected to learning and assessment separated from learning. In the former case, which I call connected assessment, there is a further distinction between assessment as part of learning and assessment as terminal evaluation of learning - a distinction roughly the same as summative and formative assessment. In the case of what I call separate assessment, its defining principle is its deliberate attempt to avoid connections with particular learning environments".

5. Habermas (1985) has criticised Foucault's 'archaeology of knowledge' in a number of ways. Since power and knowledge are

inseparable in Foucault's work, there is no way that the observer can step outside the text to judge the relative merits of what is being asserted. Foucault's epistemology has no secure foundations. If knowledge is simply created in and through particular sets of power relations, what credence can we give to any assertions Foucault makes about power and knowledge mechanisms. Furthermore, since all societies for Foucault, operate through systems of regulation, it is not possible to develop ethical criteria by which we can compare one with another. It is possible for Foucault to argue that one system is more or less efficient than another, but not that one is ethically better or worse.

6. Material from the following has been used in this chapter:

Scott, D. (1991b), 'Issues and Themes: Coursework and Coursework Assessment in the GCSE', *Research Papers in Education*, 6, 1, pp.3-20

Scott, D. (1991c), 'Developing understandings of time and pupil maturation in the National Curriculum', *British Journal of Curriculum and Assessment*, 1, 2, pp.38-40

APPENDIX 1: A DISCUSSION PAPER

COURSEWORK AND COURSEWORK ASSESSMENT IN THE GCSE

THEMES AND ISSUES

This paper is intended as a provisional outline of the project.

The project will draw on research in the fields of the sociology of education, curriculum studies, assessment and social research methodology.

A. Its primary focus will be on the demands made by MEG GCSE syllabuses on students who are assessed by coursework in different areas. It will look at the following:

1. The demands made on students by the examination boards. This will include an analysis of the syllabuses produced for the GCSE by MEG. It will examine patterns of coursework tasks. The analysis will focus on the following: timing during the two year period; quantity of coursework; type of coursework (project? short essays? practicals? fieldwork? experiments?); methods of assessment with different types of coursework; moderation procedures.

2. How the Syllabus requirements are interpreted by the teachers.

3. How teachers translate 2. into instructions for the pupils.

4. How pupils interpret those instructions

5. How pupils go about those tasks.

6. How those performances match up to the expectations of the Examination Board.

7. How those performances match up to the expectations of the teachers.

(6 and 7 are not concerned with assessment as such - that is judging the worth of the performance in the first instance. They are concerned with whether the students are fulfilling the requirements of the coursework syllabuses.

B. Initial hypotheses and suppositions

1. Children in rural schools may have problems with completing History and Geography coursework projects because they may have limited access to primary sources of information.

2. Parental interventions in coursework processes would be differentially distributed and were likely to be of greater intensity in middle class locales.

3. The amount of work students actually do may have gender implications. Coursework processes which are assessed over the two years of the course may favour the more persistent and hardworking student. Girls are therefore likely to benefit.

4. Coursework processes are of benefit to the taught curriculum, but reduce examination reliability and comparability.

C. The introduction of GCSE

1. Pupil/Teacher Relationships.

2. Styles of Teaching / Styles of Learning.

To this end the research project will:

A. Devise a methodology for investigating the effects of the assessment of coursework in a range of schools or colleges following curricula based on MEG syllabuses.

B. Provide a series of case studies based on different schools in the state and independent sectors.

C. Produce results which will feed into policy initiatives that can be taken up and utilized by the Midland Examining Group.

D. Contribute to debates in the sociology of education, in the philosophy of education, in social science methodology, and in social and educational research policy.

In particular, the research tasks can be sub-divided into the following areas:

A. To review the current literature in the area of sociology of education, curriculum studies and assessment, and research methodology.

B. To devise an appropriate methodology for the project.

C. To undertake an intensive period of fieldwork which will be based on a variety of research instruments:

1. Observation.

2. In-depth or loosely structured interviews.

3. Collection of documentary material.

4. A more formal method of collecting certain types of information, ie, questionnaires.

D. Data analysis.

E. Report writing which will include interim reports to the project's steering group, and a final research report to the Midland Examining Group.

In addition, it is envisaged that papers will be produced that will be given to professional conferences in the area of curriculum, assessment, case study methodology and so forth. Furthermore, it is intended that papers will be disseminated through journal publications, and to professional bodies.

RESEARCH TIMETABLE

The following is proposed:

A. January to March 1988

Literature reviews with an interim report to the project steering group in late March or early April. Preliminary survey of coursework assessment tasks and dates during the two year period - to enable design of main fieldwork period to take place.

B. April to July 1988

Preliminary fieldwork visits. Design of methodological framework. A report will be provided for the Steering Group by July.

C. September 1988 to April 1989

The main fieldwork period. Data collection and data analysis will take place simultaneously. It is therefore important that equal amounts of time are given to fieldwork and data analysis, and preliminary drafts of reports. In addition, interim reports for the project's steering group will continue to be supplied at intervals of four months.

D. April 1989 to July 1989

Data analysis will continue, and the production of papers based round the case study materials will be produced. If time permits a survey will also be conducted in the summer term of 1989.

E. September 1989 to December 1989

The production of the final report which might involve editing the papers that have been produced to date and, in turn, preparing a series of articles and producing a longer report for wider dissemination.

Extensive field notes will be kept.

They will take two forms:

- a) A diary or journal.
- b) Substantive notes that deal with the project itself.

It will be important to establish the ground rules as far as confidentiality is concerned. A paper on this will be produced.

WRITING

The general pattern of work on the project is such that the steering group should be supplied with all papers before they are presented at conferences or submitted to journals for publication. All papers will carry a reference to (a) the project, (b) the funding body, (c) the research centre in which the project is located.

APPENDIX 2: STAFF INTERVIEWS

In each school the following were interviewed (all syllabuses are M.E.G.):

CARSELEY HIGH SCHOOL

Head of Art and Design (syllabus no.1300, Art and Design (unendorsed); and syllabus no.1301 (Draw and Paint))

Head of Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A)

Head of Business Studies (syllabus no.1350, Business Studies)

Head of Chemistry (syllabus no.1375, Chemistry)

Head of CDT (syllabus no.1451, Technology; and syllabus no.1452, Design and Communication)

Head of English (syllabus no.1500, English A; syllabus no.1502, English Literature; syllabus no.1505, English M)

Head of French (syllabus no.1525, French)

Head of History (syllabus no.1605, History SHP)

Head of Home Economics (syllabus no.1625, Home Economics: Child Development; and syllabus no. 1626, Home Economics: Food)

Head of Mathematics (syllabus no.1650, Mathematics; syllabus no.1653, Mathematics SMP 11-16; syllabus no.1654, Mathematics M)

Head of Physics (syllabus no.1700, Physics)

Head of Geography (syllabus no.6355, Geography)

Headteacher

LORTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Head of Art and Design (syllabus no.1304, Art and Design (Textiles); and syllabus no.1301 (Draw and Paint))

Head of Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A)

Head of Chemistry (syllabus no.1375, Chemistry)

Head of Computer Studies (syllabus no.1425, Computer Studies)

Head of CDT (syllabus no.1450, Design and Realisation; and syllabus no.1452, Design and Communication)

Head of English (syllabus no.1500, English A; syllabus no.1502, English Literature)

Head of French (syllabus no.1525, French)

Head of History (syllabus no.1607, History Modern World)

Head of Home Economics (syllabus no. 1626, Home Economics: Food)

Head of Mathematics (syllabus no.1650, Mathematics)

Head of Music (syllabus no.1676, Music B)

Head of Physics (syllabus no.1700, Physics)

Head of Geography (syllabus no.1576, Geography B)

Head of Religious Studies (syllabus no.1725, Religious Studies A)

Head of Office Practice (syllabus no.2345, Office Studies and Information Processing; syllabus no.2380, Typewriting)

Headteacher

TIDEHILL SCHOOL

Head of Art and Design (syllabus no.1301 (Draw and Paint))

Head of Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A)

Head of Business Studies (syllabus no.1350, Business Studies)

Head of Chemistry (syllabus no.1375, Chemistry)

Head of CDT (syllabus no.1451, Technology; and syllabus no.1450, Design and Realisation)

Head of English (syllabus no.1501, English B; syllabus no.1502, English Literature)

Head of French (syllabus no.1525, French)

Head of History (syllabus no.1607, History Modern World)

Head of Home Economics (syllabus no.1625, Home Economics: Child Development; syllabus no. 1626, Home Economics: Food; syllabus no.1627, Home Economics: Textiles)

Head of Mathematics (syllabus no.1650, Mathematics)

Head of Music (syllabus no.1676, Music)

Head of Physics (syllabus no.1700, Physics)

Head of Geography (syllabus no.1575, Geography A)

Head of Rural Science (syllabus no.1753, Rural Science)

Head of Drama (syllabus no.1325, Drama)

Headteacher

LAMPTON SCHOOL

Head of Art and Design (syllabus no.1300, Art and Design
(unendorsed))

Head of Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A)

Head of Business Studies (syllabus no.1350, Business Studies)

Head of Chemistry (syllabus no.1376, Chemistry Nuffield)

Head of Latin (syllabus no.1407, Latin SCP; syllabus no.1411,
Roman Civilization JACT)

Head of Computer Studies (syllabus no.1425, Computer Studies)

Head of CDT (syllabus no.1451, Technology; and syllabus no.2321, Graphic Communication)

Head of English (syllabus no.1501, English B; syllabus no.1502, English Literature)

Head of French (syllabus no.1525, French; syllabus no.1526, German; syllabus no.1528, Spanish)

Head of History (syllabus no.1613, History F 1867-Today)

Head of Mathematics (syllabus no.1652, Mathematics SMP 11-16)

Head of Music (syllabus no.1675, Music)

Head of Religious Studies (syllabus no.1725, Religious Studies)

Head of Physics (syllabus no.1700, Physics)

Head of Geography (syllabus no.1575, Geography A)

Head of Drama (syllabus no.2325, Drama)

Director of Studies

Headteacher

TADFORD SCHOOL

Head of Art and Design (syllabus no.1300, Art and Design (unendorsed))

Head of Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A; syllabus no.7499, Science)

Head of CDT (syllabus no.1451, Technology; syllabus no.1452, Design and Communication; syllabus no.1450, Design and Realisation)

Head of English (syllabus no.1500, English A; syllabus no.1502, English Literature)

Head of French (syllabus no.1525, French; syllabus no.1526, German)

Head of Health Studies (syllabus no.2415, Health Studies)

Head of History (syllabus no.1606, History British Social and Economic)

Head of Home Economics (syllabus no.1625, Home Economics: Child Development; syllabus no. 1626, Home Economics: Food; syllabus no.1627, Textiles)

Head of Home Economics (syllabus no.1625, Home Economics: Child Development; syllabus no. 1626, Home Economics: Food; syllabus no.1627, Textiles)

Head of Mathematics (syllabus no.1650, Mathematics; syllabus no.1653, Mathematics SMP 11-16; syllabus no.1654, Mathematics M)

Head of Music (syllabus no.1675, Music)

Head of Physics (syllabus no.1700, Physics)

Head of Geography (syllabus no.1579, Geography E)

Headteacher

ST THOMAS'

Head of Art and Design (syllabus no.1301 (Draw and Paint))

Head of Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A)

Head of Chemistry (syllabus no.1375, Chemistry)

Head of English (syllabus no.1500, English A; syllabus no.1502, English Literature)

Head of French (syllabus no.1525, French; syllabus no.1526, German)

Head of History (syllabus no.1605, History)

Head of Home Economics (syllabus no.1625, Home Economics:
Child Development; syllabus no. 1626, Home Economics: Food;
syllabus no.1627, Textiles)

Head of Mathematics (syllabus no.1650, Mathematics)

Head of Physics (syllabus no.1700, Physics)

Head of Religious Studies (syllabus no.1725, Religious
Studies)

Head of Geography (syllabus no.6355, Geography)

Headteacher

Christmas Term - 4th Year	Easter Term - 4th Year	Summer Term - 4th Year	Christmas Term - 5th Year	Easter Term - 5th Year	Summer Term 5th Year
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ENGLISH
LITERATURE -
Scheme 3,
no. 1502,
M.E.G.

L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L
Each pupil completes a minimum of ten and a maximum of
fifteen assignments. Each assignment should take
between thirty minutes and two hours.

MATHEMATICS -
no. 1650,
M.E.G.

No Coursework assignments.
Regularly set homework throughout the two years.

GEOGRAPHY -
no. 1575,
M.E.G.

GGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGG
Coursework: Class- 20 hrs.
One Project. work & extra
home- home-
work. work.

Homework set at regular intervals throughout the two
years, except during the second half of the summer term
- 4th year.

PHYSICS -
no. 1700,
M.E.G.

10xPh
Coursework: Ten assessed practicals done in class.
Regularly set homework throughout the two years.

CHEMISTRY -
no. 1375,
M.E.G.

C C C C C C C C C C C
Coursework: Ten assessed practicals done in class.
Regularly set homework throughout the two years.

BIOLOGY -
no. 1325,
M.E.G.

B B B B B B B B B B
Coursework: Ten assessed practicals done in class.
Regularly set homework throughout the two years.

TYPING:
no. 2380,
M.E.G.

T T T T
Total time for coursework would be between 8 & 10 hrs.

HOME ECONOMICS:
FOOD -
no. 1626,
M.E.G.

F F F F F F F F F F F F
Each coursework assignment should require between two
and three hours.

HOME ECONOMICS:
CHILD DEVELOPMENT
no. 1626,
M.E.G.

CD CD CD CD CD CD CD CD
Each coursework assignment should require between two
and three hours.

Christmas Easter Summer Christmas Easter Summer
Term - Term - Term - Term - Term - Term
4th Year 4th Year 4th Year 5th Year 5th Year 5th Year

ART & DESIGN:
no. 1301
M.E.G.

A1A1A1A2A2A2A2A3A3A3A4A4A5A5A5A6A6A7A7
Classtime is used throughout; homework during termtime
- 1-2 hrs. per week, with at least 4 hrs. during the
holidays.

APPENDIX 4: LESSONS OBSERVED

In each school the following lessons were observed:

CARSELEY HIGH SCHOOL

Art and Design (syllabus no.1301 (Draw and Paint))

Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A)

Business Studies (syllabus no.1350, Business Studies)

CDT (syllabus no.1451, Technology; and syllabus no.1452, Design and Communication)

English (syllabus no.1500, English A; syllabus no.1502, English Literature)

History (syllabus no.1605, History SHP)

Home Economics (syllabus no.1625, Home Economics: Child Development; and syllabus no. 1626, Home Economics: Food)

Physics (syllabus no.1700, Physics)

Geography (syllabus no.6355, Geography)

LORTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Art and Design (syllabus no.1304, Art and Design (Textiles);
and syllabus no.1301 (Draw and Paint))

Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A)

Chemistry (syllabus no.1375, Chemistry)

CDT (syllabus no.1450, Design and Realisation; and syllabus
no.1452, Design and Communication)

English (syllabus no.1500, English A; syllabus no.1502,
English Literature)

French (syllabus no.1525, French)

History (syllabus no.1607, History Modern World)

Home Economics (syllabus no. 1626, Home Economics: Food)

Music (syllabus no.1676, Music B)

Geography (syllabus no.1576, Geography B)

Religious Studies (syllabus no.1725, Religious Studies A)

Office Practice (syllabus no.2345, Office Studies and
Information Processing; syllabus no.2380, Typewriting)

TIDEHILL SCHOOL

Art and Design (syllabus no.1301 (Draw and Paint))

Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A)

Business Studies (syllabus no.1350, Business Studies)

Chemistry (syllabus no.1375, Chemistry)

CDT (syllabus no.1451, Technology; and syllabus no.1450,
Design and Realisation)

English (syllabus no.1501, English B; syllabus no.1502,
English Literature)

History (syllabus no.1607, History Modern World)

Home Economics (syllabus no.1625, Home Economics: Child Development; syllabus no. 1626, Home Economics: Food; syllabus no.1627, Home Economics: Textiles)

Geography (syllabus no.1575, Geography A)

Drama (syllabus no.1325, Drama)

LAMPTON SCHOOL

Art and Design (syllabus no.1300, Art and Design (unendorsed))

Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A)

Chemistry (syllabus no.1376, Chemistry Nuffield)

CDT (syllabus no.1451, Technology; and syllabus no.2321, Graphic Communication)

English (syllabus no.1501, English B; syllabus no.1502, English Literature)

French (syllabus no.1525, French; syllabus no.1526, German)

History (syllabus no.1613, History F 1867-Today)

Music (syllabus no.1675, Music)

Physics (syllabus no.1700, Physics)

Geography (syllabus no.1575, Geography A)

Drama (syllabus no.2325, Drama)

TADFORD SCHOOL

Art and Design (syllabus no.1300, Art and Design (unendorsed))

Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A; syllabus no.7499,
Science)

CDT (syllabus no.1451, Technology; syllabus no.1452, Design
and Communication; syllabus no.1450, Design and Realisation)

English (syllabus no.1500, English A; syllabus no.1502,
English Literature)

History (syllabus no.1606, History British Social and
Economic)

Home Economics (syllabus no.1625, Home Economics: Child Development; syllabus no. 1626, Home Economics: Food; syllabus no.1627, Textiles)

Music (syllabus no.1675, Music)

Physics (syllabus no.1700, Physics)

Geography (syllabus no.1579, Geography E)

ST THOMAS'

Art and Design (syllabus no.1301 (Draw and Paint))

Biology (syllabus no.1325, Biology A)

Chemistry (syllabus no.1375, Chemistry)

English (syllabus no.1500, English A; syllabus no.1502, English Literature)

French (syllabus no.1525, French; syllabus no.1526, German)

History (syllabus no.1605, History)

Home Economics (syllabus no.1625, Home Economics: Child Development; syllabus no. 1626, Home Economics: Food; syllabus no.1627, Textiles)

Physics (syllabus no.1700, Physics)

Religious Studies (syllabus no.1725, Religious Studies)

Geography (syllabus no.6355, Geography)

APPENDIX 5: COURSEWORK AND HOMEWORK TASKS

NAME

DATE

A) SUBJECT

NATURE OF COURSEWORK OR HOMEWORK TASK

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

WAS IT DONE AT HOME OR IN CLASS

.....

TIME TAKEN

.....

COMMENT ON TASK

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

B) SUBJECT

NATURE OF COURSEWORK OR HOMEWORK TASK

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

WAS IT DONE AT HOME OR IN CLASS

.....

TIME TAKEN

.....

COMMENT ON TASK

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

C) SUBJECT

NATURE OF COURSEWORK OR HOMEWORK TASK

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

WAS IT DONE AT HOME OR IN CLASS

.....

TIME TAKEN

.....

COMMENT ON TASK

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

D) SUBJECT

NATURE OF COURSEWORK OR HOMEWORK TASK

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

WAS IT DONE AT HOME OR IN CLASS

.....

TIME TAKEN

.....

COMMENT ON TASK

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Note: Pupils completed these sheets of paper for five continuous weeks.

APPENDIX 6: STUDENT GCSE QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THESE SHEETS OF PAPER

1. Are you male or female? _____

2. What is the number and letter of your class for each of your GCSE subjects?

SUBJECT

NUMBER AND LETTER OF CLASS YOU ARE IN

3. How much Homework have you had to do in the last full week?

DAY OF WEEK: MONDAY

SUBJECT

TIME TAKEN

TITLE OF HOMEWORK

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

DAY OF WEEK: TUESDAY

SUBJECT

TIME TAKEN

TITLE OF HOMEWORK

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

DAY OF WEEK: WEDNESDAY

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>TIME TAKEN</u>	<u>TITLE OF HOMEWORK</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

DAY OF WEEK: THURSDAY

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>TIME TAKEN</u>	<u>TITLE OF HOMEWORK</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

DAY OF WEEK: FRIDAY

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>TIME TAKEN</u>	<u>TITLE OF HOMEWORK</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

DAY OF WEEK: SATURDAY

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>TIME TAKEN</u>	<u>TITLE OF HOMEWORK</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

DAY OF WEEK: SUNDAY

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>TIME TAKEN</u>	<u>TITLE OF HOMEWORK</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please take this home and fill it in as you do the homework. At the end of the week, hand it into your tutor.

THANK YOU

APPENDIX 7: FIELDWORK TIMINGS

TADFORD SCHOOL

Two days in July 1988

Fifteen days in September 1988

Five days in February and March 1989

CARSELEY HIGH SCHOOL

Two days in July 1988

Fifteen days in October 1988

Five days in February and March 1989

TIDEHILL SCHOOL

Two days in July 1988

Fifteen days in November and December 1988

Five days in February and March 1989

ST THOMAS' SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Two days in July 1988

Fifteen days in November

Five days in February and March 1989

LORTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Two days in July 1988

Fifteen days in January 1989

Five days in February and March 1989

LAMPTON SCHOOL

Two days in July 1988

Fifteen days in February 1989

Five days in February and March 1989

APPENDIX 8: INITIAL LETTER REQUESTING ACCESS

C.E.D.A.R.
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL

To:

. .1988

Dear

As you may be aware from the M.E.G. Examiner No.4, March 1988, I am a researcher funded by the Midlands Examining Group to look into the effects of Coursework on students undertaking M.E.G. GCSE syllabuses. Though funded by M.E.G., I am attached to a research and development unit at Warwick University called C.E.D.A.R. (Centre for Educational Development Appraisal and Research). Until January of this year, I was Head of Humanities in an 11-16 school on the west side of Luton. I will be doing my research in six M.E.G. Centres. I am hoping to spend about seventeen days in each school. The first research period will be two days in July 1988. The main research period will be ten days between September 1988 and February 1989. The final research period will consist of five days in June or July 1989. I would like to interview staff and pupils, and observe some lessons. I will be producing an interim report in April 1989 and a full report will follow in December of that year.

I realise that in a letter of this sort, I can only supply a brief description of my intentions. I hope though, that this is enough to give you a reasonably clear idea of what I intend to do. I was hoping to use your school as one of my research centres. To this end, I would like to come and see you to provide you with more information about the nature, purpose and type of research that I am proposing to do. If you feel that such research would be of benefit to your school, and in a wider sense to the educational community at large, I will contact your secretary to arrange a meeting at a convenient time and place to us both.

Mrs M.K.Abbott, Principal Assistant Secretary of the West Midlands Examinations Board has been in contact with your Local Education Authority. I enclose a copy of the letter. As you can see they raise no objections to research being conducted in their schools.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

David Scott
(Research Fellow - C.E.D.A.R.)

APPENDIX 9: SITE BRIEF

**CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
APPRAISAL AND RESEARCH**

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE EFFECTS OF THE ASSESSMENT OF COURSEWORK ON STUDENTS
FOLLOWING A CURRICULUM BASED ENTIRELY ON THE M.E.G. G.C.S.E.
SYLLABUSES**

SITE BRIEF

- A) OUTLINE OF STUDY
- B) PROCEDURE
- C) ETHICS

David Scott
Research Fellow
C.E.D.A.R.
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL

Confidential to the School

A. Outline of Study

The project's primary focus will be to look at the demands made by the GCSE on students who are assessed in part by coursework in different subject areas. The research is being financed by the Midlands Examining Group, and thus the original intention was to do the research in 100% M.E.G. Centres. This proved to be impossible; so centres have been chosen which are predominantly M.E.G. This means that consideration will have to be given to the effects of other Board's syllabuses.

I will be looking at the following:

- 1) What actually is asked of students in terms of coursework by the Examination Boards.
- 2) How these syllabus requirements are being interpreted by the teachers.
- 3) How those teachers translate the syllabus requirements into instructions for their pupils.
- 4) How their pupils actually interpret these instructions.
- 5) How those pupils go about their tasks.
- 6) How those performances match up to the expectations of the Examinations Board.
- 7) How those performances match up to the expectations of their teachers.

The Project will also look at:

- 1) Coursework assessment.

- 2) The teacher's role in the assessment of Coursework.
- 3) Changing pupil/teacher relationships.
4. Changing teacher practice.

B. Procedure

Research will be carried out in six schools. In order to facilitate the process of creating generalised theory from particular examples, procedures will be regularised. Thus it is proposed that similar numbers of pupils in each school are interviewed; a similar amount of time will be spent in each school; similar ethical and methodological positions will be adopted. It is important though, to preserve a measure of flexibility towards the approach one adopts - so that the methodology one uses is always responsive to the data that is collected.

The study will also look at parental attitudes towards Coursework.

The research will be carried out in six schools

Phase One - May 1988 - Choosing the Schools

A variety of schools has been chosen:

- A. An independently controlled, mixed, day/boarding school;

- B. An independently controlled single-sex (female) day school;
- C. A single-sex (female) urban comprehensive;
- D. A mixed urban comprehensive;
- E. A single-sex (male) rural comprehensive school;
- F. A mixed rural secondary modern school.

Phase Two - June 1988 - Negotiating access to the six schools

- (a) Initial presentation of purposes. Outline of procedure, method and ethical stance to the Headteacher.
- (b) Negotiation with the Headteacher of the means of access to the rest of the staff.
- (c) A written outline of the procedure, method and ethical stance will be left with the Headteacher. (A Site Brief)
- (d) Organisation of third phase of the Research.

Phase Three - Late June to Early July

Informal collection of initial data.

Phase Four - First three weeks in July - Two days in each school

- (a) Completion of access procedures.
- (b) Gathering of initial data (interview and document collection) from the Deputy Head about the school. [The initial data will consist of the following: The History of the School; The Future of the School; Its relationships with

its local community; Its catchment area; Its timetable arrangements; Its curriculum principles; Its examination results and examination policies; Its relationship with its Local Education Authority; Its pedagogical principles; Its ethnic make-up; Other organisational matters.]

- (c) Gathering of initial data (interview and document collection) from the Examinations Officer - Examination Results and Examination Policies.
- (d) Further interview with the Deputy Head to work out a sample of 25 pupils (same tutor group) - six of whom will be studied.
- (e) Organisation of the fourth phase of the Research.

Sample of Pupils - A Tutor Group, from which six pupils will be selected for concentrated study.

The sample will be selected in consultation with the Deputy Head. The sample within the sample will be selected in terms of:

- (a) Some form of gender balance;
- (b) Some form of balance in terms of the School's estimate of ability;
- (c) Similarity of GCSE subjects. There will of course be different combinations of subjects for different schools.

Phase Five - September 1988 to January 1989 - Ten days in each

School

- (a) Initial interviews with students.

- (b) Getting the students started with diaries.
- (c) Some classroom observation.
- (d) Interviews with teachers.
- (e) Longer interviews with students.
- (f) Collection of Coursework materials.
- (g) Collection of pupil's work, which would be a consequence of (f)

Methodology and Procedure will be responsive to the data that is collected.

Phase Six - February and March 1989 - Case-Study of Parental Involvement

Semi-structured interviews with:

- (a) Parents of children that I have interviewed.
- (b) They may be parents of children in any of the six schools.

Purposes:

- (a) To provide a different perspective on the process of completion of Coursework.
- (b) To enrich the data already gathered from individual pupils about their part in the completion of Coursework.

Interim Report - To be produced by the end of April.

It will be formative, cross-case, cross-site, anonymized, and will be used in Phase Seven of the Research.

Phase Seven - May to July 1989 - Five days in each school.

- (a) Follow-up interviews with teachers.
- (b) Further collection of children's work.
- (c) Follow-up interviews with pupils - exploring with them their diary entries.
- (d) Respondent Validation - Negotiation with participants to correct mistakes, misunderstandings and to provide further data.
- (e) Discussion with Teachers and Pupils of the content of the interim report.

Phase Eight

- (a) Writing up each school-study.
- (b) Writing up the cross-school report.
- (c) Negotiation by post of Phase Seven (Respondent Validation).

C. Ethical Issues

I will be obligated in a number of different ways:

- (a) I have a responsibility to understand properly what students tell me. I am also aware that the type of interview techniques used will determine the nature of the data - and thus I have a

responsibility to adopt the most appropriate method of data retrieval.

(b) I have an obligation to describe accurately and fairly what students say.

(c) I have a responsibility to incorporate the data that are received from individual students into a coherent pattern which accurately represents the particularistic nature of the data received from individuals.

(d) I have an obligation to act in a responsible manner towards that student; that is, an obligation to protect particular individual information from becoming the property of others because it may harm them. This obligation goes further than merely agreeing to negotiate the release of data, because such negotiation is always going to take place on an unequal basis.

(e) I have an obligation to get at the truth of the situation, and bring such information into the public domain.

(f) I have an obligation to understand properly what teachers say; and equally to allow the teachers to express themselves properly.

(g) I have an obligation to describe accurately what teachers say. The problems of negotiation apply equally well here as

they did with (b) above, since power and knowledge differentials are still relevant.

(h) I have an obligation to protect the interests of teachers, whether from internal or external scrutiny. What a teacher has to say in confidence, if it became public knowledge, may affect that teacher's chances of promotion, that teacher's relationship with their colleagues, that teacher's relationship with his or her Headteacher, that teacher's relationship with the Examining Board, and so on. It is no part of the researcher's obligation to promote positively the interests of those teachers that agree to take part, though it may be unavoidable.

(i) I have an obligation to the school - to protect its interests. Anonymity can partly fulfil this responsibility, though not completely. The researcher's data can affect negatively the image of the school in the community, the relationship of the school to the Examinations Board, the image of the school with the research community, and so on.

(j) I have an obligation to fulfil the needs of the sponsor - in the case of this project, The Midlands Examining Board.

(k) I finally have a responsibility to certain ethical principles of conduct - that one should tell the truth for instance. It will be argued that such principles are far from absolute.

This list of obligations cannot serve as a working model because they may be in conflict with each other. An obligation to tell the truth may conflict with an obligation to protect the interests of participants. Telling lies may be necessary to protect confidentiality. The granting of anonymity may distort the truth in however small a way. Moral obligations are always conditional - that is, they have consequences which cannot be subsumed absolutely under the aegis of any moral prescription. Telling the truth all the time may actually cause harm. Thus the obligations that one accepts for oneself as a researcher are always going to be tempered by the knowledge that such obligations may conflict, that they are never absolute.

Therefore, given the fluid nature of the principles that the researcher can use to guide him in his endeavours, as a general rule ownership of the data resides with the researcher. The research will be open so far as this is possible. There are two caveats to this. Since the researcher will not have a clear idea about what exactly he wants to research at the beginning of the investigation, he can only inform participants to a limited degree. Any situation involving the giving of consent is subject to the power/knowledge differentials that necessarily exist between participant and researcher. Protecting the interests of all the people involved in any research project will be difficult. Individuals and locations will not be completely disguisable. Town, geographical environment, school can be anonymised, so that only those within the school will recognise

it. But it is harder to anonymise the pattern of activity within that school which will make it unrecognisable to members of staff.

By the use of anonymity, individual responses can be protected from external scrutiny and in the nature of this project, that is important. It is very important, for instance, that no students' honest remarks about how they completed their coursework becomes the knowledge of the Examination Board, which would enable them to pinpoint who actually said what. The needs of the Examination Board will be met by generalised anonymised knowledge of events. The identity of student responses can be concealed, and needs to be concealed, from teachers within their schools, though this will not be easy to achieve. There is always going to be a tension between the demands of confidentiality and anonymity and portrayal of events. Various devices will be employed which will protect that portrayal and not breach confidentiality.

Thus:

1. The researcher will be guided at all stages of his research by sensitivity to the likely effects of that research.
2. The individual participant's anonymity will be safeguarded at all stages of the research, even if this means a slight distortion in the nature of the truth of a situation.

3. As far as possible the nature of the research will be open, in that informed consent will be obtained before a subject is interviewed.

4. The informed consent of the Headteacher will be obtained before any research takes place in their school.

5. M.E.G. will be entitled to read research reports which have anonymised the subjects of that report.

6. The Headteacher and teachers will be entitled to receive a copy of the completed research report, but would not be entitled to receive any copy of the raw data. Thus confidentiality is preserved within the school.

7. Teachers will not be entitled to receive raw data about their students. Any information conveyed to teachers by the researcher will be heavily disguised.

8. Ownership of the data resides in the hands of the researcher and the researcher will employ methodological devices to guard, as far as this is possible, against bias. But this places certain obligations on the researcher - these obligations having been listed above.

JUNE 1988

APPENDIX 10: LETTER TO HEADTEACHER OF SCHOOL 7

C.E.D.A.R.
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL

To:

19 July 1988

Dear

Thank you for seeing me.

This letter is to confirm an agreement made at our meeting. I will submit to you before publication any article or paper that I write, so that you may check for inaccuracies or bias; and so that we can, if it proves to be necessary, reach a compromise about what should go in the article. The article will of course not mention your school by name, nor any of the teachers in it by name; but the above stipulation will apply to any part of that article which concerns itself with your school. My research, it should be said, would not concern itself with the issue of state provision as opposed to independent education. In other words I have chosen two independent schools, not to judge the desirability or otherwise of privately financed educational provision over public financing of educational services, but to make a comparison in terms of certain factors by which the independent sector is more likely to be characterised, i.e. greater parental involvement in their children's education. I would hope that any judgments that I make about different kinds of school would not be made in terms of crude comparisons between the independent and state sectors. Anyway I have built into the investigation enough safeguards for you to challenge any conclusions that I may come to; and I should add that, as far as I am concerned, these safeguards are fair and essential.

Secondly you asked for a brief description of how much of a burden my research would be for those taking part. I would like to come in for about ten days in February and March 1989, and for about five days in June or July 1989. Any other dealings that I would have with the school would be conducted by post. During the first part of the research I would hope to interview those Heads of Departments that have chosen to use M.E.G. Syllabuses - nine in all - for about an hour initially. I would during that time negotiate with them about observing some of their lessons, and also about the possibility of a further interview at the end of the first period of research. I would hope to interview about six to eight pupils for a similar length of time. I have deliberately left vague what I will be doing in the second research period, because that will depend on what I find out during the first ten days. Each participant would receive a transcript of any interview that I do with them, and I would provide an opportunity for them to comment on it. Other

ethical safeguards for the participants are listed in the last few pages of the Site Brief.

I hope this adequately explains my purpose, and I hope that it clarifies the need for me to be sensitive at all the stages of the research to its likely effects. We agreed on a first meeting for 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 8th September.

Yours sincerely

David Scott
(C.E.D.A.R. Research Fellow)

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