DECISION MAKING: A STUDY IN GUIDANCE

William Bremner

Thesis presented for the degree of Master of Philosophy

University of Edinburgh

1986

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work contained
in this thesis was carried out entirely
by myself.

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W. Bremner

CONTENTS

Abstract

The thesis examines the development of guidance in secondary schools in Scotland. Particular emphasis is placed on studying how pupils learn to make decisions. This process is seen as integral to the process of education and it it is through decision making that the individual exercises control.

Considerable emphasis is placed on the role of parents in the education of their children. The study focuses on alienated families and an attempt is made to develop procedures designed to place parents and children in control of the child's education.

In considering how the individual child learns to make decisions, particular attention is paid to the relationship between consistency of learning experience and the child's development of decision making competence. An attempt is made to identify specific levels of performance and to select criteria which will indicate development.

The methods selected were chosen because they involve parents and pupils as well as teachers. They are also designed to enable the promoted guidance teacher to establish a specialist role in the school. The training aspect of this role is stressed in view of the potential for development of the guidance role of all teachers.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge and thank the following for their help during this study:

Professor N.J. Entwistle, Department of Education, University of Edinburgh, for his patience and his continued encouragement to complete what was, from the outset, an unconventional thesis.   His supportive supervision and critical comments were invaluable throughout the study.

Alistair Pollitt, also of the Department of Education, for initiating a novice into the mysteries of factor analysis and SPSS.

Alex Goodall, Principal, Wester Hailes Education Centre, for managing the guidance team and making it possible for me to carry out this research.

The teachers, parents and pupils who gave up time to talk and whose insights are reflected in the study.

M. Norquay, not only for typing the thesis but for her expertise in presentation and for the professional way she produced the finished thesis.

CHAPTER   1

BACKGROUND   TO   THE   STUDY

Guidance is used to denote the taking of that personal
interest in pupils as individuals which makes it possible
to assist them in making decisions.

(SED, 1968: 3)

1.1   The Origins of the Study

Guidance as it is defined in Scottish secondary schools, is

based on the relationship between an adult and a child (SED, 1968).

The outcome of this relationship, for the child, is a decision.

From this starting point the study attempts to explore what

guidance means for those involved, in order that the participants

in the process of guidance may function more effectively and that

the decisions which result may contribute to the pupils achieving

their potential as autonomous individuals.

The study grew out of a feeling of frustration, shared by

many teachers, when they reflect on practice in schools.   One

solution is to engage in activity, in innovation, but eventually a

point is reached at which one recognises that much activity is

intuitive rather than reasoned.   In a day to day situation when

one is faced by actual needs of real pupils it is tempting not to

make time for contemplation and reflection, yet inevitably the only way to move beyond frustration is to seek new perspectives.

The gulf between educational theory, research, and day to day practice was most surprising when encountered in a new and innovative secondary school. In well established traditional schools there is less likely to be an expectation that theory and research are directly relevant. In the school on which this study is based the discovery was more disconcerting. The staff were alive and receptive to new ideas; innovation and change had become a way of life; yet it sometimes seemed that the activity was based on subjective conviction rather than on reasoned theory and substantial evidence. It was in this context that a period of disciplined, supervised study seemed especially relevant.

From the outset, however, a difficulty was encountered. The regulations for postgraduate study clearly state that a thesis should make a definite contribution to knowledge. Does this requirement allow for other than a cumulative view of knowledge?

> The progression from the known to the unknown is characteristic of logical thought, and it probably accounts for the fact that logical thinking has so often proved itself to be an obstacle to intellectual progress. It is a device for perpetuating the assumptions of the past.

> (Kelly, 1972: 2)

> Learning is synonymous with the process of living. Man's image of man influences our alternate futures. Thought, feeling and action are indivisible, and psychological tool making may be the most productive

activity for advancing psychology through a period in
which our modes of description must change at least as
radically as did those of chemistry from the alchemists
to the periodic table.

(Harri-Augstein and Thomas, 1979: 117)

Knowing, whatever its level, is not the act by which a
subject transformed into an object docilely or passively
accepts the contents others give or impose on him or her.
Knowledge, on the contrary, necessitates the curious
presence of subjects confronted with the world.   It
requires their transforming action on reality.   It
demands a constant searching.   It implies invention and
re-invention.   It claims from each person a critical
reflection on the very act of knowing.   It must be a
reflection which recognises the knowing process and in
this recognition becomes aware of the "raison d'etre"
behind knowing and the conditioning to which that
process is subject.

(Freire, 1973: 99)

These quotations serve to illustrate the background against
which the enquiry is set and point to issues which will be examined
more fully in the context of the study.   It was established that
the study was less likely to contribute to knowledge than it was to
identify questions and develop approaches which would allow the
pupils, parents and teachers involved in the process of guidance to
understand and to learn from their experiences through cooperative
interaction.

It seemed at the outset that, in order to extend the guidance
role, teachers needed to reflect on the assumptions they routinely
made, to reinterpret their experience in guidance and to enable
parents and pupils to understand and to benefit from the guidance

process.   This study is an attempt to analyse that process and to identify approaches which are applicable in a school situation. In this respect it should be noted that the study was completed on a part-time basis with no extra allowance of time made available. The study was conceived, implemented and has been written up as part of the routine work load of a practising guidance teacher. To this extent it can be shown that any methods suggested in the course of the study have already been tested in a typical school setting.

1.2   The Guidance Role: a National Perspective

The evidence, to be found in a survey of the existing literature on guidance as it developed in Scotland, is that the guidance role was a practical response to a specific situation. Between 1950 and 1975 a dramatic change took place in Scottish secondary education as 898 secondary schools were reorganised largely along comprehensive lines into 450 schools.   During the same period the school population increased by about 70% because of a bulge in the number of children of secondary school age.   The result was a dramatic increase in the size of secondary schools. Because of this increase in size, concern was felt by those involved that individual pupils might be unable to cope in large, potentially impersonal institutions.   In 1971 the Scottish

Education Department (SED, 1971) produced a plan for a new structure of promoted posts which included the creation of promoted guidance posts.

It seems probable, in retrospect, that promoted guidance posts emerged as a practical response to a new situation in schools rather than as the result of a perception of a need for a guidance expertise in schools. Certainly there is little evidence of guidance specialism or training being required for appointment to the new posts. By 1975 all the, then existing, education authorities had appointed guidance staff, recruited solely from practising teachers trained as subject specialists.

Limited training was provided even after the newly promoted guidance staff took up their posts. The Scottish Association of Guidance Teachers and the various local associations affiliated to it, were set up largely to press for more adequate training. The report published by the Inspectorate in 1976 (SED, 1976) praised the way in which guidance staff seemed to be performing their new roles but it failed to further clarify the basis of the new guidance specialism or to define the guidance teacher's authority. Following the publication of the report, those inspectors who had been involved addressed local meetings of guidance teachers. At one of these local meetings, held in Edinburgh in 1976, guidance teachers expressed their concern at the lack of clarity surrounding their guidance duties and at the need for adequate training. That these concerns were lightly dismissed in the progress report may be

the result of the background and training of the inspectors who had themselves gained promotion based on their own subject specialisms.

> At first guidance staff felt some uncertainty about
> their duties, but as experience was gained and
> in-service grew, schools were able to set out their
> aims with greater confidence and to define the duties
> of guidance staff more precisely.

(SED, 1976: 20)

It can be argued that one result of this situation was that guidance developed as a task orientated role. In a situation where the newly appointed staff could not claim a guidance authority or specialism, they appear to have accepted the duties defined and required by the schools to which they were appointed. Task orientated guidance may also have been reinforced by those training courses which were provided . A survey of courses offered over this period tends to support an emphasis on specific duties such as interviewing, record keeping and report writing. It was not until 1981 that the National Advisory Council on Guidance, itself an ad hoc body representing the colleges of education, suggested that more was required.

> We recommend that a special study of priorities for
> research and development work in guidance training be
> carried out; and we express our views that particular
> attention needs to be paid to research into the develop-
> ment and assessment of practical skills in guidance and
> counselling.

(NACOG, 1981: 30)

The report also recognises the need to identify individuals who would be able to provide training. By 1982 there were still

few lecturers who could combine training in guidance related skills with a practical experience of developing guidance in schools. In the main the lecturers who were qualified had been trained on courses in England and Wales, courses designed to provide pastoral or counselling staff for schools outwith Scotland. These courses do not appear to be designed to qualify lecturers to train others, particularly for the guidance system as it has evolved in Scotland.

Over the years attempts have been made to evaluate guidance in Scotland. In the main these are descriptive studies and, while they identify weaknesses in the guidance systems as they evolved, they do not attempt to define or to develop the conceptual basis on which guidance stands (Bennet and Wilkie, 1975; Cassidy, 1976; City of Glasgow, 1975; Fife Region, 1976; Gray, 1979; Miller and Russell, 1978; Smith, 1976; Weir and Johnston, 1980). The list is by no means exhaustive but is typical of the interest shown in guidance over this period.

In 1974 the Headteachers Association of Scotland agreed a remit with the Scottish Council for Research in Education which reflects the headteachers' perception of the new guidance role.

> To consider the form and range of items of information
> needed to produce, for all secondary pupils, a compre-
> hensive picture of their aptitudes and interests, so as
> to enable responsible guidance staff to give them the
> best possible advice on future curriculum and/or
> vocational choice and on appropriate social and leisure
> activities; and to offer them a common form of statement

which would be generally comprehensible and which would be available to them when appropriate.

(SCRE, 1977, Remit: 1)

The "Pupils in Profile" project was an attempt to use specialists, trained researchers, to develop tools for use by guidance staff. Involvement as a guidance teacher in two of the schools involved provided a long term view of the project. There was clear evidence, from the enthusiasm of both subject and guidance teachers in the two schools, that staff recognised the need for tools such as those proposed by the project team. Staff gave generously of their free time to attend meetings and to complete the complex procedures required by the researchers. There was a frequently expressed hope that the project would enable teachers to help pupils to make sounder decisions.

The report failed to have any lasting effect on either school. In the eight years following its publication neither school has implemented nor developed any form of pupil profile. The reasons for this are worth considering. Admittedly the report is based on a remit which confuses formative and summative aspects of assessment. More importantly, however, while the report acknowledges the guidance teachers' lack of training or assessment expertise, it does not indicate how this can be resolved nor does it provide tools which would enable those involved to resolve the difficulty for themselves.

> Familiarity with assessment techniques should be regarded
> as part of the professional equipment of all teachers in
> secondary schools.

> (SCRE, 1977: 44)

Other difficulties were highlighted though staff were not helped to

resolve these.

> It was further recognised that in many subject areas
> teachers often met a large number of pupils for perhaps
> no more than one or two periods a week.

> (Ibid: 45)

> A problem frequently raised by teachers was that they
> did not see many pupils for long enough to get to know
> them in a less superficial way.

> (Ibid: 80)

> Time became a problem because teachers have to make time
> to get to know pupils.

> (Ibid: 81)

> A majority of guidance teachers did not think it would
> be helpful to feed all the information in the profile to
> the pupils.

> (Ibid: 89)

The problems highlighted in these comments continue to be

problems for guidance teachers and the involvement of pupils in

self assessment and their right to information requires closer

consideration.   The report also reveals the priorities on which

the project developed.

> An important part of the work of the working party has
> been concerned with finding a clerically efficient
> recording and reporting system.

> (Ibid: 37)

Certainly guidance teachers would not want to be clerically inefficient but most would feel that the information recorded should reflect guidance priorities and not be determined largely by clerical, recording requirements. It may be that part of the report's failure to gain acceptance was that it was based on identifying measurable data, rather than on aiding the guidance teacher to identify potential for learning, a point which will be returned to later.

What emerges, both from the report and from personal observation of the project, was that those involved failed to provide the teachers with tools which would enable them to make more sense of the process in which they were involved. The project began by making assumptions, revealed that these assumptions about teacher expertise were ill-founded, but did not contribute to resolving the difficulty. This appeared to be a crucial lesson relevant to this study. Any study of guidance is likely to be more effective if it involves the people being studied and enables these individuals to gain insights and to make their own sense of the process in which they are involved.

An entirely subjective view is that guidance staff lacked confidence in their own authority. This lack of confidence reflected the way they had been appointed and may even have been reinforced by the training they received. These staff welcomed the apparent help offered by outside experts but any relationship based on dependence is unlikely to lead to independence. The

outside experts for their part failed to perceive the needs of those involved in guidance or perhaps were constrained by a remit which did not accurately reflect the stage guidance staff had reached at that point in their development. However one views the situation, it is argued that research must involve those being studied, should enable them to take control of their own experiences and to gain their own insights into the process in which they are engaged.

Concern was expressed earlier at an apparent reluctance by guidance staff to involve the pupils in the assessment procedures. Broadfoot (1979), one of the researchers involved in the project, subsequently developed the concept of pupil self evaluation. She uses the concept of alienation, defined as a feeling of power-lessness linked to a lack of control over, or involvement in, decisions affecting one's future, to condemn existing forms of assessment which she argues reinforce failure.

Broadfoot argues that self evaluation is an essential part of achieving an integrated identity. In order to achieve this integrated identity she points to a need to establish empathy between the child and the teachers and parents who are involved in the child's attempt at self evaluation. She argues that there is a clear need for a shared understanding of the work being assessed, the forms of assessment adopted and the follow-up strategies required to enable the pupil to achieve his potential. The implication of this, as far as this study is concerned, is that

consideration must be given, in adopting procedures, whether for research, evaluation or assessment purposes, to ensuring that the strategies adopted are accessible to all those involved. If, in the course of the study, new procedures are identified, it is more likely that they will lead to change if they are available to, and understood by, pupils, parents and teachers.

Finally, mention must be made of a fresh perspective which has emerged over the period of this study. In 1981 the first Scottish Central Committee on Guidance (SCCG) was set up by the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum (CCC) with the following remit:

> To examine and clarify the role of Guidance as a whole school function including the specialist role of guidance staff and the relationship between guidance and the curriculum.

<div align="right">(SCCG, 1983, Remit, p. 1)</div>

The first report was published in January 1983. It was clearly not an attempt to present a definitive view of guidance and it concentrated on identifying general features of guidance provision. The report reinforced the guidance role of all teachers and introduced the concept of the first level guidance teacher. In drawing attention to such a role SCCG conceded that further analysis was required.

> The committee considers that a study of those schools implementing forms of guidance organisation in which promoted guidance staff train, support and manage

teachers who are responsible for guidance should be undertaken to provide evidence for or against their desirability or practicability.

(SCCG, 1983: 25)

Following the publication of an interim report in 1983, SCCG was asked to undertake discussion and consultation with a view to preparing a more substantive report which subsequently appeared in August 1985.   Given the limited resources available to the committee they seem, once again, to have discussed rather than conceptually analysed and developed, the guidance role.   SCCG were, for instance, unable to undertake or to commission the study of guidance structures mentioned earlier.

Emphasis continued to be laid on the guidance role of all teachers through the development of first level guidance.

> However it is organised, the important characteristic of the first level guidance role, as we see it, is regular daily contact between a teacher and a group of pupils permitting the establishment of a close relationship in a relatively informal situation.   The first level guidance teacher's regular contact with pupils, and the knowledge of them that results, should help him to develop a sensitivity to their personal development and create an awareness of the particular stresses and strains they are experiencing.

(SCCG 1985: 7)

It is made clear that 'sensitivity' and 'awareness' require more than daily contact.

> If the role as we envisage it is to be fulfilled it will be essential that time, support and training are offered. Time is necessary to build a relationship with a group of pupils.   Support will be required from promoted guidance staff as the first level guidance teacher

becomes actively involved in those school decisions which
affect his group of pupils. Training will be required
to develop the new range of skills which the role will
require and which pre-service training will not be able
to cover adequately, although it is there that they
should be first introduced. The establishment and
maintenance of the first level guidance approach,
therefore, requires careful work by school management
and considerable support and training from promoted
guidance staff.

(Ibid.)

In the course of this thesis it is hoped to combine a study
of one school in which first level guidance was attempted with the
study of the implications of this development for the staff
involved. Such a change in any school is likely to require new
insights by those with a first level role and also by those
responsible for developing guidance in the school.

1.3   The Guidance Role: A School Perspective

It seemed important to balance a general view of guidance
with specific developments in an actual school. The school used
is appropriate not because it is typical but because, as a result
of a commitment by all staff to the development of guidance, it
provides a wide range of guidance activities and as a result a wide
range of problems and concerns are illustrated. It also has the
advantage that the staff generated a considerable school
'literature' on these developments and, while the reports may not

be widely available as published material, they do provide a limited source of evidence on which observations can be based.[1]

When the school opened in 1978 it was the result of eight years deliberation at regional level and was an attempt to pilot community schooling. Pupils were drawn entirely from a single large housing estate of 5000 houses. Until the school opened, the estate, equivalent in size to a small town, was almost devoid of community provision and these community facilities were an integral part of the school's design.

A central feature of the philosophy and ethos of the new school was the emphasis placed on guidance. This emerged in the period before the school opened when the Principal and the senior staff produced the initial statement of intent published in the staff handbook. This handbook established a pattern which led to the production of a series of reports which document developments within the school.

Staff at principal teacher level and above were appointed two months prior to the school's opening. This gave them a unique opportunity to state and to develop the principles on which their approaches would be based and to develop the training they would require in order to implement them. When the school opened, the initial intake extended from S1 to S4, approximately 1200 pupils, many of whom had embarked on 0-grade courses designed and taught by staff who did not move to the new school with the pupils. It was

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(1) Copies of these publications can be found in Appendix A.

also generally accepted that the pupils were transferring from a school organised on extremely traditional lines to one where a radically different set of principles and rules would be in operation.

Several of the guidance staff appointed at the level of principal teacher of guidance had previously held a similar post in other schools. Most of the staff appointed had taken advantage of the in-service available to guidance teachers and had at least attempted to develop a guidance specialism. It was based on this expertise acquired on courses, combined with a number of years experience at both assistant principal and principal teacher level, that the guidance team set out to define the nature of their role and the contribution they felt they could make to the school.

The key to the guidance role was seen as the unique relationship between the guidance teacher and the pupil. To this extent the guidance team anticipated subsequent developments in guidance and became one of the first Scottish schools to stress the guidance role of all teachers and to translate it into reality. Subject teachers were given a guidance role and assigned responsibility for a group of 20 pupils. The guidance team were determined to learn from earlier developments in guidance and from the outset gave a commitment to training staff in the new dimension of their role as teachers.

Each guidance group leader was assigned a group of 20 pupils belonging to the same year group. Groups were set up on the basis

of pupil nominated friendship groups in first year and kept as stable guidance groups throughout the pupil's schooling. The groups provided the basic teaching groups for practical classes though, in subjects where the ratio was 30:1, these groups were split to create two stable classes. In this way one adult was assigned responsibility for each individual child although within this provision the pupils had a range of adults they could opt to relate to. The guidance leader's role was to ensure that every single pupil received adequate guidance. Guidance leaders met with their groups for 30 minutes at the start of every day.

Guidance leaders received training during weekly in-service time and were also timetabled in small groups for support group meetings with promoted guidance staff. A supplementary programme of voluntary residential courses was run and over a period of years most guidance leaders attended at least one course.

The staff questioned from the outset the contribution of the outside expert and attempted to develop their own approach to staff development. It is in the context of this experience that the need for school based research and a disciplined approach to self evaluation and staff development became apparent.

It is relatively easy to describe the practical developments which took place. Guidance leaders tried to establish a group identity. They tried to train the group to accept responsibility for its own behaviour. This training was especially relevant in a

school which had given a lead in abolishing corporal punishment following a unanimous decision by the staff.

The process of establishing a group identity included organisation of social activities, leisure outings and residential trips. The guidance leader was also the key contact between home and school and was given the task of establishing a relationship with the family either by involving the family in school activity or by establishing contacts through home visiting.

Guidance leaders also encouraged pupils to reflect on and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour through the use of behaviour contracts. These documents set out to define patterns of mutually acceptable behaviour agreed by both teachers and pupils. The discussions which preceded the production of these documents was valued because it seemed to increase the awareness of staff and of pupils to the impact of their actions and to the relationship between rights and responsibilities.

Once a contract was agreed it was typed and kept in a folder carried by each group. In the folder were sheets on which teachers recorded their comments on the group's behaviour. These were reviewed by the leader and the group each day during the guidance period and the group was encouraged to accept responsibility for ensuring that all the members of the group complied with the agreement. Guidance leaders worked with promoted staff who liaised with subject staff to ensure that teachers also complied with the agreement. The discussions which

resulted often led to the group supporting pupils who were encountering or presenting problems. On occasions disagreement could also lead to organised discussions between the group and the subject teacher to resolve difficulties.

The guidance groups also organised and financed their residential and social experiences. As the relationship between the leader and the group developed, it occasionally also grew a community dimension leading to involvement in activities outwith the confines of the school. Community service and involvement in community festivals were a typical manifestation of this development but the activities also included participation in local campaigns such as the protest about damp in houses.

While the guidance group provides the key to understanding the support system provided for the pupils, it was not the only provision made. Additional support was provided for the more vulnerable pupils and, in an area of multiple deprivation with a relatively high incidence of poorly socialised pupils, it was estimated that as many as 40% of the pupils required additional support.

A "special unit" based in the school provided support for up to 25 pupils at any one time. This unit specialised in disruptive pupils. A learning area operated to provide support for 10 pupils with severe learning problems in order to support them in as many classes as they could cope with. A range of intermediate groups provided a half day, weekly, support for a further 30 pupils,

giving them access to social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and other specialist staff. Promoted guidance staff were involved in short term group work with about 30 pupils and were engaged in individual counselling and case work with a further 90 pupils. On average promoted guidance staff, as a group, were engaged in family case work with about 10 families. During the period of the survey 60 pupils were involved in experimental projects within the school to evaluate alternative support systems. A further 10 pupils were placed in external provision but an ongoing contact and support was provided by the school. External provision includes assessment centre, residential special school, list D school and special day schools. On average this amounted to 265 pupils, about 20% of the pupil population, though less than half of the pupils identified by teachers as being in need of additional support.

Any pupil selected for special provision was subjected to a rigorous assessment and referral procedure. The referral committee was chaired by the deputy headmaster and anyone involved with the pupil, the guidance team and the teacher involved in the additional provision being considered, were members. Teachers, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and community workers were involved in making the decision and care was taken to see that pupils and parents were fully consulted. It is in the light of the number of referrals seriously considered by this group that it was realised that only 50% of those who required extra support, received it.

It was in the context of providing guidance training and also of developing guidance procedures and provision that the promoted guidance team began to realise how inadequately defined was the guidance role and the concepts on which it was based. The relationship between guidance specialist and guidance leader was not a trainer-trainee relationship. Both were engaged jointly in making sense of the process they were involved. in. Competition for resources and for places in the provision which existed, required more developed techniques for assessment of pupils and evaluation of practice.

While the school's practice was innovative, the conceptual framework on which it was based was open to criticism, not least by the staff involved. The teachers began to realise that guidance skills must include analytical and research skills as well as teacher training and management skills. From 1983 onwards there are clear indications that the guidance team was spending as much time on research and evaluation as on innovation and development of provision. It was in this context that it became essential to develop approaches which would enable teachers to gain insights, to evaluate practice and to assess developments in pupil competence.

1.4   Summary

Before proceeding it is worth rehearsing the argument stated so far.   Historically it can be shown that guidance evolved in Scotland as a practical response to a specific situation.   Because guidance staff were appointed without establishing the nature of guidance authority or of their guidance specialism, they were assigned tasks selected by managers trained as subject specialists. As a result a task orientated model of guidance developed and may have been reinforced by the training the promoted guidance staff received.

In recent years various groups have recognised the need for a more disciplined approach to the development of a guidance specialism.   This situation is likely to become more acute if the recent emphasis on the guidance role of all teachers is accepted in schools.   Implicit in this development may be a repetition of the difficulties encountered earlier by promoted guidance staff unless attempts are made to give meaning to the nature of the teacher's guidance role and to develop the pattern of training required to produce a guidance specialism.

In at least one school where first level guidance roles have been assigned to staff, it has become apparent that there is a need for greater conceptual clarity and for analytical and research skills by those involved.   This study recognises that this situation can best be resolved by developing techniques and

approaches which will enable all those involved in guidance —
pupils, parents and teachers — to make sense of the process in
which they are engaged. Guidance is recognised as an integral
part of the process of education. It occurs in the relationship
between teacher and a pupil, as part of the learning taking place,
and leads to the pupil making a decision. It is the nature of
that ability to make a decision which now serves as the focus for
the next chapter.

CHAPTER   2

SUBJECT   CHOICE

2.1   Subject Choice: Scotland

The definition of guidance given by the Scottish Education
Department (SED, 1968) focused attention on helping pupils to make
decisions.   One of the most comprehensive studies of pupil choices
was carried out by the Scottish Council for Research in Education
during the "Awareness of Opportunity" project (Ryrie, 1979, 1981,
1983).

The first report "Choices and Chances" (Ryrie, 1979) examines
subject choice:

> We have argued that choices are frequently not genuinely
> free and uninhibited but are rather a falling in line with
> accepted assumptions and expectations.

(Ryrie, 1979: 133)

and argues that schools should reconsider the role of the guidance
teacher.

In "Routes and Results" Ryrie (1981) develops this line of
thought and suggests that the decisions made by pupils fall into
three groups: deliberate choice, choice resulting from intentional
school influence and finally choice which results from the tacit

acceptance of a mutually understood situation. Ryrie argues that the pupils internalise school expectations which are based on a limited view of ability judged by performance in school exams.

> The examination system controls the schooling process and defines its purpose. And, overall, the concept of ability with which performance in school is equated presides as the background assumption and the unquestioned guide.

<div align="center">(Ibid: 107)</div>

Ryrie extends an earlier model of guidance (Law, 1977) to illustrate the role played by guidance staff. In distinguishing between systems orientated guidance and open guidance systems he emphasises the systems orientated guidance which was predominant in the schools studied in the project. On the evidence available, through the project, it is suggested that guidance staff tend to guide the pupils in line with the values and expectations of the school system, reinforcing the assumptions traditionally made in schools. Ryrie challenges systems orientated guidance while conceding that:-

> Decisions made by tacit acceptance of the prevailing expectations or by allocation on the part of the school may, of course, turn out to be the right ones in the light of a full consideration of all pupils' abilities, interests and individual potential.

<div align="center">(Ibid: 109)</div>

In discussing systems orientated guidance, Ryrie seems to be developing the point made in the first chapter of this study, that the guidance role was task centred and that the tasks were assigned by the school rather than resulting from the implicit guidance needs of the pupil.

Ryrie argues for an 'open' system of guidance in which the guidance staff act as 'advocates' (Law, 1977) and attempt to contribute to "more effective decision-making, to more freedom and flexibility within the system and to the development of personal autonomy in the students themselves." (Ryrie, 1981, p. 110).   He claims that a basic feature of an open system would be the involvement of teachers in attempting to broaden the concept of ability used in schools.   Ability should move beyond being a basically cognitive concept.   As well as considering the definition of the concept, Ryrie also stresses that teachers need to examine their attitude to ability.   Teachers need to be trained to value a wider spectrum of abilities.

> We need to recognise that human ability is much more
> varied than our schooling system usually indicates, that
> every young person has gifts and potentials waiting to
> blossom and that all abilities are to be valued as part
> of the many-faceted character of human life.

(Ibid: 120)

It is the intention of this study to consider the implications of this claim.   In the first chapter it has been argued that such training of teachers cannot be the product of external authority or existing external expertise.   If guidance

teachers are to achieve autonomy as advocates, it is argued that it is essential that they be enabled to make sense for themselves of the situations they encounter rather than relying on explanations and translations which they themselves have not been involved with and which may only be partially understood.

2.2   Subject Choice: England

A greater number of large scale studies of subject choice have been completed in England.   Although subject choice occurs in the third year in England, rather than the second year as in Scotland, the procedures are similar and it seemed appropriate to consider the considerable literature available.

Reid et al. (1974) undertook one of the earliest large scale studies of subject choice.   They set out to examine school procedures and, while their report represents a thorough description of these procedures, it is, nonetheless, open to criticism.   It is certainly a very full examination of the surface activities associated with subject choice.   The report does not, however, set out to identify or to analyse the basic concepts on which the teachers have based the procedures described in the study.   There is no attempt to analyse the assumptions made by the teachers and on which the teachers interpret the activities in

which they are involved. Nor does the study analyse the contexts in which the exchanges between parents, teachers and pupils occur.

Even as a superficial examination of activity, the study does make the point that over 40% of the mothers and 50% of the fathers had no recorded contact with the schools during subject choice. These figures reflect an earlier School Council report (1965) which pointed out that over 30% of families have no recorded contact with school at any point in their child's secondary education.

Reid et al. also report concern by teachers that they had inadequate time in which to get to know the pupils, as individuals, in order to assist with choices. Similarly the time available for contact with parents was felt to be inadequate. Teachers are also reported to be concerned at the lack of training they received in order to support both pupils and parents. Concerns such as these reflect earlier observations (Moore, 1970), and both studies question the school's ability to operate meaningful choice procedures. Having raised the issues, however, neither study attempts to suggest solutions.

Reid et al. argue that schools must evaluate their own procedures. They suggest that researchers should be involved in order to support and to coordinate these activities. The research contribution is identified as suggesting measurement instruments for use by teachers, help in collecting and analysing data and in the analyses of such data. Helpful though this model of cooperative research might be to schools, it does not seem to go

far enough.   In both the research reports and the proposals, Reid
et al. appear to neglect the need for conceptual analysis and an
analysis of the contexts in which choices are made.

Woods (1976) adopts just such an analytical approach.   He is
concerned not simply with describing procedures and reporting the
comments of those involved.   He questions the assumptions and
analyses the concepts used and the contexts in which the process
takes place.   At a surface level subject choice gives the
appearance of taking place at a fixed point, relatively late in the
child's schooling, at which all pupils encounter the same range of
options.   The various options are apparently equally accessible to
all pupils, of equal worth, and determined solely by ability.
Woods argues this is a myth.   Behind the facade many pupils face
limited options, of considerably less value than those available to
the able minority, and find that major constraints have been placed
on their choices earlier in their school life.   In the real school
and social context a change in procedures will do little to counter
the social influences which limit the options of these less
fortunate pupils.   Without necessarily accepting Woods' entire
argument, it does point to the need for a deeper analysis of the
interactions between parent, pupil and school and of the contexts
in which these interactions are interpreted.   This raises
questions about the teachers' understanding of the procedures, the
range of structures required to support pupils in making choices
and the nature of the teachers' role.

Hurman (1977) develops this line of thought even further in her analysis of choice procedures. She questions the extent to which genuine choice exists in school and suggests that schools create a ritual which enables the institution to meet its own needs while appearing to be concerned for the needs of the child. She points to the danger of subject choice becoming a self perpetuating system which consumes valuable teacher time without contributing to the child's development.

Hurman places emphasis on the child's developmental process rather than on individual incidents of choice. Within such a developmental process, Hurman points out that there may be a danger that premature freedom may restrict future choices. Compulsory elements in the early stages of the child's education may provide a support structure which will enable the pupil to develop the competence needed for more complex decisions later. Hurman makes the point that, by providing gradually increasing ranges of choice, the Swedish education system provides more controlled opportunities for pupils and parents to learn to make choices.

Weston (1979), in a follow-up to the Hurman study, develops the argument. She suggests a way of reaching beyond the myth of choice. She suggests that schools should give up the search for a perfect choice procedure, within an attempt to create an ideal school, and should adopt a more realistic stance. They should develop the concept of negotiating within existing processes. Such negotiation would not imply a compromise but rather a

realistic process in which pupils, parents and teachers develop their understanding of the process in which they are involved and develop their shared ability to exercise more effective control through decision making.

Weston argues that parents, pupils and teachers should combine to become more effective curriculum makers and that the study of the way they interact should become a feature of that curriculum. In order for tripartite negotiation to be feasible there must be school structures and procedures which provide the opportunity to share knowledge and which allow each party access to the power and control required to contribute to the process. Weston argues that the logical group to initiate the negotiation are the teachers. While this may be a pragmatic approach, it is dangerous. Unless the parents and the pupils are involved from an early stage they may learn once again to perceive themselves as less in control and regard teachers as exercising control through their expertise. The teachers would be regarded as in authority as well as being an authority.

Teachers need the perceptions and insights of the parents and of the pupils if the new process of negotiation is to be effective. It is likely to be the only way to avoid the old trap of paternalism evident in Weston's description of the schools she studied. The process is likely to require time for teachers, parents and teachers to interact. Teachers are likely to need training in the new skills required to facilitate negotiation and

to accept the new roles and relationships negotiation implies. To this extent the argument reflects that made by earlier research but with a new dimension added. Parents, pupils and teachers will now share their perception of the development of decision making competence and their interpretation of the contexts in which choice is encountered.

Burgess and Adams (1980), in a study not directly related to subject choice, explore the implications for schools which attempt to share control with parents and pupils. They suggest that a major structural shift must take place in the organisation of schools. They stress the subject based emphasis in the curriculum and the way in which the subject department organisational structure dominates the authority and control aspects of the school organisation. Any shift in control would require new management structures, and new skills for staff who would find themselves in new roles and in new patterns of relationship with each other and also with parents and pupils.

> The new relationship would undoubtedly demand different skills from the teachers but they are skills which the relationship itself would be the most powerful end and spur to develop.

(Burgess and Adams, 1980: 169)

The analysis made by observers of the Scottish approach to subject choice mirrors that made by researchers in England. Raffe (1984) for instance compares the arguments of Weston (1979) with those made by Ryrie (1979, 1981, 1983). In both cases the researchers argue that choice is restricted because those involved

in the process do not analyse the concepts and the assumption on which decisions are based. They argue that, in both countries, decisions made at a relatively early age reduce the options available in the later stages of education.

> We would argue that young peoples' decisions are
> influenced less by the content of the available
> educational provision - its intrinsic educational
> quality or relevance - than by its context and in
> particular by the relation of provision to structure of
> educational and occupational selection.

> (Raffe, 1984: 218)

By 'context' Raffe makes it clear he means a situation in which young peoples' norms and perspectives are shaped by the assumptions they share in common with family and school. It seems that in order to change these contexts a logical first step would be for those involved to attempt to question the assumptions they make and to attempt, in redefining the context, to gain control over it.

Both Ryrie and Raffe instance the concept of 'ability' as an example of the way in which redefinition might contribute to a change of assumptions and thus of the context in which pupils encounter choice. They stress that it is not only a case of defining ability in a wider sense than simply cognitive ability but that, as other aspects of pupil competence are identified, it is also vital to consider the way these aspects are perceived by those involved. Unless any new concept of competence is regarded as useful and valuable by teachers, parents and pupils, it is unlikely that a redefinition of ability will have any impact.

Nor will progress be made until critical consideration is given to the implications such changes may have for those planning programmes of in-service and staff development. Similar attention should also be given to preparing parents and pupils for the role they will have in any future development. In a situation where "expertise" should not be taken for granted, one implication may be that there is a need for a new relationship to be established. A relationship within which staff, parents and pupils mutually strive to understand the contexts and the processes they are engaged in.

Burgess and Adams (1980) have stressed the implications for school organisation. Raffe (1984) also stresses the dominant influence of a subject based power structure in schools. In Scotland the introduction of Standard Grades, and the additional centralised control which may result, may tend to reinforce traditional structures. If teachers, parents and pupils are to form relationships based on negotiation and advocacy, they will need procedures which will provide insights into the situations they encounter. In so far as the relationships are likely to lead to decision making, the procedures may have to be those this study is attempting to identify.

2.3   Subject Choice: Regional Level (Scotland)

Subject choice procedures have been studied at school level in both England and Scotland.   At regional level in Scotland there are also policy and in-service patterns which may prove relevant. A survey of activities in one regional education authority reveals an interesting pattern.   Over the period we have been looking at, 1975-85, the titles of the courses and the publications emerging in the region conform to the pattern already identified.

To begin with the training courses and conferences focused on providing more effective subject choice procedures.   By 1980, however, a new emphasis had emerged.   Attention focused on alternatives within the school structure, including special units and alternative provision in some school timetables for specified groups of pupils.   By 1981, the region may have been entering another new phase.

A conference was held on a Saturday in 1981 to examine Responsibility Education.   The speakers were from the Department of Educational Studies at Edinburgh University and from Moray House College of Education and they produced a conceptually sound analysis of education for responsibility.   The conference was well attended and the concepts appeared to be welcomed by the teachers present.   Several schools expressed an interest backed by an undertaking to commit staff to developing the ideas.   By 1984 it

was virtually impossible to find any remaining signs of attempts to
develop the concept of responsibility education in the region.

The arguments had been well presented.

Our essential premise is that we are concerned with
developing opportunities for responsibility within
education.

(Ashley, 1981: 4)

In the course of the conference it was argued that children
were often denied responsibility in schools.   The point was also
made that teachers were also denied significant participation in
the decision making aspects of education.   Such teachers could
hardly be expected to demonstrate to pupils how to make decisions
or to contribute to developments in schools designed to give
control to pupils when teachers felt alienated and powerless
themselves.   In spite of acknowledging this situation, however,
the speakers proceeded to recommend that teachers should create
situations in which children could learn to make decisions.   It
seems possible that this may have contributed to the project's
eventual lack of impact.

At the time it seemed strange that the emphasis was on
creating situations.   As these were described at the conference,
they appeared to resemble existing experiences provided for pupils
within controlled social education programmes.   These programmes
of social education seldom make use of actual situations and there
is rarely a chance for staff to work with pupils to gain control
of real situations.   The speakers seemed not to have made the

radical leap which was demanded by their arguments. If teachers

and pupils were to engage in exercises in responsibility within

education, it seemed logical these should be based on real

situations. Social education classes rarely provide the

experience of real responsibility and have little effect in

relation to the teachers' or pupils' control of the education

system in which they work.

On the one hand it was argued that:

Our approach requires a response by the total institution,
the management of the institution, the policy making of
the institution, the whole personnel of the institution,
or else it is doomed to failure. (Ibid: 6)

On the other hand the proposal for implementation was exactly

that kind of limited programme which had failed in the past. At

this point the speakers appear to have predicted the outcome of

their own proposals and the available evidence suggests it failed

as predicted. This is unfortunate given that the conference was

an attempt to get teachers to consider their actions in a more

analytical way. The definition of responsibility is worth

recording.

Responsibility - in the sense of a person's capacity
to be accountable for his or her conduct - requires a
socially evolved consciousness which monitors action
"responsively" in respect of its meaning and social
consequences. On the other hand, responsibility - in
the sense of an evaluative response to action, "socially
responsible" - comprises an attitudinal set which
primarily has a social genesis.

Following this the components of the process are: the
capacity to monitor the actions of self and others, to
make an evaluative response and to implement this in a
given context. This process requires dialogue, whereby

the child establishes values, negotiations of group
frameworks with no presumption of authority by teachers
to reach collective and individual decisions.

(Sharp, 1981: 30)

The conference failed to confront the challenge illustrated

by Raffe (1984) or Burgess and Adams (1980).   Mention was made of

alienation of teachers.   The point was made that responsibility

cannot be learned in a school structure which denies an experience

of exercising responsible choice yet the conference did not

encourage the participants to consider their own experiences and to

look at ways of influencing real structures.   Even less did the

speakers encourage those involved to look at ways of developing the

participation of parents and of pupils in real responsibility.   If

guidance is really about decision <u>making</u> and is truly to be a

creative act then these issues must be faced.

In this study it is argued that the priority is not to

develop theory so much as to develop strategies which will enable

teachers, parents and pupils to engage in creative decision making.

These strategies will need, by implication, to enable those

involved to translate decisions into action by exercising control

within existing educational structures.

> In this respect responsibility education draws attention
> to the need for educators and educated to regain greater
> control over the content of genuinely educative experiences
> in our schools.   It seems important to realise at the
> outset of any commitment to responsibility education that
> changes of a fundamental nature in our educational practice
> may be required.

(Ibid: 35)

2.4   Subject Choice: School Level

A shift in emphasis which has been identified at national level, repeated in developments at regional level, can also be seen to apply to developments at school level.   In the case of the school being studied, the observations which follow are based not only on an actual observation of developments but also on an analysis of the extensive literature published within the school.

Between 1978 and 1981 a series of working parties produced reports dealing specifically with subject choice procedures and the arrangements made by the school.   Attempts were made to involve the maximum number of parents and to make staff available for consultation by pupils and parents.   Efforts were also made to ensure that pupils received the maximum information about the courses available to them.

The pupils received carefully prepared handbooks describing the courses.   The language was carefully selected to convey information clearly to all ability ranges.   Pupils also received recommendations, and departments were only allowed to make positive recommendations so that every major curricular area was forced to ensure that they offered courses suitable for pupils of all abilities.   Departments arranged to demonstrate new courses and new approaches to all pupils.   A day was set aside so that all second year pupils were free to visit any department or member of staff to enquire about courses and to seek advice.

During this time guidance support was provided by group leaders who, over a year and a half, had developed close relationships with the pupils.   A series of meetings were held for parents.   Staff explained the courses at open meetings;   every parent then had the opportunity to arrange appointments with guidance staff and with subject teachers and were allowed as much time as was needed to resolve any difficulties which arose.   Staff were available in the evenings if required.   By 1981 the school was offering an extensive provision to enable pupils and parents to make choices.   Families who did not contact the school were contacted by home visits to ensure that every family had access to the support they might need.

By 1981, however, the reports indicated that staff were beginning to question the validity of these procedures.   This did not reflect a concern at the amount of time required, both during the school day and voluntarily in the evenings, but rather a questioning of the outcomes.   If anything, the alternatives proposed looked even more demanding of time.

The criticism was based on the staff's awareness of the outcomes of the choice procedures.   In third year the number of pupils who resented being in classes and who felt they had had no choice did not seem to change.   The drop out rate, the absenteeism and the level of apathy in the classes remained constant.   Staff who had worked with children in the area prior to 1978 felt that the procedures had produced no change.Motivated children probably

knew what they wanted without exhaustive support and alienated children remained unaffected by the process.

In this same period, 1978-1982, the school had also developed the range of alternative provision described earlier. Allied to this innovation there existed a programme of in-service training in which the staff had attempted to develop their own expertise. In the context of their innovations, the staff had learned new roles and worked in new relationships, with each other, and with parents and pupils. The insights gained from these experiences seemed to suggest an alternative approach to subject choice. As a result staff engaged in a pilot study based on a sample selected from a typical second year. This study is described in full by Malcolm (1985).

In brief, it was an attempt to create a new structure of relationships between teachers, pupils and also their parents. It also provided support for staff in developing a fresh perspective on the roles and relationships encountered in the new situation. A major outcome of the study was a commitment to create a new structure for pupils entering their first year at the school. Allied to this commitment was a clear realisation that new roles and new relationships required a new approach to staff development.

It was clear to those involved that there were no existing authorities to whom they could turn. The lesson for this study is that innovation requires new expertise to be developed. Staff development requires techniques and approaches which enable those

involved to interpret the process they are engaged in, to engage in self directed learning. To do so is not to turn one's back on existing theory or to reject the expertise available. It does imply that those involved must learn to exercise control of the process they are engaged in and the structure they create. Once again it is emphasised that those involved include parents, pupils and teachers.

2.5   Summary

An examination of subject choice in Scotland and England suggested that choice should no longer be viewed in the context of individual incidents such as subject choice but in the context of the development of decision making competence. The process by which decision making competence is developed is that part of the process of education which is the particular responsibility of guidance staff.

Research suggests that, if real development is to take place, it may require restructuring of the way learning is organised and managed in schools. Any new structures which are introduced will require an extension of the teacher's role, involving new skills and also a new relationship with parents and pupils. The intended outcome is that teachers, parents and pupils should be able,

together, to confront the real world and to negotiate change in the situations they encounter.

The case for a broader concept of ability was made by several of those who examined subject choice. If schools could involve teachers, parents and pupils in redefining ability, it seemed likely that this would challenge the assumptions normally made about many children and a redefinition of the context in which they found themselves would result. The new context would be one in which it became possible to facilitate the development of greater pupil competence based on the recognition of a wider range of potential.

New contexts imply new roles which require new training and inevitably schools would need to identify new trainers. A training role for promoted guidance teachers emerges and by implication a need for methods and procedures which will enable them to become authorities and specialists in developing decision making competence.

The insights identified at national level were reinforced by examining guidance developments at regional and school level. Once again the need for promoted guidance staff to develop a specialist knowledge of the development of decision making competence, to train teachers and to involve parents and pupils was highlighted.

CHAPTER   3

REVIEW   OF   EXISTING   THEORY

3.1   Outline of the Proposed Review

At this point in the study it was clear that consideration
should be given to the insights available within existing theory.
Where this theory was expressed in language, or depended on
concepts which did not translate freely into the experiences of
those involved in school guidance, it seemed it would be less
likely to contribute to their control in the guidance process.
When theory demands a level of technical expertise not accessible
to those to whom it applies, there is a danger that the theory may
reinforce the authority of the theorist while alienating those for
whom it was intended.

In undertaking a review of theory, priority was given to
identifying theory which enabled those involved in guidance to
generate their own insights into the process they were engaged in.
As a result of this emphasis the task of reviewing resulted in the
identification of three major theorists and the work of
George Kelly, L.S. Vygotsky and Martin Fishbein became the focus of
this part of the study.

3.2   The Theory and Methods of George Kelly

The potential value of Kelly's methods may owe a great deal to his origins as an educational psychologist working in a school situation.   Kelly's personal construct theory seems to offer methods which could be valuable to teachers and a theory which was especially relevant in the context of education.   Critics have argued that personal construct theory has too narrow a base and is predominantly cognitive, yet Kelly (1969) expressly denies this and demonstrates convincingly that it does encompass cognitive, conative and affective aspects of the individual's development.

Kelly views man as essentially an active creature striving to make sense of his environment.   He points out that the best way to know a child is to begin with the child and to listen to the child's construction of experience.   Personal construct theory suggests methods of eliciting the child's constructs and of analysing these.   Such methods indicate an alternative approach to the study of the child.

It has been usual to identify what teachers consider to be major events or major influences on the child and to attempt to establish, through observation of the child, a causal relationship. Conventionally teachers study the contexts in which the child develops and they interpret the child's experience in the context of home, school and community.

Kelly stresses the child's construction of these experiences
and the interaction between experience and construction which he
regards as the basic learning process.   The child's construction
of its own experience may not be obvious to the adult observer who
may be observing the experience from a different personal construct
perspective.   Each child is unique and, in this sense, the only
authority on its own life because only that child is engaged in
living it.   If teachers can gain access to the way a child
construes experience, they will not only understand that child but,
as they compare children's constructs, new patterns of relationship
between experience and learning may emerge.   In so far as children
are unique, teachers are reduced to individual case studies.   If
they can identify common or shared constructs held by groups of
children, then other forms of research become possible.

In realising the importance of the child's personal
constructs, however, teachers also become aware of the ways in
which they construe their own experiences.   Personal construct
methods not only give access to the child's interpretation of
experience but they also enable an examination of the teacher's own
construct systems and the construct systems of those who have been
identified as significant adult or peer influences on the child.
In the context of this study, which has stressed the tentative
nature of theories and the assumptions they reflect, personal
construct theory presents the possibility of a more critical

examination of the constructs held and of the way in which they influence behaviour.

Personal construct theory offers the promise of access to the way the child, the significant peers and adults, the teachers with whom we wish to share our theory and the way we ourselves construe experience. Not only do we obtain access but we obtain it in a way that can be shared with these others so that the assumptions we make can be checked out with them and so that they can form their own alternative interpretations. Facilitating construing for adults and pupils may develop their understanding and their skills in giving meaning to their own experience. This may lead to a new understanding of teaching and learning.

> Didactic teaching consists of feeding pupils with facts
> and ready made concepts. Such an approach may fail, in
> its own terms, through neglecting to enforce first the
> nature of the child's pre-existing construct system;
> and is bound to fail by any criteria which measure the
> pupil's capacity to cope with new information. The
> creative act is one in which new frameworks and patterns
> are applied to phenomena and didactic teaching denies
> the student the experience of converting his bewilderment
> into a search for new construction.

<div align="center">(Ryle, 1975: 30)</div>

This description of didactic teaching applies equally to didactic forms of research and statements of theory. If instead we can develop a research process which includes personal construct awareness we may be able to involve teachers more easily and may also be able to involve parents and pupils. As people become more involved in a process which heightens their awareness, they may gain more control over their lives and we may be able to counter

feelings of alienation. Teaching may become a process which enables pupils to learn from their own experience rather than a process which emphasises the authority of the teacher. Research may become a process which ceases to emphasise the control of the experts and which enables teachers to reflect on and to interpret their own experiences.

> The aim of science is conventionally stated to be prediction and control. The aim of personal construct theory is liberation. This is achieved through understanding. Control in any complete sense is a dangerous myth.

(Bannister and Fransella, 1971:200)

Personal construct methods consist of two elements. Constructs are elicited and constructs are then analysed. For the purposes of this study the emphasis will be on the former. Extensive methods, including computer analysis, are available for the analysis of construct grids but at present they are insufficiently developed for use in schools. They also involve a level of expertise which at this point would act as a barrier to their adoption by teachers. The emphasis in this study is on developing a process which involves staff and it seems unwise to adopt techniques which cannot be shared. Eliciting constructs on the other hand can be shared by staff as can the discussion to which this leads.

3.3 The Theory and Methods of L.S. Vygotsky

In developing his theory, Vygotsky (1934) lays considerable stress on adult-child interaction and as a result has produced a teaching approach especially relevant in schools. In Vygotsky's approach, potential is viewed by comparing what the child can achieve with adult help with what the child routinely achieves unaided. The difference between the two performances is the child's zone of proximal development and is a measure of the child's present potential for learning. Teaching directed within this zone is most likely to produce learning and development of the child. This has been described by Vygotsky (1934) as the teaching dimension.

In arguing for the importance of Vygotsky for educational psychology, Sutton (1978) makes the following case:

> The process I see is from practice, which we evaluate,
> to theory that generates new practice and so on. At
> the moment practice is determined by all sorts of things
> but rarely by that. I want to intervene and change.

> (Sutton, 1978: 46)

Sutton argues that at present we act on an ad hoc basis in schools and rarely empirically validate our activities.

Vygotsky developed an approach which enables us to analyse the development as it takes place in a child:

> We are faced with the following state of affairs: a
> child is able to grasp a problem, and to visualize the
> goal it sets, at an early stage in development: because
> the tasks of understanding and communication are
> essentially similar for the child and the adult, the

child develops functional equivalents of concepts at an
extremely early age, but the forms of thought that he
uses in dealing with those tasks differ profoundly from
the adult's in their composition, structure and mode of
operation.

To discover the higher forms of human behaviour we must
uncover the means by which man learns to organize and
direct his behaviour.

(Vygotsky, 1934: 55)

Vygotsky proceeds to suggest a method of studying the process

of concept formation.   This method was based on observing the

child manipulate wooden blocks of varying sizes and shapes.   The

characteristics of the blocks are indicated by nonsense words and

in the course of the experiment the observer checks how the child

gives meaning to these nonsense terms or concepts.   In the course

of this study an attempt will be made to combine approaches

originating in personal construct theory with Vygotsky's

experimental approach.

If pupils are encouraged to manipulate cards with the names

of people they know, or descriptions of experiences they have

encountered, it may be possible to begin to understand the process

by which they develop cognitive, conative and affective competence

in decision making.   Vygotsky himself, makes clear the link

between the development of cognitive concepts and mastery of

intentional behaviour.

Learning to direct one's own mental processes with the
aid of words or signs is an integral part of the process
of concept formation.   The ability to regulate one's
action by using auxiliary reasons reaches its full
development only in adolescence.

(Ibid: 59)

The importance of the child's experiences in developing

maturity is also stressed:

If the environment presents no tasks to the adolescent,
makes no new demands on him and does not stimulate his
intellect by providing a sequence of new goals, his
thinking fails to reach the highest stages, or reaches
them with great delay.

(Ibid.)

The "sequence" of events is of particular importance.   If

the stimulus is not appropriate to the zone of proximal development

or the stage of learning achieved by the child, learning will not

take place.   The role of the teacher, the adult-child, interaction

is also essential if the intention is to facilitate learning.

In "Language and Thought", Vygotsky (1934) emphasises the

cognitive aspects of language development.   There would seem to be

no reason why the study should not be extended to consider how

language and thought extend into action.   Patterns of intentional

behaviour are likely to be as distinct from thought, as Vygotsky

argues thought is from language:

We studied inward aspects of speech, which were as
unknown to science as the other side of the moon.   We
showed that a generalised reflection of reality is the
basic characteristic of words.   This aspect of the word
brings us to the threshold of a wider and deeper subject
   - the general problem of consciousness.   Thought and
language, which reflect reality in a way different from
that of perception, are the key to human consciousness.

> Words play a central role not only in the development of
> thought but in the historical growth of consciousness as
> a whole.   A word is a microcosm of consciousness.

(Ibid: 153)

Consciousness, however, also depends on experience, on
behaviour and on the experience and control of intentional
behaviour through the ability to make decisions.   Language,
thinking and behaviour have an element of independence and an
influence on each other which amounts to interdependence, which
must be studied if we are to understand and to promote decision
making competence.

At one stage in a child's development, adult-child
interaction may consist simply of an abstract discussion of a new
pattern of behaviour and the mature child may learn from this
exchange.   With a less mature child, however, it seems likely that
a concrete experience of the new behaviour, supported by the adult,
may be required.   In order to decide which is appropriate we must
experiment further with Vygotsky's approach in order to become more
proficient at identifying pupils' zones of proximal development in
the widest possible sense.   We must identify patterns of behaviour
the child can perform with adult help and compare these with
behaviour when there is no adult intervention.   If we can develop
methods to achieve this, we may be able to trace the child's
development of decision making competence.

3.4   The Theory and Methods of Martin Fishbein

In attempting to identify and to define decision making
competence, in this study attention has already been focused on the
ability to make an evaluative response to experience.   To do this
we require methods which give access to the ways in which pupils'
attitudes and beliefs develop.   In studying the pupils'
development of value system we are not primarily concerned with
making value judgements about the values held by the pupils but
rather we are concerned with the way in which any value system
develops.

It is of course possible to study the pupils' value
judgements in the context of personal construct theory but it was
anticipated that this would simply reveal existing constructs and
might not contribute insights into the development of those
constructs.   Serious doubts were raised when alternative
approaches were attempted.   In the main these were based on
specific attitude instruments which, as a result of attempts to
pilot them with pupils, appeared to be of doubtful validity and
reliability.

The theory of reasoned action developed by Fishbein, however,
appeared to be both relevant and practical.   The theory as
described in Fishbein (1967, 1980) and Fishbein and Ajzen (1975)
was also presented in person by Martin Fishbein at a conference at
Edinburgh University in 1982.   The theory of reasoned action is

based on the premise that most human behaviour is rational and the result of conscious decisions. Fishbein provides us with a framework for analysing the person's conscious decisions. Emphasis is placed on the intention behind the behaviour, which is formed in the light of the individual's perception of the advantage to be gained from the action balanced by the individual's perception of the social consequences of the action.

When we indulge in intentional behaviour we act to gain advantage. This may imply personal advantage or may relate to improving the way in which significant others regard us. Altruistic behaviour can be included provided we realise that, as individuals, we ourselves may be significant, and that self esteem is a factor. Diagrammatically this can be represented as follows:-

Belief about behaviour
and resultant outcomes → Attitude to
behaviour

Intention → Action

Belief about attitude
of significant others → Influence of
including self   significant others
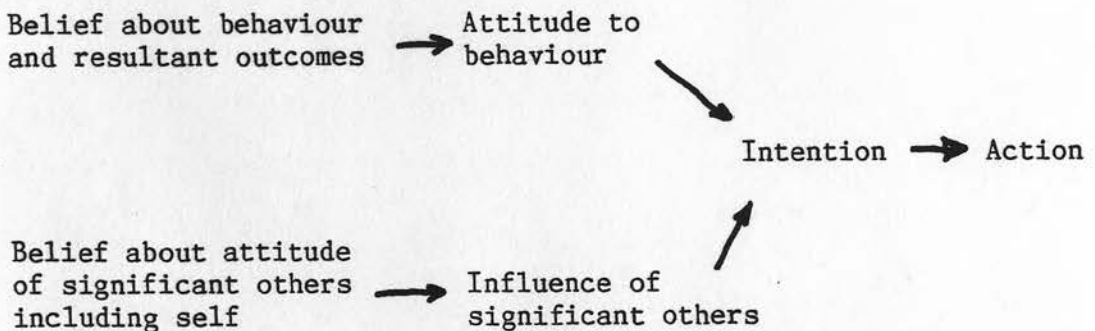
This provides a framework against which we can analyse an individual's behaviour. At each point it is necessary to elicit from the individual their beliefs and the significance they place on others and on themselves. Personal construct approaches to

eliciting this information appear to be relevant.   Kelly's advice
that the best way to find out about a person is to ask that person
is once again relevant.

The relative importance an individual assigns to declared
attitudes must be weighed against the individual's declared
relationship with significant others, including self, and checked
in the light of that individual's actual behaviour.   Once again
the theory also suggests the possibility of mathematical analysis
and once again the point is made that, until greater expertise is
acquired as the result of teachers using this approach, it is
unlikely that the data provided will lend itself to stringent
mathematical analysis.

CHAPTER 4

SELECTION OF METHODS

4.1   Research Design and Methods

In the light of the observations made earlier about the

impact of research on those being studied, the intention at this

point was to select a research design which would open up the study

to allow a greater degree of participation by those who, in the

past, had been the objects of research into decision making.   This

did not imply an outright rejection of existing research design.

> To think dialectically is to decree the obsolescence of
> cherished concepts which explain even one's recent past.
> One of the tasks of a true dialectician, however, is the
> ability to move beyond the past without repudiating it
> in the name of new levels of critical consciousness
> presently enjoyed.

(Goulet, 1974: vii)

If the dialectic is to be opened up to those participating,

teacher, parent and even pupil, care will have to be taken to

ensure that the techniques selected do not require a degree of

sophistication or technical expertise beyond that possessed by the

participants.   This may challenge the methods normally associated

with academic tradition but simplicity of approach need not be a

denial of academic discipline.

In recent years research has gained access to a range of mathematical models and statistical techniques, allied to sophisticated computer programmes. One spin-off of these developments may have been the alienation of some who are keen to be involved in research. In the third world countries we are beginning to realise that the technology developed and appropriate for an advanced industrial society is not suited for use in less developed countries. Groups such as Oxfam are developing alternative technologies of more use in developing countries.

If teachers, parents and pupils are to enter into dialogue, and, through debate and discussion, gain insights from research, there appears to be a need for an alternative technology which does not exclude their participation, by requiring too high a level of technical expertise. Such methods must be simple but this does not mean simplistic and the methods selected must reach the appropriate levels of validity, reliability and objectivity. Methods which are too sophisticated are likely to increase the alienation of those who feel they do not fully comprehend them.

Sutton et al. (1978) argue for a fresh approach to educational psychology which will focus on what occurs in real school situations. If teachers are helped to select the terms they adopt, to define the concepts they use, they may gain greater insights into the experiences they encounter in the situations they seek to control. The logical extension of this would seem to be that this claim could equally apply to the parents and to the

pupils thus enabling them to exercise control and to make decisions.

The point has been made that new approaches should not reject earlier practices. Within the research tradition, one of the most helpful statements was that of Kerlinger (1969). Kerlinger begins his discussion with Pierce's definition of the method of science:

> To satisfy our doubts .... therefore it is necessary
> that a method should be found by which our beliefs may
> be determined by nothing human but by some external
> permanency - by something upon which our thinking has
> no effect .... The method must be such that the
> ultimate conclusion of every man shall be the same.
> Such is the method of science. Its fundamental
> hypothesis is this: There are real things whose
> characteristics are entirely independent of our opinions
> about them.

(Pierce, 1955: 18)

There undoubtedly is a reality beyond mere human opinion and subjective interpretation but at our present state of development it must be challenged that our access to objective facts is extremely limited. Even in the physical sciences, which to the non physicist may appear to be objective and real, an element of subjective interpretation exists. Certainly when one discusses the frontiers of physics, particle acceleration theory for instance one begins to see less distinction between the physical and the human sciences.

At present we must interpret all experience and we must compare this with the interpretations of others involved. In order to negotiate our agreed interpretation, which is accepted by those involved as approximating to truth, we must follow Sutton's

suggestion and examine the meanings we assign and compare these with the meanings we routinely adopt in day to day conversation. Any methods developed must reveal the language we use to interpret experiences as well as making clear the nature of the experiences themselves.

Kerlinger further describes the contribution of science to theory.

> A theory is a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relationships among variables with the purpose of explaining and predicting phenomena.

(Kerlinger, 1969: 11)

This definition draws our attention to terms such as "construct", "concept", "relationship", "variable" and "predicting", which are worth further consideration. It also appears to imply a permanence for theory which can be challenged.

> A concept is a word that expresses an abstraction formed by generalisation from particulars.

(Ibid: 32)

In the course of the study so far the point has been made that 'guidance' is a word introduced in the first instance by the Scottish Education Department. Since then it has emerged as an entity which is proving to be very difficult to define. The meanings of 'guidance' can best be analysed through a consideration of the generalisations which are evident in the exchanges between those involved in guidance. A study of guidance is a study of

meaning related to practice, of in fact, the process of guidance in action.

> A construct is a concept, deliberately or consciously
> invented or adopted for a specific scientific purpose.
> (Ibid.)

In the context of this study attention will also focus on personal constructs. This does not conflict with Kerlinger's definition in view of Kelly's view of every man as a scientist.

> A variable is a property of a concept that takes on
> value.
> (Ibid.)

Bloom (1979) argues that in the infancy of educational research a restricted number of variables was commonly used. Variables such as age, sex and even social class featured because they were relatively easy to define and, it was assumed, to identify. Bloom argues that these variables (he calls them measurable variables) were selected precisely because it was possible to assign values to them. The techniques available to research dictated the outcomes of research. To counter this Bloom persuades us of the value of alterable variables.

> It is the shift in variables used which to me is central
> to the new view of education. It is this shift which
> enables researchers to move from an emphasis on prediction
> and control to a concern for causality and the relations
> between means and ends in teaching and learning. It is
> this concern which has resulted in new ways of under-
> standing, explaining and altering human behaviour.

> (Bloom, 1979: 2)

Bloom suggests that our choice of variables should be influenced by our desire to make sense of the relationship between

the concepts we adopt. If we designate specific variables as alterable, this does not imply that we accept others as unalterable but simply that we focus out attention on the designated alterable variables. Bloom has introduced a new perspective to terms such as relationship and prediction as well as to variable.

Once we focus on a specific variable it may be important to assign a specific meaning to it. Wilson (1972: 1) describes assigning meaning as, "as much a creative act, as a discovery or description" and emphasises the contribution made by careful definition.

> It is as much a matter of making clear distinctions as of making already existing distinctions clear.

(Austin, 1962: 72, quoted by Wilson, 1972)

The nature of the distinctions, made clear by the definitions, may be psychological, sociological, or any of a range of ways of perceiving and interpreting reality. The meaning adopted should be clearly linked to the nature of the validating process being used at that point in the study. This is part of the process of operationalising the concept.

> An operational definition is a definition that assigns meaning to a construct or variable by specifying the activities or operations necessary to measure the construct or variable.

(Kerlinger, 1969: 34)

Attention has briefly focused on prediction and on relationship but more requires to be said.

Prediction is considered to be an aspect of theory.
That is when from the primitive propositions of a theory
we deduce more complex ones we are in essence "predicting".

(Ibid: 12)

It is this wider view of prediction that may serve us better

than a notion of prediction linked to a simple cause-effect

relationship where prediction seems to lead to precise control.

In a process such as education or guidance we may be able to

predict that a particular action is likely to contribute to the

process but it is very unlikely that we will be able to predict the

actual outcome.   This is partly because it is impossible to

control the other intervening influences and also because at the

centre of the process is a person who has free will and is

therefore unpredictable.   There is, however, one kind of

prediction we can make and that is, that without a specified action

or variable, then the process may be held up and development may

not take place.   The relationship is not if x, then y but rather

that without x, y is unlikely.

Scientific research is systematic, controlled, empirical
and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions
about the presumed relations among natural phenomena.

(Ibid: 13)

Control is likely to present difficulties in interpersonal

research except that it may be possible to isolate cases where the

designated variable was not present as a matter of course rather

than as the result of research intervention.   The relative

impossibility of achieving objective evidence has been discussed

previously but to accept this argument is not to deny the need to
attempt to validate subjective belief. Kerlinger also refers to
"hypothesis" which he compares with "problem".

> A hypothesis is a conjectural statement, or tentative
> proposition about the relationship between two or more
> observed phenomena or variables.

> (Ibid: 14)

> A problem is an interrogative sentence or statement that
> asks: What relationship exists between two or more
> variables

> (Ibid.)

In most research literature considerable emphasis is placed
on stating hypotheses. One result of this has been discussed by
Glaser and Strauss (1955). Premature focusing, it has been argued
by them, can result in diverting attention away from important
broad considerations. If we move too soon to state a hypothesis,
the variables we select may divert attention away from important
aspects of the process we are contemplating.

Glaser and Strauss (1955) argue that theory should be
grounded in experience. This implies that the early stages of a
study will require a detailed analysis of all the data available
and that the theory should be based on an exhaustive scrutiny of
all the available data. If these data are accessible to those
involved, then the theory which emerges may, in the words of Glaser
and Strauss, "be more accessible to non research professionals."
The argument that the examination of data should precede as well as
follow the formulation of hypotheses has been developed especially

by those who argue for illuminative research.

> In interpretative studies, data are the source of
> hypothesis, of interpretation, they precede any
> theorising or explanation which takes place.

> (Cohen, 1980: 27)

Cohen argues that the interpretative researcher is in a
position to negotiate and reconstruct meanings with those involved
in the activity being studied.   Any action will have a meaning for
the actor and a separate meaning for the observer.   This is an
argument which was well developed by Harre and Secord (1972) who
claimed that the defect of traditional studies was that they
engaged in inadequate conceptual interpretation, taking no account
of the meanings assigned by the participants.   The effect of this
is even more marked in studies where people are not only
participants in the study but also the focus of the study.   To
this extent it matters not only what meaning they assign during the
study but to what extent the insights of the study affect their
future behaviour in a way which changes it from the behaviour
actually studied.   To this extent it seems important that the
techniques developed should be designed to give those involved
direct access to the range of meaning they adopt and on which they
base their actions.   What Harre (1979) describes as:

> .... the mutual inextricability of the social and the
> individual, neither of which is fully independent of the
> other: social events involve the meeting and matching
> of individual projects: individual action involves
> interpretative procedures of social and collective origin.

> (Harre, 1979: 123)

Harre emphasises the need to develop methods of analysing episodes and accounts; behaviour as observed and meaning as assigned by those involved. This will be developed in the study to provide the basic data on which the early stage of the study will be based.

In the discussion so far several points have been raised which indicate the general principles on which the research design selected for this study will be based. An emphasis has been placed on developing approaches which produce data which are accessible to, and can be comprehended by, those involved in the process being studied. In this case the process is the guidance process, itself an integral part of the process of education, and the participants include teachers, parents and pupils.

The methods should enable those involved to focus on what happens in real situations. Sutton (1978) suggested that the movement was from definition, through insight, to control. Definition is interpreted as exploring and clarifying the meanings actually used in the process rather than as assigning specific meaning. The process of definition is a process of negotiation in which meanings are explored and the nature of the relationship between those aspects of experience, illuminated by the meaning, is made clear. Guidance, for instance, can have meaning which is revealed in terms of psychological, sociological or historical realms of meaning. Once the nature of the relationship is clear,

the nature of the data required to examine the relationship can also be specified.

The study will require methods which give access to the language "in use" of those involved. The terms and concepts will require to be related to the actions and experiences to which they apply. The relationship between language and action or between meaning and practice will be considered in order to select and progressively focus on specific aspects of the guidance process.

Emphasis will be placed in the initial study on grounding any theory which emerges by analysing as wide a range of guidance related data as is possible within the limited scope of this study. These initial stages will be defined by a statement of the problem (Kerlinger, 1969). The study will then focus on a selected alterable variable in order to test a specific hypothesis. The relationship specified in that hypothesis will reflect a developing process rather than a simple cause-effect interaction.

The stages proposed for the initial study are as follows:-

Stage 1.   A content analysis of reports published by teachers in the school selected.

  2.   A consideration of teacher talk, focusing on concepts identified in the content analysis (stage 1).

  3.   A content analysis of a random sample of pupil records.

  4.   An analysis of teacher accounts of encounters with pupils and parents.

5. An analysis of structured conversations held with parents.

6. Interviews with pupils.

7. An attempt to specify alterable variables.

8. An attempt to develop the tutor's role as the key to observing, interpreting and recording pupil behaviour.

9. An analysis of the patterns of pupil personal constructs.

10. An attempt to identify pupils' zones of proximal development.

11. Analysis of pupils' formation of attitudes and beliefs in the light of the theory of reasoned action.

12. The development of specific instruments for use with pupils.

At each stage the assumptions formed will be tentative and subjective. The concepts identified and the data relevant to these concepts will be shared with those involved, teachers, parents and pupils, in order to explore the range of meaning each assigns to these experiences and, where possible, to negotiate an agreed range of meanings. In the sections which follow each stage will be considered in more detail.

4.2   Methods based on General Research Theory (Stages 1-8)

Stage 1:   Content analysis

Content analysis of written material is a relatively
established research method (e.g. Holsti, 1968;   Travers, 1969;
Cohen, 1980).   The more sophisticated approaches use 'categories'
and 'units of analysis' to reflect the nature of the document being
analysed.   In this case the application was relatively simple.
The intention of the publications was clear.   They represented an
attempt by the teachers to be accountable and to communicate their
intentions and to describe school practice to a wider public.

The category on which emphasis was placed by the study was
related to pupil decision making and the documents were searched
for concepts relating to decision making.   The 'units' or concepts
identified were then discussed with teachers, parents and pupils to
see what meanings they associated with them.

The reports examined can be seen as representing the views of
most teachers in the school.   In every case the document was
produced by those teachers most involved but it was also fully
discussed and accepted by the entire staff before being released as
an account of school practice.   Because of the extensive thought
and debate which preceded the release of these papers it can be
assumed that they represent the most disciplined use of language by

teachers in the school to describe their intentions and their actions.

Stage 2: Teacher talk

Once a limited number of concepts have been identified an attempt will be made to record the meanings assigned to these terms in informal teacher talk.   It was considered possible that a different range of meanings might emerge.   Any difference in meaning between the disciplined use of concepts in published papers and the meanings assigned in actual conversation was likely to be important in an attempt to examine how teachers interpreted their experiences and their actions.

Stage 3: Pupil records

The pupil records, consisting mainly of report cards and primary-secondary transfer forms, seemed to provide an interesting combination of teacher language and teacher action.   The comments recorded on the reports reflected the language the teachers used.   The reports themselves represented school practice.   They were a basic communication with parents and provided the only permanent basis on which long term decisions about the pupil, or decisions made with the pupil, could be based.   They were also the only longitudinal record of pupil decision making which existed.

At the very least the pupil records were the only record of home-school contacts.

Stage 4: Accounts

As with content analysis, accounts represent a well established approach adopted by researchers (Cohen, 1980; Harre 1978, 1979).   In the study an account is used to designate a spoken record of a specific encounter between a teacher and a parent or pupil.   Each account reflects the perceptions and constructs of the person giving the account and should not be regarded as an objective record of what actually happened.

From the outset it was realised that accounts serve a valuable function as a tool for staff development as well as contributing insights to research.   The method, based on the use of triads, was highly developed in the school.   A triad consists of three people, an interviewer, interviewee and an observer.   The interviewer questions the person giving the account and helps to elicit as accurate a record of the encounter as possible.   The task of the observer is to identify the subjective bias or assumptions being expressed in the interview.

The observer should be able to draw the attention of the other two to the ways they are perceiving and construing the original encounter.   By using non teachers, as well as teachers, as observers it is possible to introduce new perspectives on

situations.   When the method was developed for in-service purposes, social workers, sociologists, psychologists and doctors were used as observers.   At a different level, and dealing only with accounts of encounters which did not raise questions of confidentiality, it was possible to use parents and also pupils as observers.   The method was not suitable for use with any parent or any pupil indiscriminately.

Stage 5: Structured conversations

The normal research approach to eliciting responses from parents would be to use a questionnaire or an interview. Structured interviews (Cohen, 1980) are certainly the easiest to analyse and to convert into data.   They also appear to be objective and fit more easily into the research tradition.   The prior consideration in this study, however, had to be the maintenance of the relationship built up between the family and the school.

A considerable amount of teacher time and school resources had been devoted to establishing a relationship between the teacher and the family.   A great deal of effort had gone into making the family feel in charge of what happened in that relationship. There was a concern shared by the researcher that, if parents were allowed to perceive themselves as the objects of research, rather than as participating partners, their alienation might be reinforced.   Several research projects had been carried out on

families in the area and the feedback received by the school was
that the parents did not feel involved in the outcomes of the
research.   In many cases the parents stated that they had not even
been informed what the outcomes were.

Structured conversations were designed to avoid these
problems.   Each conversation took place in the context of a
genuine attempt by the school to work with the family for the sake
of the child.   Each contact occurred for a reason, mutually
unconnected with the research, except that it was related to
helping the family and the child make a decision.   In the context
of these conversations, parent and teacher were able to reflect on
the relationship which existed between the parent and the school
and it was anticipated that this would allow sufficient structure
to be built into any conversation.   In the course of each school
year every family was involved in at least one conversation about
their child so it was possible to select either a random sample or
specific samples from the year group.

Any insights gained were shared openly with the parents both
to maintain the participatory control of the conversation and also
to check out with them the assumptions being made.   The nature of
the relationship was of paramount importance.   In a relationship
in which the parent feels their control is enhanced, it seems more
likely that an honest, as opposed to a calculated, response will be
elicited.   If the pupils observe their parents to be in control

and on an equal footing with teachers, it is probable that this will reinforce the development of the pupils' competence.

Stage 6: Pupil interviews

Talking to pupils also presented problems. Given a counselling background it was not difficult to get even the most inarticulate pupils to respond and certainly the school selected had a higher ratio of these pupils than was usual. From a research point of view, however, these counselling interviews rarely produce objective data. The counsellor is involved in using a range of varied techniques to stimulate responses so that not only are the responses open to subjective interpretation, they may not always be responses to identical input. The considerations of the counselling interview, however, seemed similar to the research considerations. The aim in both was to help pupils to reflect on experience and to begin to understand the ways they individually made sense of experience.

What is recorded is the way pupils perceived and explained their behaviour. This may not reflect the intentions they formed in the situation, as it was encountered, nor may it be an objective account of the behaviour.

Stage 7: Alterable variable and hypothesis

In the light of the data obtained, an attempt will be made to identify a specific alterable variable and to form a hypothesis which will be examined more fully in the final stages of the study. While it is not anticipated that a single variable will produce major insights into the development of decision making competence, this study is obviously constrained by the limited time and resources available. Examination of one hypothesis may, however, provide a general model on which teachers, pupils and parents may be able to base participatory exploration of the decision making process.

Stage 8: Tutor role

The first level guidance teacher, called the guidance leader in the school being studied or more commonly the group tutor, may provide the key to future attempts to record pupil behaviour. Simple observation of physical movement may provide an apparently objective record of behaviour but until it is interpreted in the light of the pupil's intention, it is unlikely that progress will be made in understanding pupil development. Once again the subjective element is critical to any method adopted.

The group tutor will be in a position to ensure that access is available to a range of pupil behaviour in a variety of contexts

and over a period of time. The methods adopted must also give parents and pupils access to the observations made and the interpretations suggested. At secondary stage, it is likely that access will be needed to well developed primary records which reveal pupil development in a range of behaviour.

If we are to avoid the criticisms levelled by Ryrie (1981) or Raffe (1984) the tutor role will be required to focus attention on the full spectrum of pupil development, and tutors will require a developed range of observation and recording skills. Schools will also need to consider how tutors gain access to the pupils' perceptions, constructs, intentions and behaviour in a sufficiently wide range of contexts and over a significant period of time. Stage 8 is intended to be a preliminary investigation of the problems schools might encounter.

4.3 Methods suggested by the Earlier Consideration of Specific, Related Theory.

Stage 9: Personal Construct Theory

The earlier analysis of personal construct theory revealed that there are two distinct aspects to be considered. The methods suggested in the literature enable us to elicit constructs.

Separately, there are also analytical methods which enable the relationship between constructs and between elements and constructs to be considered.

Eliciting constructs gives access to the ways in which individuals appear to construe their experiences. The methods have been developed and applied within the school with pupils and teachers, though rarely with parents. At a subjective level they enable discussion with teachers and pupils of the ways in which they appear to make sense of their experience. At a initiative level they may contribute to critical awareness but it is when an attempt is made to develop the methods in order to produce quantitative data for analysis that difficulty is encountered.

A range of techniques, including computer analysis of grids, was considered but these failed to produce consistent results which could be used to substantiate relationships. This appears to reflect the present level of development of grid analysis rather than to challenge the potential of such analysis in the future. At a national level there is little evidence of a major development in the application of grid analysis. At a regional level a group of teachers, educational psychologists and social workers have been meeting over several years to discuss the applications of repertory grid analysis. Once again the evidence available is that the results of such analysis are inconclusive.

Stage 10: Methods suggested by the theory of

L.S. Vygotsky

The experiments conducted by Vygotsky (1934) involved children manipulating wooden blocks.   In this study the blocks will be replaced by personal construct cards on which will be written the names of pupils or adults known to the child.   Other cards will be used on which are written brief descriptions of situations or experiences encountered by the child.   It is anticipated that, by encouraging the child to manipulate the cards and to discuss, comparing and contrasting, the people and experiences they represent, it may be possible to begin to perceive how the pupils interpret and conceptualise their behaviour.

An alternative approach will be based on Vygotsky's emphasis on the importance of the adult-child interaction and on identifying the child's zone of proximal development.   Children of varying general maturity will be selected and attempts will be made to teach new behaviours.   The nature of the support required to ensure that the child learns a new pattern of behaviour is likely to be indicative of the level of development achieved by the child. Pupils who are able to demonstrate new patterns of behaviour, study skills for instance, after an introduction to general principles, are likely to be more developed than pupils who require to have specific examples demonstrated, and these pupils more mature than

pupils who need to be given experience of new behaviours, then reinforced and rewarded before the behaviour is adopted.

Stage 11:

Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action, which was discussed earlier, included a method which has two aspects to it. The theory presents us with a conceptual framework against which a person's beliefs and attitudes can be examined.   Separately the theory develops a formula which suggests it is possible to analyse and measure the relationships between the variables involved.   At present, it is felt that the mathematical analysis is insufficiently developed, especially for use with less mature children.   Emphasis will be placed on using the conceptual framework to analyse the ways in which pupuls form intentions. The framework can be restated as:

Pupil belief about behaviour ⟶ Attitude to behaviour

Intention (Decision) ⟶ Behaviour

Pupil belief about significant others including self ⟶ Subjective influence of others
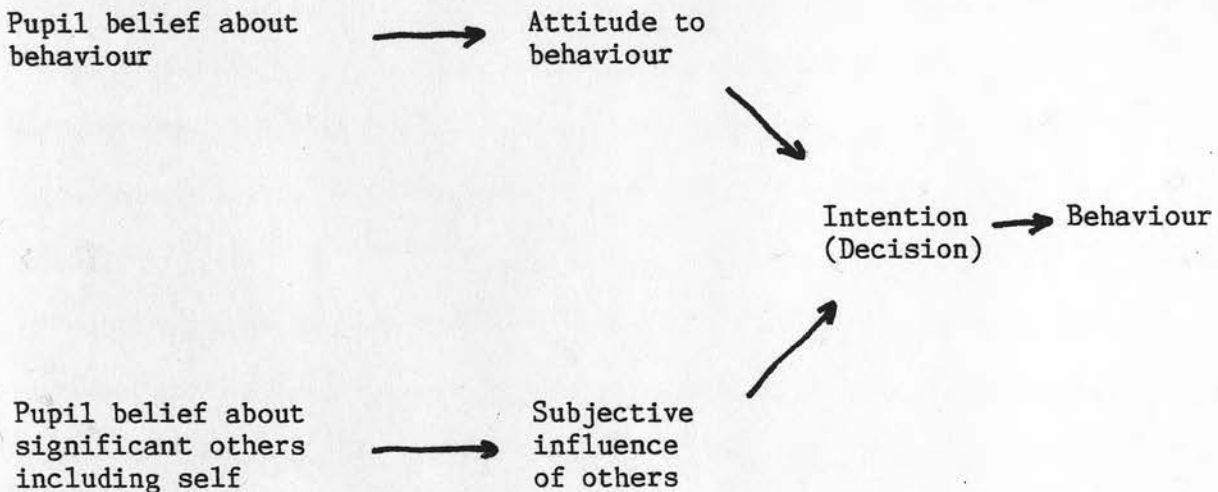
The relevance of this structure to individual pupils will be considered in the light of interviews with pupils and an analysis of their personal constructs.

4.4   The Development of Specific Instruments for Use in the Study

About one third of the total time and energy devoted to this study was spent on an attempt to develop specific instruments which might contribute quantitative data.   The eventual output of this effort is minimal and there are several reasons for this.

Emphasis must be placed on the nature of the pupil population involved, including as it did a higher than average ratio of pupils of low maturity.   It appeared in the course of the study that inconsistency of response marked the response style of a significant number of these pupils.   Granted the mathematical approaches to analysis available through the use of statistical methods such as factor analysis allied to computer programmes such as SPSS (Nie et al., 1975), could have coped with this, but not, it is argued, on the basis of the limited sample available in one school.

It is also argued that the statistical theory available has outstripped the procedures used to generate items for inclusion in potential instruments.   Either large numbers of items for factor analysis are assigned or a sounder logic than is evident in the

approaches adopted so far must be developed. In line with earlier arguments stated in the course of the study, it is pointed out that it would be important, if not essential, for the teachers involved to have mastery of the logic underlying the instruments and of the statistical theory on which the analysis is based. When this argument is extended to include parents and pupils, real difficulties emerge.

Consideration was given to using existing instruments. Two emerged which were found to be useful in stimulating conversations with pupils. These were the Lewis Counselling Inventory (Lewis, 1978) and "What I do in school" (University of Lancaster, 1978). These were not selected at random but, from a range of instruments used, were the only ones the children found easy to understand and to respond to. Permission was granted to use both of these instruments.

They did not appear to be ideal in their original formats. The Lewis Counselling Inventory contained items relating to family which were rejected in case parents felt that they were intrusive. The inventory also contained scales which were not directly related to relationships and which seemed less immediately relevant to the study. "What I do in school" contained items which reflected a mixture of behaviour and attitude items. The pupils clearly found it easier to respond to items which asked them to reflect on specific examples of behaviour (A) than to items which asked them to reflect on their attitude to behaviour (B).

A.   Does your mind wander during lessons?

B.   Would you like to be the quickest worker?

("What I do in School", University of Lancaster, 1978).

A further consideration related to the attention span of the pupils. If they could see a point in the instrument they were completing, it was likely that they would apply themselves more consistently to completing it.   Pupils in the school were used to discussing behaviour and relationships so it seemed reasonable to ensure that their interest might extend to the instruments. Concentration span, however, represented a serious problem.

Experience with the particular school population had shown that, if instruments were completed by pupils in groups of more than 20 pupils, it was extremely unlikely that it would be possible to sustain the interest of all the pupils for the time it took to complete the instrument.   There was clear evidence of inattention and pupils could be observed ticking responses without reading the items.   With a group of 20 pupils, the problem seemed to disappear and, as a precaution, children who were known to have short attention spans completed the questionnaire in groups of three or less.

The length of the instrument was also crucial.   An instrument which required pupils to turn to a fresh page seemed too long.   Pupils who could be observed to be concentrating on the first page could be seen to be ticking items without reading them once they started the second page.   If more instruments were used,

more sessions were required and the loss of interest by the pupils was evident in their responses. The pupils involved in the study appeared to limit this approach to two short instruments.

Stage 12: outline of the steps followed -

1. Interviews with random small groups of pupils to select items from existing 'What I do in school" and Lewis Counselling Inventories.

2. Additional items based on personal constructs elicited from the pupils.

3. Pilot instruments discussed with small groups of pupils to determine selection of response style.

4. Completion by first sample of 100 pupils.

5. Scoring and analysis using SPSS (Nie et al., 1975).

6. Follow up interview to check interpretation based on score with what was actually known about the pupil.

4.5   Summary

This chapter opened with a consideration of research methods and of the relationship between methods and theory. Priority was placed on developing approaches which would allow for participation in the process of research by those involved in the guidance

process being studied. The initial general focus was to be on real school situations. In an attempt to avoid premature focusing and to ground the data recorded in real experiences, the initial stage of the study was focused on a general guidance "problem" rather than a specific hypothesis (Kerlinger, 1969).

The initial stages were concerned with exploring the ways in which those involved in guidance, the teachers, parents and pupils, could gain insights into the effect of their activities on its development of decision making competence in the pupils.

The stages of the initial study were outlined and the method adopted at each stage was described. Two main outcomes were predicted. The initial study would provide a pilot study of the methods proposed and it would also enable those involved to identify at least one alterable variable for more critical, focused consideration in the final stage of the study. Once the alterable variable was identified a specific hypothesis would be formulated prior to entering the final stage of the study. Chapter 5 deals with a description of the initial stages of the study, followed by Chapter 6 in which a specific hypothesis will be tested as the final stage of the study.

CHAPTER 5

THE INITIAL STUDY: AUGUST 1981 - AUGUST 1983

5.1 Intention

The intention is to assist those involved, the teachers, the pupils and the parents to become more critically aware of the guidance process they are engaged in. Children are more likely to learn from adults who are themselves in control of the situations they encounter. In interpersonal relationships, such as guidance, each person is a unique expert in understanding their own experiences. The methods developed at this point in the study are designed to enable those involved to gain insights into each other's experiences so that each can contribute and each can learn in the situations they encounter. It is not intended to reject completely existing approaches to research, rather the intention is to complement existing approaches.

The methods used in the initial study were identified and discussed briefly in the previous chapter. In the course of applying these methods during the period of the initial study, time was devoted to considering the problems which emerged. The decision was made that an understanding of the problems which

prevent particular methods being developed in real school situations was at least as important as perfecting applications of the methods which might only be possible in a research situation using highly trained researchers. It has already been argued that there is a need for an alternative research methodology which could be available to non specialists and which would complement the methods of more traditional research.

The methods which will be applied and developed in the succeeding sections are as follows:

5.2 Content analyses of school publications

5.3 Analysis of teacher talk

5.4 Content analysis of pupil records

5.5 Analysis of teacher accounts

5.6 Structured conversations with parents

5.7 Interviews with pupils

5.8 Selection of alterable variable and
      formation of hypothesis

5.9 Development of tutor's role

5.10 Personal constructs

5.11 Pupil zones of proximal development

5.12 Pupil attitudes and beliefs

5.13 Specific instruments

5.14 Summary of initial study

The methods were also selected so that they could be implemented and developed within the role of a principal teacher of

guidance and did not require additional time to be made available
for research purposes.

5.2   Content Analysis of School Publications

It was fortunate that the school involved had adopted a
policy of producing public reports of all major developments (see
Table 5.2a).   Because each report had been discussed and accepted
by the whole staff, the reports can be accepted as representative
statements of school policy and practice.

> The responsive model of accountability suggests that
> schools ought to be self accounting;   generating and
> communicating information about themselves in the light
> of interests and concerns expressed by local audiences.

> (Elliot, 1981: 2)

In this case the local audience consisted of the local
community, parents, pupils and interested teachers in other
schools.   In the case of a school which did not publish statements
of policy and practice, such a statement would be required if those
involved were to attempt to understand the process they were
engaged in.

The publications were read carefully to identify concepts
and practices relating to pupil decision making.   In addition an
attempt was made to consider how the thinking revealed in the

TABLE 5.2a: LIST OF SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS

	Date	Title	Main Authors
1.	1978	Staff Handbook, vol. 1, "The Ethos"	Principal teachers and senior staff
2.	1980	Staff Handbook, vol. 2, "The Way Ahead"	Senior staff above principal teacher level
3.	1981	Report on Assessment	Primary and Secondary Liaison Group
4.	1981	Report on Special Unit	Special unit staff
5.	1981	Report on Alternative Provision	Guidance team
6.	1982	Report on Alienation	Working party including members of the community
7.	1982	Report on Home Base	Home base team
8.	1983	Report on reporting and communication	Working party including parents
9.	1983	Guidance in a Community	Guidance Team
10.	1983	Report on Management	Principal teachers and senior staff who attended a residential weekend

(Extracts from these reports can be found in Appendix A.)

documents had developed over a four year period. The concepts, the quotations and the development in thought identified, were then discussed with the staff, the parents and the pupils. An attempt was made to record the insights which emerged from these conversations.

Three terms which are repeatedly used in the reports are 'relationships', 'decision making' and 'behaviour'. The teachers accepted that these were concepts which occurred frequently in their discussions and as such they provide a starting point for a closer analysis of the content of the reports.

5.2.1 Relationships:

The success or failure of the school will depend,
probably more than in most educational establishments,
on the quality of relationships between staff and
students whether children or adults.

Our first priority must be to establish good relationships.

We encourage relationships which are warm, caring,
personal and open. We reject relationships which are
cold, uncaring or impersonal.

(Staff Handbook, vol. 1, 1978, Section 1.1: 1)

We would like every youngster to feel valued as a person.

(Ibid., Section 1.1.1:)

The guidance leader should be willing to help
re-integrate vulnerable students 'squeezed out' by the
pressures of the school system.

(Ibid., Section 1.1.1: 2)

Were developments to be linked with a class organisation
using home-base teaching, where the teacher/pupil
relationship forms the basis of all learning, we would
be near to constructing an exciting new model for
secondary education in Scotland.

(Staff Handbook, vol. 2, 1980: 16)

Therefore the starting points for the school are in the
relationships within the school, among head-teachers,
teachers and pupils and in a genuine accountability to
the community for the decisions and ordering of the life
of the school; and in relationships between the school
and the community, between professional staff and members
of the public.   Where such relationships exist, there
is a possibility of achieving the ideals of the community
school.

(Nisbet Report, 1980)

Comment: We endorse this statement completely.

(Staff Handbook, vol. 2, 1980: 24)

The heart of that operation is the relationship among
the individuals that make up the unit community.   The
first component of that relationship is trust, a word
often abused by teachers who assume that they are due
trust and respect as a right and not things to be earned.
We seek also an atmosphere that breeds tolerance and
loyalty, that challenges each member yet supports those
who fail.

(Report on the Special Unit, p. 3)

"Relationships" had been a key word used in the school from
the outset.   Staff agreed that intuitively many of the actions

they took, and strategies they developed, were intended to improve relationships. What seemed to be missing from the range of meaning they assigned to relationship was a notion of how pupils developed the ability or competences required to form relationships. There was no understanding of the stages children passed through in becoming competent at forming relationships. In the range of alternative provision created within the school one could detect structural attempts to organise pupil experiences so that the pupil learned to relate and there was clear evidence in the publications of a desire to create a school structure which would permit a closer relationship between teachers and pupils.

The observations made and the quotations selected were discussed with the teachers. There was widespread agreement that attempts were being made intuitively to help pupils relate, without considering fully how a start could be made to examining how the child developed relationship competences or that such an examination should be based on a longitudinal record of pupil development. One result of this discussion was the attempt to introduce "relationships" as a category on the pupil records (see section 5.4).

The teachers accepted that many of the intuitive innovations which had led to alternative provision were based on the belief that they would help the pupil to form relationships. Until a clear understanding of the process involved was available, it would be very difficult to justify the resources needed for additional

support and more significantly they realised that, until they had a
grasp of the basic competences involved in forming relationships,
they would not really be able to suggest strategies which would
apply to all pupils.

5.2.2 Decision-making:

Promoted Guidance Staff.

Their basic philosophy is to enable students to make
real decisions based on an awareness of self and others.

(Staff Handbook, vol. 1, 1978, 1.1.1: 4)

Special Guidance Unit

It has begun to develop new techniques to develop
decisionmaking among students, and has acted as a
challenge and stimulus to our thinking on the needs of
youngsters in schools in general.

(Staff Handbook, vol. 2, 1980, 6.2: 16)

If teachers have no say in school affairs, they will
not favour involvement of the community in decision
making.   And if pupils are enrolled in an ordered
environment in which they have no part to play except
obedience, they cannot learn responsibility.

(Nisbet Report, 19 80   )

Comment: We endorse this statement completely.

Staff Handbook, vol. 2, 1980, 10: 24)

The philosophy is easily articulated, as an attempt to allow each child to look at himself, assess himself and decide for himself, taking into account the feelings and opinions of others.

But if we really mean 'decide for himself' then we are talking about giving pupils power and the right to decide important things and responsibility so that they can learn to reject irresponsibility.

Report on the Special Unit, 1981:)

Our aims have been to give pupils greater control over their education: to get them more involved in the process; to give them a feeling of belonging.

Home base evaluation report, 1983, p. 1)

An attempt to give students a greater control over their education.

(Ibid.)

The activities were organised for the students, by the students, who by and large accepted direction from those in charge of the activities. Students were directly involved in making and implementing policies regarding the code of conduct to operate in the base.

(Ibid.: 7)

The aims are primarily concerned with relating to school as it is and the non-hierarchical management style, the relationship with students, the content, the methodology, and means of problem solving are all derived from the sphere of guidance and counselling rather than in established classroom practice.

Ibid: 9)

There can be no doubt, however, that it [home-base] has enriched the curriculum by providing opportunities in a way that no other section of the curriculum does for

students to learn and display such qualities as leader-
ship, initiative, responsibility, self discipline and
vital communication skills.

Ibid: 10)

We must undertake as a matter of priority a review of
the opportunities provided or not provided for pupils
to be involved in decision making within subject classes.

(Report by Principal Teachers and Senior Management:
Residential Weekend, 1983)

When the quotations were used to focus the teachers'
attention on decision making, they agreed that they were failing to
analyse decision making.   There was little evidence of their
having assessed the decision making competence of pupils, analysed
the way in which competence develops, or identified the experiences
required to facilitate full competence.

The various working groups on assessment had accepted that
too narrow a range of ability was reflected in school reports.   In
moving from an over emphasis on cognitive assessment, however, they
had tended to regard affective assessment as a "hold-all" category
for all other aspects of development.

> Affective domain: The areas in which comment should be
> made, and the guidelines to comment, were discussed.
> It seemed that possible areas for comment were endless
> encompassing everything from interest, effort, coopera-
> tion, punctuality, perseverance, behaviour, confidence
> and responsibility.

(Report on Reporting and Communication, 1983: 3)

The teachers realised that a wider concept of ability or
competence was required which took into account the pupils'

thinking, behaviour, and attitudes or beliefs.   They expressed a
clear preference for methods which would enable them to understand
all aspects of the pupils' development in the cognitive, conative
and affective domains.   It was accepted that new assessment skills
and techniques would be needed and that in turn this would require
staff development, and again the teachers clearly preferred
approaches they could develop for themselves.

5.2.3 <u>Behaviour</u>:

> The guidance leader should be vigilant in observing
> changes in attitudes or behaviour patterns amongst his
> charges so that an immediate report can be made to the
> year guidance staff with a view to further investigation.
>
> (Staff Handbook, vol. 1, 1978, Section 1.1.1: 2)
>
> The teacher must establish the standards of acceptable
> behaviour of students on entering the classroom, within
> the classroom and on leaving the classroom.
>
> (Ibid. 1.1.2: 1)

> A programme of behaviour training should be devised for
> pupils.
>
> (Staff Handbook, vol. 2, 1980, p.14)
>
> There is a clear need to provide training in the basic modes
> of behaviour linked to a need to devise strategies to
> reinforce approved behaviour.
>
> (Ibid.)

The teacher's role becomes one of total involvement with the family rather than the arrogant dispensation of questionably relevant information from an assumed position. We have to talk about parents' behaviour and teachers' behaviour as well as the child's.

(Report on the Special Unit, 1981: 4)

The teachers placed great emphasis on a concept of behaviour which related to maturity and responsibility. The notion of behaviour training caused great concern in case there was implicit in it the idea of inculcating specific behaviour. They were also clear they wanted to promote self discipline and not simply to react to indiscipline.

Once again the teachers accepted that many of their strategies were intuitive and that they had not established for their own use, or use by others, a clear cut line of the way a pupil's intentional behaviour developed or of the experiences required if the pupil was to learn to behave responsibly. A great deal of practical work had been done, mainly through the introduction of group and individual behaviour contracts. The teachers made it clear that they had not had sufficient time, nor had they received adequate support, to enable them to reflect on the insights they had gained while developing these contracts.

5.2.4 General discussion

In discussing the reports generally the teachers agreed that the early reports tended to stand independently, and that there was little evidence of theory being developed to explain the innovations taking place. Continuity had been provided by

teachers having access to earlier reports but no disciplined attempt had been made to develop substantive theory.

The early reports consist of statements of intent and descriptions of practice. By 1982 a shift in emphasis was detected. The reports became more concerned with evaluation and evidence. The teachers indicated that this reflected a growing competition for limited resources. They also pointed out that a stage was reached at which the expansion of alternative provision raised serious questions about what was being provided in mainstream schooling. As a result of both these pressures, an attempt at a more analytical approach was to be found in the later reports.

The teachers also detected a concern to be more precise in the way in which language was used. They admitted they had a clear preference for terms which emerged in the situation they were involved in and were suspicious of any attempt to introduce "jargon" from existing theory. "Alienation" was a term which emerged first in their discussions. They then spent time defining it and considering its meaning in sociology before adopting it as a key concept in the development of the home-base. "Conative", on the other hand, was rejected in spite of the fact that teachers agreed that "behaviour" was often a misleading term, because the teachers perceived "conative" as reflecting a less relevant aspect of theory.

> Apathy, vandalism, indiscipline and truancy were the
> symptoms of what is referred to as "alienation" —
> where pupils have no control over their education.
> (Report on Home Base, 1982:   )

So far the discussions reported have been limited to those

involving teachers.   The reports, the concepts identified and the

quotations selected were also discussed with parents and with

pupils.   It is worth establishing at the outset that these

discussions involved a wide spectrum of parents and pupils and were

not restricted to the more articulate or to those who were already

closely involved in the school.

To begin with most parents did not regard "relationships" as

a central feature of the education they wanted for their child.

They certainly hoped their child would get on with teachers and

other pupils so that the child was happy at school but

"relationships" did not feature in the way that "discipline" or

"qualifications" did in their thinking.   Many parents were anxious

about the priority given to "relationships" and expressed concern

that it might divert teachers' attention away from important

aspects of education.   These anxieties and concerns mainly

appeared during the initial contacts with parents, at a time when

the parents were discussing them as abstract concepts and had no

practical experience of the school to which they could relate the

concepts.

Parents saw "decision making" in a very limited way and

related the term simply to choice of courses.   Most parents

expressed the view that even this decision could be left to the

school. In some cases this reflected their faith in the authority of the teacher and in other cases it reflected the parents' acceptance of powerlessness and inability to intervene. Many parents were worried by suggestions that their child would be allowed to make choices in class and they often equated freedom with licence.

Similarly, when discussing behaviour, parents tended to overlook self discipline and to focus on preventing indiscipline. Almost all parents were concerned that their child made the best possible progress and equated this with strict control exercised by the teacher. The initial discussions with parents produced a caricature of behaviour which obviously reflected the extreme anxiety felt by most parents.

Contact with parents over a two year period, however, indicated how their attitudes changed as they gained access to the experiences to which the terms referred. As parents were involved with teachers in developing strategies to help their child to learn, they began to see how important relationships were, and in many cases how they related to discipline and qualifications. As the children moved through adolescence, teachers and parents together gained experience of attempting to develop responsibility in making decisions. Once parents realised that the level of discipline in the school was high, and that their child would not be held back by the disruptive behaviour of others, they began to

consider a wider range of relevant behaviour and to see a value in leadership skills, or in study skills, for example.

It was clear that for parents and teachers to communicate effectively, it was important to share experiences as well as to share concepts. The parents, themselves, pointed out that they had not realised how much time was required to achieve this contact. By the end of the two year period most of the parents involved in these discussions had visited the school two or three times a year for routine visits; had attended weekly discussions on school practice and philosophy as it related to their child for at least six weeks;[1] had been involved in at least one period of intensive activity with the guidance leader to support some aspect of the education of their child; and had been through the second year subject choice procedures. Once again it is emphasised that they were a cross-section of parents, including families with severe difficulties or with problem children. They were not typical of the range of parents who routinely attend parent-teacher meetings.

On the face of it, contact with pupils should be easier than contact with parents. In fact, in many schools, there is minimal contact between teachers and pupils in situations in which time is devoted to reflecting on developments within the school or on the

1.   See also 5.4, Parents' Forum, p.116

experiences of the individual pupil concerned. To begin with, when time was set aside to discuss the teachers' reports with pupils, the results were unproductive. Over the two year period the situation changed and this did not simply reflect the growing maturity of the pupils. What they needed was access to the experiences relating to the ideas in the reports and also training in reflecting on and discussing what they saw happening in school

Both the experience and the training were provided as a result of the activities in which all pupils were involved in guidance time. These pupils were not trained in group discussions specifically for the purpose of this study but, when a random group was assembled towards the end of their second year, it was obvious that they were well equipped with the skills needed to discuss the reports.

The pupils agreed that, in their experience, being able to relate to others was the most important skill they felt they needed. It was the single skill whose absence they felt presented them with the greatest problems. Almost every pupil indicated real concerns and was able to illustrate these by reference to specific incidents. The pupils also referred to ways in which teachers had realised there was a problem and had intervened to help them. The pupils did, however, refer to the difficulties in isolation and less than half the pupils were able to translate the specific help they had received into strategies to deal with future problems. Among those who had difficulty generalising were pupils

who mentioned that their guidance leaders had tried to help them to anticipate future difficulties. These pupils continued to express surprise at this and were clearly convinced that every situation was different and to express their belief that they could not control future events.

In conclusion it is argued that, where a school is prepared to issue public accounts of its intention and practice, a content analysis of these accounts will provide the basis for enabling teachers, parents and pupils to gain insights into their own experiences and, more importantly, into the meanings these experiences have for each other. As a result of the insights gained, the school will have not only a new set of priorities to consider but also a trained group of teachers, parents and pupils who together are likely to be more effective in developing strategies to reach their priorities.

5.3   Analysis of Teacher Talk

The teacher talk referred to here is the everyday conversation which took place informally between teachers. It does not refer to follow-up discussions on the content analysis of the publications. At the outset it seemed possible that teachers might have one set of priorities in public statements yet reveal a different set of priorities or beliefs in less formal discussions.

The concepts of "relationship", "decision making" and "behaviour" were used as categories in which comments were collected.

The conversations took place in staff meetings, department meetings, guidance meetings, case conferences, meetings with parents and in the many informal conversations which took place every day.   What was immediately evident was the wealth of discussion about educational topics which did take place. Meetings, as well as informal discussions, took place most lunch times, for over an hour at the end of every day and most evenings. Obviously they did not always involve the same staff but there was a frequent movement of staff between groups, including between departments.

"Relationships", as a topic, occurred frequently, either directly or by implication.   It was as much a concern when mathematics courses were being designed as it was in a meeting of guidance staff.   Good classroom discipline was based, by most staff, on taking account of relationships between pupils and on forming sound teacher pupil relationships.   Disruptive behaviour was frequently explained in terms of poor relationships within the classroom.   Curriculum reforms, course design and alternative provision were discussed in the light of the improvement in relationships which would result.

In discussing these observations with the teachers, however, they admitted that their emphasis was on creating a context in which relationships could occur.   In their discussions they agreed

that they saw themselves as being responsible for using the context they had created. The teachers agreed that they had not articulated in their talk exactly how the experiences provided would contribute to the pupils' competence nor were they confident they understood the nature of the development involved. The teachers agreed there was a need to shift away from specific provision to an emphasis on a developmental process.

Decision making tended to crop up spontaneously in conversation less often than relationship. It occurred mainly at department level when new courses were being discussed. Teachers less frequently discussed helping a pupil to make a decision and when it did occur it tended to relate to a specific decision which had emerged as the result of a problem rather than in the context of day to day learning.

When these observations were discussed with teachers they accepted that allowing space for the child to decide was an ideal they believed in but which frequently got lost in the pressures, mainly of time, they encountered in the class. They admitted that too often they resorted to direction rather than to encouraging choice. They also pointed out that, in a situation where they feared the child might make what they regarded as a wrong choice, they would be likely to intervene and as a result the child might not learn from its experience. Alternatively they were concerned that they might not notice a child encountering a choice outside

the child's competence and that the child might experience failure which could be detrimental to future learning.

The teachers were searching in their conversations for a structure which presented the child with situations in which they could learn to make decisions yet which provided support so that they would not be seriously harmed by failure. Their conversations revealed that this was the area which continued to present them with most anxiety. This was illustrated in the conversation which took place on the residential weekend for senior staff in 1983, quoted earlier (p.93), when they placed priority on setting up a review of opportunities for pupils to make decisions. That decision in itself was influenced by the discussions described in this part of the study.

Conversations about pupil discipline were dominated by references to indiscipline. While the strategies proposed were positive and the conversations were generally supportive of the pupil, it was a matter of some concern that discussion of self discipline, and of positive behaviour, such as leadership skills or study skills, was recorded less frequently.

The teachers expressed surprise when this was pointed out to them. On reflection they agreed that strategies such as those encountered whilst negotiating behaviour contracts with their group, especially where the strategies involved stressing positive behaviour, were new to them. They were still learning and, until

they felt confident, it was less likely that the topic would occur in their informal conversations.

In the main the teachers' talk revealed a high degree of consistency with their written statements. It was fair to record that the staff did not have one set of beliefs for public display and a second set they displayed in private. What was also obvious was the commitment of all staff to the views as expressed in the documents. In most schools there would be at least a few reactionary staff whose conversations would reveal they did not accept the ideals stated in public statements. Obviously there was a lot of specific argument and criticism, both of policy and practice, but there was a noticeable absence of outright rejection.

At this point it was realised that the approach was serving a counselling function for the staff and it may be worth noting, as a service guidance staff in other schools could provide, given a counselling background. The teachers were being encouraged to reflect on their experiences and on the meaning they gave to that experience. They were helped to relate their understanding to their actions and to resolve any conflicts which emerged. As they became aware of alternative interpretations, they were able to set themselves new priorities.

In the course of helping the teachers to reflect on the experiences they shared with the pupils one topic repeatedly emerged. Teachers continually asked for time to observe and to support members of their guidance group. They expressed a concern

that the pupils were encountering too wide a range of experiences
and that they were concerned that demands encountered in these
situations were not consistent from situation to situation. As a
result the less mature pupils encountered frequent failure and were
unable to learn.

One type of behaviour might be required at home, a second
with friends and a whole variety in different subject areas or with
different teachers. A behaviour might be encouraged in one area,
make one popular in another, yet be punished in a third. In
discussing relationships, decision making or behaviour, this
concern seemed to lie behind a unanimous demand by guidance leaders
to have access to members of their group in a variety of contexts.
Consistency of pupil experience will be looked at in more detail at
a later stage (5.8).

5.4   Content Analysis of Pupil Records

In a study of pupil decision making it seemed relevant to
consider the part played by the cumulative records, held by the
school on each pupil. It seemed reasonable to assume that these
records should provide the basis on which pupils, parents and
teachers could make decisions involving the child's education. An
analysis of these records should, or so it was assumed, provide a
clear indication of the contacts between home and school as well as
revealing the information on which decisions were based.

Before considering the content of the pupil records it seemed important to establish the extent to which they were used and to quantify the contacts between home and school. Before the new school opened in 1978 the pupils had been educated in the annexe of a neighbouring comprehensive school. Figures were available for contacts between home and school at that time. These figures reflect a situation which seemed to be typical of such contacts in the average school. Approximately 60% of parents visited the school during parents' evenings in S1, falling to 40% by S4. The contacts in S1 and S2 were limited to 'one off' parent evenings to introduce the family to the school, as a follow up to report cards or for the purpose of S2 subject choice. In any year fewer than 10% of families called at the school for interviews requested either by the parents or by the teachers.

When the new school opened, a series of strategies were adopted. Meetings were held in local primaries prior to transfer into S1 in the belief that some parents with young families found it difficult to travel far from home. As a result, several meetings of small groups of parents replaced the large open meeting and parents commented that they felt more involved in these smaller local meetings. Records reveal that attendance rose from 60% to 80%.

The guidance leader was designated the key contact between home and school. In 1980 enrolment evenings were introduced. Guidance leaders arranged a suitable evening and enrolled as many

pupils in their group, whose parents could attend, as possible. Additional evenings were set aside by guidance leaders for families who could not manage the initial evening and families who did not manage into school were visited at home. In this way the school ensured 100%, positive, initial contacts with families.

Guidance leaders received in-service prior to home-visiting in an attempt to prevent intrusion into the family's privacy. During the enrolment procedures parents and teachers completed an enrolment form containing information which the parents agreed the school should record. This formed the basis of open records which were available to parents at any time. Guidance leaders were also encouraged to keep a record of the developing relationship and of contact with the family and these were reviewed at regular intervals by promoted guidance staff who offered encouragement and support. Table 5.4a shows a typical pattern of contacts over a two year period, between 1980–1982, for two groups in S1-2 at that time. These contacts took place between September 1980 and September 1982. They do not include contacts between the secondary school and the families during the transfer period, when as many as three contacts were made with families while the pupil was still in the primary school, nor do they include contact specifically relating to incidents of indiscipline. In line with the school policy of open records, all the pupils' records were available during these contacts. The main outcome of this

TABLE 5.4a:

Pupil No.	Visit to School	School Interview	Home Visit	Telephone	Total Contact
01	2	2	–	2	6
02	1	3	–	–	4
03	4	–	–	2	6
04	4	–	–	2	6
05	2	–	–	4	6
06	2	1	1	1	5
07	3	4	2	1	10
08	4	–	2	2	8
09	2	4	2	1	9
10	1	–	3	–	4
11	1	–	3	2	6
12	3	2	–	1	6
13	2	–	2	1	5
14	4	–	–	2	6
15	4	–	–	1	5
16	3	–	1	2	6
17	4	–	1	1	6
18	3	–	–	3	6
19	4	–	–	1	5
20	2	1	–	2	5
Totals	55	17	17	31	120

Average contacts per pupil = 6

Pupil No.	Visit to School	School Interview	Home Visit	Telephone	Total Contact
01	4	2	1	–	7
02	2	–	2	3	7
03	6	–	2	4	12
04	8	–	2	3	13
05	2	–	1	5	8
06	3	–	2	–	5
07	1	2	5	2	10
08	2	2	1	–	5
09	4	–	1	4	9
10	3	1	1	–	5
11	3	–	1	–	4
12	4	–	1	1	6
13	3	–	1	–	4
14	3	–	1	2	6
15	4	4	2	1	11
16	4	–	1	2	8
17	6	–	1	2	8
18	2	–	3	2	7
19	5	–	1	2	8
20	4	–	1	1	6
Totals	73	11	31	34	149

Average contacts per pupil = 7.5

Notes: Visits to school – these were parent initiated.
School interviews – these were initiated by the school.
Home Visits and telephone contacts were most often by mutual agreement.

availability of records was to demonstrate decisively to all
involved how inadequate the average school record is.

As is the practice in all secondary schools in Scotland,
each child has a personal record folder which contains a record of
his progress in school.   In the main the contents consist of
primary report cards, transfer reports from primary to secondary
and secondary reports.   A content analysis of these records
reveals why they proved so irrelevant in real situations where
important decisions were being made.   Table 5.4b reveals the range
of comments about the pupil's behaviour, personality and ability to
relate to others, found in a random sample of 800 primary reports
and 200 transfer documents.   These reports and transfer records
had originated in over 30 different primary schools and were
written by over 300 different teachers, at different stages in the
child's primary education.   The reports and transfer documents
were written on standard forms issued by the region and there was
little variation apparent from teacher to teacher.   It seemed
likely the figures quoted reflect the general situation in pupil
records at this time.   Where phrases of approximately similar
meaning were identified, they are counted against the phrase most
frequently used.

Other aspects of the reports were not revealed by the
figures quoted.   About 200 documents contained only positive
comments and in the main those were larger reports containing more
comments.   Over 500 documents were predominantly negative in tone

TABLE 5.4b:

COMMENTS RECORDED ON A SAMPLE OF 800 PRIMARY REPORTS AND 200 TRANSFER
DOCUMENTS, EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL
PHRASES IDENTIFIED

Comment	Boys %	Girls %	% Total in each Category
1. Behaviour (+ve)			
Well behaved	2.2	3.2	
Helpful	2.6	3.8	
Hardworking	2.3	2.0	
Tries hard	4.0	1.7	
Careful	–	1.5	
Quiet	1.8	3.0	
Neat	–	2.2	
Reliable	–	0.5	
Responsible	0.4	–	
Totals	13.3	17.9	31.2
2. Behaviour (-ve)			
Cheeky	1.0	0.7	
Irritating	0.4	–	
Must try harder	3.0	1.5	
Careless	3.4	1.6	
Noisy	3.0	–	
Untidy	3.0	0.6	
Silly	0.9	1.1	
Easily distracted	4.5	3.0	
Totals	19.2	8.5	27.7

TABLE 5.4b (contd.)

	Comment	Boys %	Girls %	% Total in each Category
3.	Personality (+ve)			
	Mature	0.4	1.4	
	Cheerful	1.0	1.0	
	Pleasant	1.0	1.0	
	Imaginative	0.2	1.6	
	Sense of Humour	0.5	–	
	Sensitive	0.4	2.3	
	Totals	3.5	7.3	10.8
4.	Personality (–ve)			
	Immature	5.0	1.0	
	Moody	0.5	2.0	
	Solemn	–	0.2	
	Totals	5.5	3.2	8.7
5.	Relationships (+ve)			
	Friendly	2.8	1.2	
	Relates well (peers)	1.0	3.4	
	Relates well (staff)	–	1.0	
	Popular	1.0	1.2	
	Outgoing	–	1.3	
	Eager to please	–	0.6	
	Totals	4.8	8.7	13.5
6.	Relationships (–ve)			
	Reserved	–	0.4	
	Avoids adults	1.6	0.2	
	Unpopular	0.6	0.4	
	Attention seeking	3.4	1.5	
	Totals	5.6	2.5	8.1

and almost without exception these were brief reports. The 200 positive documents included reports on pupils of a wide range of ability. The 500 brief negative reports dealt only with less able pupils. Some of the most positive comments were included in lengthy reports on the least able pupils.

The reports, the figures and the comments were discussed with primary teachers. In the course of the study over 20 afternoons and at least as many evenings were spent at primary parent-teacher consultations. It should be made clear that it was obvious from these meetings that only a fraction of the information which passed between parent and teacher was recorded on the report.

The teachers made the following observations. They pointed out that the assessment of the pupils' English or mathematics in these reports enabled one to make an accurate assessment of progress and that the information was structured in such a way as to indicate how development in these areas took place. The secondary school English and Mathematics departments were already actively working with the primary teachers to develop an even clearer structure against which pupil progress could be recorded. A similarly structured approach to relationships, decision making or behaviour had not been attempted.

Comments in these areas appeared to exist in isolation with no suggestion as to how progress could be made or in what way development was possible. The teachers admitted that, when they discussed behaviour, they usually dealt with specific incidents and

did not have a clear developmental structure in mind. Because they might teach the same child for several years, the teachers pointed out it was possible to develop a strategy with cooperative parents but they emphasised this developed after the event and was not planned in advance as were strategies to deal with reading or number problems.

The teachers felt that most of the reports they read seemed to tell them more about the teacher who wrote them than they did about the child. As a result of the discussions which took place and of observations such as these, the primary secondary liaison group agreed to develop a new approach to pupil records. They developed an assessment sheet which could be introduced in the final two years of primary school and would continue to be used in the first two years of secondary school. The format would record the concepts and skills required in language and number work over this period and would allow teachers, parents and pupils to judge the progress made and to plan strategies. The teachers saw no difficulty in developing this for English and Mathematics.

The teachers also agreed that there was a need to include assessment of ability to relate, of responsible behaviour and of an ability to make decisions and to exercise leadership. This was not an area they felt competent to develop fully and introduced the categories on a very tentative basis stressing the in-service which would be required if staff were to be encouraged to make comments, especially as these would be available to parents and to pupils.

Discussing the reports issued at the secondary school was a more complex exercise because of the range of subjects involved. The reports were issued every ten weeks so that, by the time of subject choice in second year, the pupils had received at least six reports. The reports consisted of cheque book size booklets. Each subject had its own page, on one half of which were comments about the pupil's progress in the subject and on the other half were comments about the pupil as a person. The teachers were asked to stress positive qualities and to indicate potential. The reports were issued with blank pages for parents and pupils to add comments.

A working party of teachers already existed to discuss the reports. It was clear from discussion with subject teachers that within their subjects they were relatively confident that they could record progress and indicate potential. The problems highlighted by the teachers lay in the general comments they were expected to make on the child's personal development. It was relatively easy to make reassuring comments but the teachers expressed difficulty in encouraging development or, where difficulty existed, in suggesting specific strategies.

As with the primary teachers, the problem seemed to have been resolved by personal contact. The key to this contact was the guidance leader who reviewed the subject teachers' comments, discussed progress with the pupil and contacted the parents. The guidance leader could also organise contact between the parent and

a subject teacher or a group of teachers. As was the case in primary schools, however, no record of these contacts emerged on the reports. The insights gained applied only to an individual child and as a result no general picture of child development was being built up. Finally, the contacts focused mainly on problem pupils and rarely discussed strategies for helping the majority of pupils. These points were raised and recognised by the teachers involved.

Contacts with parents involved a more complex exercise than might at first be assumed. Parents were all familiar with the reports, so involving them in conversations could have been simply organised. It was feared, however, that this might lead to a relatively superficial conversation. Fortunately an alternative existed.

Mention was made earlier (5.2) of weekly discussion groups involving parents. From the outset of this study an attempt had been made to contact parents and to involve them in discussions about education and about their child. The group which emerged called itself the Parents Forum and each year over 100 parents were involved. A series of meetings were held as an introductory course to introduce new parents to aspects of education. As years passed and existing members returned, they became available to contribute to these induction meetings. The group then selected its own topics and were able to involve teachers as they required. As a result, a pool of parents existed who were well informed about

the school and who could be approached when working parties were being set up. The Forum also provided a reference group which could be consulted by the parent representatives on the School Council.

The Parents Forum differed from the normal Parent Teacher Association in a number of ways. Every parent was automatically a member and could attend every meeting. Meetings were advertised to all parents. The main recruitment, however, was by personal contact. Teachers provided contact with individual parents. Parents recruited each other. Care was taken to encourage a wide cross-section of parents to become involved and to ensure that the discussions dealt with real issues which would encourage them to return. As a result, the parents themselves were convinced that the group contained many parents who normally would not have attended the meetings. Many parents admitted they would have lacked sufficient confidence to attend if they had not been introduced by someone they knew. The groups always contained a number of parents who were facing serious family problems or whose children were presenting problems.

The parents also saw that their views were fed straight into the school system at every level. They were invited into department meetings, had access to the head teacher or the heads of lower, middle or upper school, and were consulted frequently. Individual parents also saw that real changes were made in response to the issues raised. As a result, a vocal and informed group,

representative of a wide spectrum of parents, existed and could be contacted to become involved in this study.

Parents from this group joined with teachers to discuss the reports. The discussion did not begin immediately. To begin with, teachers and parents discussed communications, assessment and reporting in general. Existing reports were examined as were reports from other schools. Once the teachers and the parents began to feel they understood some of the basic principles involved they began to discuss the reports in detail.

The parents of pupils who were making good progress at school pointed out how relatively easy it was to deal with difficulties which arose. These parents indicated they would benefit from traditional parents' evenings which gave them a chance to meet briefly with all their child's teachers. Little more than polite contact was needed with most and time could be spent with one or two where difficulties lay. Even these parents realised that such a system was less beneficial for most families. The parents of able pupils also pointed out how much information was communicated by their child.

Parents of the majority of pupils painted a different picture. If pupils were average in all subjects, it was difficult for parents to know what to do. Because the teachers were being positive and were trying to encourage the pupils, many families felt they had had a false feeling of security. The parents pointed out that it was too late before they realised the child was

not doing as well as they had hoped.   When difficulties were
identified in a range of subjects, it was difficult to know exactly
what to do.

Most parents of pupils who had difficulty in several
subjects pointed out that the guidance leader had been the most
important person and that often the strategy which produced results
was not linked to a specific subject.   The strategies mentioned
involved setting the pupil to work to change their behaviour
patterns, encouraging pupils to accept responsibility for their own
learning and working to resolve relationship problems or dealing
with peer pressures.

The parents and the teachers pointed out that these
strategies did not appear to be related to, or reflected in, the
reports issued.   Mention was made by teachers and parents of
examples, in recent years, of progress in reporting specific
learning problems in reading or number work and they commented that
specific behavioural or relationship problems were not diagnosed
and linked to specific strategies in the same way.

The parents pointed out that language was a real problem.
Once they understood the thinking behind the terms routinely used
by the teachers, they felt that they wanted the terms to be used
but first they needed to know what they meant and to understand the
experiences and the strategies to which the terms related.   In the
course of the discussions, however, it became clear that similar
reports meant different things to different families.

In discussing how they would react to a sample report, some families made it clear that they would take control, contact the school, expect to work out a strategy with the teacher and resolve the problem. Other parents suggested that they would simply accept the report. It did not seem to be that they were apathetic or not interested in their child - they were involved in the discussion after all - but that they were not used to being able to control what happened to them. They did not expect to be able to do anything.

Care was always taken to give these parents real experience of developing strategies with teachers and once they had experienced this involvement, it was recorded that they subsequently initiated their own contacts.

The parents involved in these discussions also pointed out that, while they would argue with teachers and criticise specific aspects of schooling, they all fundamentally believed in the value of education and basically supported teachers. They pointed to conversations they had had with other parents which suggested that in some cases this basic agreement might not exist. In some cases it seemed that the child might receive fundamentally different messages about school from parents and teachers.

Because it had not been possible to include families with severe difficulties in the working party, these observations will be followed up later in the context of home visits to families who were unwilling to contact the school (5.6). The parents and the

teachers agreed that there was a clear need for a longer term study of reports in actual use.

When the working party was set up, it was agreed that it was important that pupils be involved. In fact this was never achieved and the comments, and discussion described below, were separate from the discussion in the working party.

In spite of the fact that the reports were issued every ten weeks, most pupils regarded reports as terminal assessments at the end of a section of work. They seemed to be encouraged by positive comments but very few could suggest how they might learn from critical comments. Attempts were made to encourage pupils to make resolutions at the start of each ten weeks, to set targets and to identify strategies. As guidance leaders became involved in these strategies, they became increasingly aware of the amount of support required and of how short term and limited targets would have to be if they were to be achieved. The pupils made it clear how much satisfaction they derived from achieving a target and also how rarely they had felt they achieved anything, when the feedback was limited to report cards. Conversations with pupils about their report cards suggested that, not only did they contain too much information, they were spaced too far apart to relate meaningfully to their experiences as perceived in immediate terms by the pupils.

In specific subjects most departments had evolved a system of continuous assessment in an attempt to reinforce behaviour more

immediately. The pupils indicated that discussions with guidance
leaders about their relationships, decision making and behaviour
filled a similar function for them but they did not feel it was as
well developed as the best examples of continuous assessment in
subject areas. In discussing the pupils' perception of their
experiences in forming relationships, making decisions and
developing complex behaviour, it was clear that the mature pupils
saw the consistency between similar experiences and planned ahead
accordingly. Less mature pupils, however, saw each incident as
separate and different and had great difficulty anticipating events
or planning ahead.

5.5   Analysis of Teacher Accounts

The teachers involved were acting in their role as guidance
leader. As has been explained, the guidance leader was the key
contact with the parents of the 20 pupils for whom the guidance
leader was assigned responsibility. Accounting was a method used
to help the leader to develop this guidance role by developing the
leaders' critical awareness of encounters with parents. Each
guidance leader was timetabled for a half hour support meeting with
a promoted guidance teacher, in small support groups of two or
three guidance leaders. It was at this time and also during
periods of in-service training that accounting was developed.

The task of the guidance specialist was to help the guidance leader to reflect on the progress of pupils in their groups and on the contact they had with parents. The promoted teacher provides a mirror enabling the leader to reflect on experience. The specialist role was to point to possible bias or to challenge any assumptions being made. Over a period of time, however, it was realised that two people, who work continually together, begin to reinfoce each other's interpretation. It was in this situation that triads were introduced (p.70). The third member of the triad was frequently changed to introduce fresh perspectives.

The observations made by the teachers about accounting relate more to the general approach than to the specific insights gained. Teachers were unanimous in agreeing that the approach caused them to question the way they interpreted encounters with parents. Every leader was clear that over a period of time they had realised that assumptions they had made were ill-founded and that often they had not even been aware of making them. They agreed that the method taught them at least as much about themselves as it did about the families involved. They also pointed to observations they had previously regarded as being factual which they now realised were subjective interpretations. The teachers pointed out that, as they had begun to realise the range of the experiences that the child encountered, and which were relevant to the child's learning, they also realised how important it was that their perception of these experiences should be as

objective as possible.   The only source of access to many of the
child's experiences was through contact with the family and
accounting appeared to increase the objectivity of the teacher's
interpretation.

The teachers selected two aspects of encounters with parents
that they had initially assumed would be influential on the child's
development.   They pointed out that they had anticipated that
families who were hostile to the school, or families who were
apathetic to their child's education, would be less likely to
benefit from any support they might offer.   Most guidance leaders
were able to point to encounters with parents and to the
experiences they had assumed indicated that the families were
either hostile or apathetic.   The process of accounting was not
focused in advance on hostility or apathy but, on reflection, those
leaders with whom accounting was discussed agreed that hostility
and apathy provided two specific examples of insights.

Hostility

Several teachers pointed out that, to begin with, hostility
had only been perceived in families of less able or of disruptive
pupils.   As they established a relationship of trust with the
families and as accounting trained them to be more critical, they
realised that a spectrum of attitudes and behaviour was involved.
Some families were hostile to specific teachers and to specific

aspects of schooling, while other families were hostile to school in general. Several families could point to specific reasons which could be accepted by the teachers as valid reasons for hostility. Other families seemed, to the teachers, to be blaming the school for problems which lay in the family or in the community.

As the guidance leaders established relationships of trust with the parents of their group and encouraged them to discuss their attitude to the school, it also became clear that the parents of able pupils were, if not hostile, at least critical of aspects of the school. The teachers stressed that it would be dangerous to over emphasise the criticism they identified and that in the main most parents accepted the school and in fact regarded it positively. It was in this context that the specific criticisms were being made.

One point was agreed by all the teachers and that was that, where a family was consistent in its attitude and behaviour, then it was possible to work with that family. The difficulty occurred not when a family was hostile or critical but when the attitude changed from situation to situation or where the family presented one attitude to the teacher and a conflicting attitude to the child.

Apathy

The guidance leaders also pointed to examples of encounters with families as a result of which behaviour they had supposed indicated apathy, or indifference to the child's schooling, took on a new significance. Once initial contact was made with some families, who appeared not to have bothered to contact the school, the leaders found the parents subsequently showed real interest in their child and were prepared to get involved in the child's education. The leaders pointed out that accounting had forced them to look for new explanations of parent behaviour. Once they gained a new perspective, the leaders' attitude to the parents changed and it was possible that this further led to better relationships with the parent.

Accounts produced a wide range of specific insights into relationships with specific parents. As far as this study is concerned, however, it is with the more general insights that we must be concerned. One general observation made by several guidance leaders concerned the inconsistency of the response made by some parents. In many cases the initiative had been taken by the guidance leader but the strategy agreed on had been negotiated with the family. In spite of this agreement, however, some parents seemed unable to implement their part of the strategy

consistently.   It did not seem as if they were unwilling to behave consistently but rather that they were unable to respond in a consistent manner.   As a result it was difficult to influence the development of the child's behaviour.

Guidance leaders also suggested they had evidence of a basic inconsistency in the beliefs and attitudes of some parents.   In the case of some critical parents, it was possible to predict what their attitudes or beliefs would be.   With almost all the apathetic parents, it was only possible to predict frequent changes in the attitudes and beliefs they presented both to the teachers and also to the pupils.   Once again the guidance leaders expressed the opinion that, in the face of these changing views, it was unlikely that the child would learn to develop consistent attitudes and beliefs.

5.6   Structured Conversations with Parents

The conversations discussed below all took place in the context of genuine contacts with the parent for the purpose of helping the child.   They were not engineered for the purpose of the study nor were research considerations allowed to dominate the conversation.   The contacts were made as a guidance teacher concerned to inform to the family, to provide support or to help

with subject choice, and they took place both in the school and in
the family's home.

The structure adopted was minimal. In every conversation,
or series of conversations, an attempt was made to elicit the
parents' attitude to schools in general, to the school their child
attended and to the teachers they felt they related to. In the
light of conversations held with guidance leaders, particular
attention was paid to families where hostility or apathy appeared
to typify the parents' attitude.

During 1981, 100 families were interviewed either in school
or at home. Every family was seen at least twice and many more
often. As a principal teacher of guidance, these contacts were
part of the school routine in which promoted guidance staff shared
contact with group leaders. The families were selected to
represent a typical cross-section of the year group. In each case
the perceptions formed by the interviewer were discussed and
contrasted with the perceptions formed by the guidance leader.
The insights gained about the family were also related to what was
known about the child. Any observations made were shared with the
families and used to facilitate their child's progress.

Hostility

Twenty-nine families were identified who seemed to be critical, either of the specific school or of schools in general. Ten families expressed their criticisms in general terms but spoke warmly of the school involved. They were able to point to differences in approach which they perceived to be important and did not seem simply to be being polite. Six families revealed specific grievances relating to incidents at the school which involved their child and which the school was subsequently able to resolve. Nine families were critical of specific aspects of the school. Five of these families remained critical of these aspects; general discipline, academic standards, informal relationships between teachers and pupils. Four of the families fluctuated and their attitude seemed to depend more on what was happening within the family than on practice at the school. None of these families suggested removing their child from the school.

The remaining four families repeatedly threatened to remove their child from the school. They were helped to explore the full range of alternatives though it was made clear that the teachers wanted to continue to educate their children. Two families eventually removed their child; the other two families kept the children at the school and continued to blame the school for what they saw as the child's lack of progress.

To begin with it appeared that the children belonging to these 29 families did not differ from the full range of pupils. The group included several able pupils, mature pupils, and in many cases pre-school pupils who did not appear to share their family's concern. As the year progressed, however, discussions with the guidance leaders suggested another possibility.

The group was divided into two. Fifteen of the families contained parents who were critical of specific aspects of education. Conversations with these families revealed that they agreed with the teachers about the importance of education and it seemed probable that the children received consistent reinforcement from home and school about the importance of schooling. In the remaining fourteen families, the picture was different. It became clear that these families did not value schooling consistently, frequently reinforced their child's criticism of school or of teachers, and were more likely to blame the school when they had difficulties with their child. When the fourteen children were considered, they stood out clearly from the rest of the sample.

The fourteen included children who appeared to have reasonable ability but, as a group, they seemed to be more disruptive, less mature and to have difficulties relating to both peers and to adults. Each child was considered carefully. Teachers were concerned not to make pro-school judgements. Anti-school behaviour, indiscipline or truancy, which presented problems for the school, were separated from problems in relating

and from behaviour which seemed to indicate general problems for the pupil. These pupils also seemed to be the least mature, least able to cope group of pupils in situations outwith the normal classroom or school situation.

Apathy

Ten families appeared to show little interest in their child's education. When the families were visited a range of possible explanations emerged. In four cases the families were encountering considerable pressures: unemployment, housing, break-up of the family, that it became obvious why relatively little interest seemed to be taken in the child's schooling. In each case at least one parent revealed an interest in the child which was sustained throughout the year but which required the school to take the initiative in maintaining contact with the family.

In a further four families the pressures were less immediate but the families seemed unable to cope and quickly became overdependent on the school. These families tried to use the teacher to solve wider problems. In every case at least one other agency was already involved and the families became the focus of professional case conferences in order to avoid creating overdependence on the school.

Only three families seemed to be completely indifferent to their child and this view was substantiated over a number of years. Contact with the primary school confirmed that indifference had been marked from the earliest years. The indifference was also evident in the clothing provided, the arrangements made to feed the child and in the extent to which the child was free to do what it liked, or to stay out as long as it wanted, from a relatively young age. The conditions did not reflect the economic situation in the homes which were well furnished and the parents involved were all in full employment.

While the sample was small, it does represent the most apparently apathetic families to pass through the school in a typical year group. The observations confirm the danger, identified by the guidance leaders, that too often what teachers perceive as apathy can be explained in different ways and overcome if the school is prepared to accept responsibility. It was also confirmed, however, that when the parents were involved in strategies, the initiative had to be taken by the teacher and that the response made by the families was often inconsistent.

Finally, three families out of a year group represented 1%, considerably less than the 40% who might have been described as apathetic if the figure had been based on attendance by parents at school-based consultation meetings. In order to study families who failed to contact the school, a further study was made of

100 families who had to be contacted by the teachers visiting their homes between August 1980 and October 1982.

Table 5.6a reveals the reasons given by the parents for not visiting the school and relates these reasons to the variety of long term relationships which resulted from the visits. The reasons indicated are those perceived by the guidance leader. Initial first impressions were modified in the light of subsequent conversations with the family and where possible evidence to support the reasons given were sought. Four main categories of reasons: specific difficulty, anxiety, hostility and indifference, as well as four categories of relationship: independence, dependence, conflict and apathy, were selected.

Non-contact was used when the family had not responded to attempts to invite them either to call at the school or to contact the school by telephone, letter or through the pupil. These families had not attended informal meetings in the primary schools, been involved in enrolment meetings or responded to contacts initiated by the guidance leader. They did not include parents who had requested a home visit or who had contacted the school by telephone. Each year about 30 families were left in the category of non-contact.

The school did not allow home visits to be used initially for discipline purposes. The first contact was always to establish a positive relationship with the family. In identifying which category to place the families in, "specific difficulty"

TABLE 5.6a:

REASONS FOR NON CONTACT RELATED TO LONG TERM RELATIONSHIPS

Explanation for non contact	No. of Families	Description of Long Term Relationship			
		Independence	Dependence	Conflict	Apathy
Specific difficulty	36	30	6	-	-
Anxiety	38	17	21	-	-
Hostility	16	6	6	4	-
Indifference	10	2	3	1	4
Totals	100	55	36	5	4

proved to be the easiest to establish and "anxiety" to be the most difficult. It was only after a relationship of trust was established that most families would admit to anxiety.

Families who were placed in the specific difficulty category were able to point to evidence of their difficulty. The group included 16 families who found distance a problem because they had several other, very young children, 12 families who referred to illness or handicap including four cases of diagnosed agrophobia, six families of Asian or Vietnamese origin who were experiencing language difficulties and two families with elderly housebound relatives. It should be pointed out, however, that the school had anticipated these types of problems and each year enrolled many other families with similar difficulties including several where interpreters were used.

All the parents included in the anxiety category admitted eventually that they were anxious and were able to point specifically to what they perceived as the cause of their anxiety. In 21 cases the parents made it clear that contact with the school was not the only contact with authority they avoided. They described their anxiety about housing department officials, and other official groups. They explained that when they received the communications from the school or were informed about meetings by their child, they rarely refused to go but when the time arrived they "forgot" or made another excuse. In every case there were

obvious, close ties between the parents and the pupils. All the pupils were liked by their teachers but there was a consensus view that these pupils were too quiet or withdrawn. Many of these pupils had experienced difficulty in relating to peers and in most cases had a higher than average absence rate.

In nine families the parents pointed to the difficulties they felt their child had created in primary school and admitted that they avoided contact with the school because they felt they had little control over the child and could do nothing to help. The other eight families in this category admitted that they had lost control of their child even within the home and they could not cope with accepting responsibility for behaviour at school. In most cases these families did not seem simply to have allowed the child to do as it pleased but rather the parents seemed at some point to have lost control of the child. In three cases there were separate locks either on the child's room to keep them in or on the parents' bedroom door to keep the child out.

The guidance leaders attempted to work with all nine of these families, many of whom already had contact with child psychiatrists. It soon became clear, from the doctors involved, that the parents were unable to keep appointments to attend regular clinics. Contact between home and school was easier and in liaison with the psychiatrist provided an option welcomed by the majority of the parents. Even when a parent agreed, the teachers encountered considerable difficulties in getting parents to

consistently implement the strategies negotiated with them and supervised by the psychiatrist.

As the parents discussed their child it became clear that inconsistency of parental response was long established in the family. The inconsistency applied to setting limits, using rewards and also to exerting parental self discipline about appointments previously requested by the parents. The teachers felt little could be done for the pupils until the parents' behaviour was developed.

The parents who were identified as hostile appeared to present a general hostility to schooling rather than a specific hostility to their child's new school. This meant little given the brief experience the pupils had had of the school. In ten cases the parents were critical of the primary school experiences of their child and in four cases evidence available from the primary school revealed that there may have been grounds. In the rest of the cases, however, it seemed unlikely that the blame lay entirely with the primary schools. Hostile parents also referred frequently to their own schooling and in two cases where grandparents lived with the family, to their schooling.

Indifference was identified when the families kept contact to a minimum, were not prepared to spend time discussing their child and indicated that it was unlikely that there would be any future need for them to be in contact with the school. In only four cases did teachers feel that their initial description of a

family as indifferent was substantiated in the light of their long term relationship with the family.

Long term relationships which appeared to reinforce the independence of the family were claimed with 55 families. Evidence for this existed in the form of guidance leaders' records which traced the active part played by these parents in their child's schooling in subsequent months.

Dependence, if not over dependence, was used to describe the relationships with a further 36 families. Guidance leaders found themselves involved in housing issues, community problems and family difficulties. While the teachers were prepared to help, they were concerned that they might be encouraging dependence rather than responsibility. The contribution made by the school based social worker was crucial in these cases. The social worker supported the teacher and intervened directly only in the most serious cases. The teachers detected an inconsistency experienced by the pupils who were encouraged by teachers to be independent, yet who saw how dependent their parents were.

In only five cases did the teachers feel that initial hostility turned into long term conflict. In these cases it appeared to the teachers that the pupils were receiving generally anti-school influences at home which were inconsistent with the influence the teacher was attempting to exert. In a further four cases the teachers felt that initial indifference was substantiated and that the parents were apathetic and refused to relate in any

meaningful way to the school or to show any signs of interest in their child. This extended beyond school and was observed as a general lack of interest which was inconsistent with attempts by the school to encourage pupils to see themselves as important.

5.7   Pupil Interviews

Pupil interviews provide a wealth of data about an individual pupil. The objectivity of the data is open to question. The honesty of the pupil's responses is dependent on trust, and the relationship built on that trust, which exists between the pupil and the interviewer. The accounts of the interviews are also open to subjective bias both through the selection of questions and the interpretation of responses. Structured interviews proved unsuitable because of the high number of less articulate pupils involved.

At this point in the study, pupil interviews were used to check out assumptions made, based on the alternative approaches. Pupils were interviewed about their interpretation of the teachers' publications; the use they felt they made of school records; and, with the parents' permission, about relationships with parents.

As ever, in research or guidance, confidentiality raised a problem but every effort was made to adopt an open approach and to

develop conversations which could be shared with parents and teachers. It was decided that, as the study progressed, interviews would simply be used to check out observations and data gained by other means. Once the study focused on an identified sample of pupils, it seemed possible that interviewing might be the only way to gain specific information.

Pupil interviews were also developed in a more structured fashion on the basis of the theory of Kelly, Vygotsky and Fishbein in the sections which follow.

5.8   Identification of Alterable Values and Formulation
       of Hypothesis

The methods which had been developed in the school were beginning to enable those involved to gain fresh perspectives on their experiences. The teachers began to realise the contributions these insights made to their developing expertise. In the past they had tended to rely on existing theory or to search for individual authorities who might train them in new areas of expertise. Without rejecting these contributions to their training, the teachers increasingly became aware of the contribution of self generated learning and research.

The insights gained, however, were in danger of becoming too diffuse. The study required a sharper focus. If teachers,

pupils and parents were to engage in strategies designed to facilitate guidance and education, then they needed methods which allowed them to gain a more precise understanding of the process they were engaged in.

The process was clearly developmental in nature and those involved needed to be able to study individual development as well as to consider the contribution made by specific learning experiences.   In the course of the study so far, attention had begun to focus on the relative inconsistency of the learning experiences encountered by some pupils.   From what was known generally about learning theory, it seemed reasonable to assume that consistent learning experiences were essential if mature development, in an area, was to be achieved.

The teachers were also becoming aware of strategies they could adopt which might ensure that the learning experiences children encountered in a variety of contexts could be adapted so that the child's development was more consistently reinforced. Not only was consistency of learning experience a potential variable, it also appeared to be an alterable variable.

There were, however, many factors which contributed to the child's learning experience.   In similar situations the experiences may be inconsistent because those involved act differently.   In other cases the external experience may be the

same but it may be perceived differently by the individual pupil. It is possible that changes in a pupil's personal construct system may cause the child to be conscious of different aspects of experience at different times. The experience may change because of cognitive development in the child. A child who learns to generalise or to think in abstract terms is likely to reinterpret earlier experiences. Conative development may mean that the child is able to engage in more sophisticated intentional behaviour which is likely to give greater control of some experiences or in some situations. Affective development may mean that attitudes and beliefs alter relative to new perceptions of outcomes or of significant others.

It is emphasised that it seemed essential to adopt a holistic view of development and that use is made of cognitive, conative and affective aspects simply to indicate facets of total development. However, development is viewed, it is stressed that consistency or inconsistency of experience must not be regarded as a simple variable. In the final stages of the study attention will not simply focus on the relationship between consistency of learning experience and the development of competence but also on ways in which the variable can be altered in order to stimulate development.

The relative consistency or inconsistency of the
learning experiences encountered by pupils, especially
in the early stages of learning, is a vital factor in
determining the pupil's future development of competence.

(Hypothesis)

5.9   The Tutor Role

In both research and guidance a record of the pupils'
development, and of the probable influences on that development,
seems vital if sense is to be made of pupil development.   Written
records on their own are unlikely to be adequate.   The guidance
leader or group tutor can serve as the person who becomes aware of
each pupil over a considerable period of time, who is trained to
record development and experience, and who is in the best position
to coordinate strategies leading to the development of competence.

In the primary stages the single primary teacher already
fills a tutor role but thought is required on what is to be
recorded.   Attempts in the course of the study to record
development relating to relationships, decision making and
responsible behaviour met with agreement in principle but failed in
practice because of the level of staff development required.

At the secondary stage tutors encouraged pupils to record
achievements outwith the school.   In this way a wider perspective
on ability and potential was gained.   How often do schools take
into account the potential of the disruptive pupil, making no

progress at school, yet who has a Chief Scouts Award or St Andrew's Ambulance awards?   Both were identified in the school.

If the records are to be of any use they will need to involve the pupils and time will be required to include the parents in discussions of the insights they provide.   In the school an attempt was made to do this and the teachers are clear about the lessons they learned.   If the role is to be developed, time and training will be required yet without this time and training the teachers did not see how they could begin to contribute to the basic learning of many pupils.

Tutors also realised the problem of working with a large number of subject teachers.   When a strategy was selected it often proved impossible to get all the teachers to apply it consistently. As has been discussed already, inconsistency of experience seemed detrimental to pupil development.   The problem became even more severe when attempts were made to involve parents.   It was as a result of experiences such as these that the teachers in the school began to discuss the need for structural changes in the curriculum to reduce the numbers of teachers who interacted with many of the pupils.

Although the role remained relatively underdeveloped, it will be used as the key to providing data in the final stages of this study.   The term tutor has been introduced at this stage in the study because it is being more widely adopted by schools who are developing a first level guidance role.   The role is identical

to the role of guidance leader described earlier.

> It is our view that the role of first level guidance
> teachers is of such importance as the the first link
> of the guidance chain that we would like to see it
> developed as a feature of the organisation of every
> school.

(CCC, 1985: 7)

5.10   Personal Constructs

An approach based on personal construct theory had several
advantages.   The use of small cards acted as a stimulus with less
articulate pupils and, holding a card with a friend's name written
on it, appeared to make it easier for some pupils to recall their
experience of that person.   Concern has also been expressed at the
unavoidably subjective nature both of the content and the analysis
of interviews of pupils.   Personal construct theory appeared to
give a more objective structure against which discussions with
pupils could be interpreted.   The later experiences, however,
confirmed the earliest impression, which was that with these
pupils, a precise mathematical analysis of responses would be
unproductive.

The original intention was to try to identify specific
groups of pupils and to see whether shared experiences might have
resulted in some pupils sharing common constructs.   The most
obvious group was found in the home-base.   This group had worked

together in an environment different from that of most pupils in
the school.   Extra staff had been available and these adults had
been able to work more closely with the pupils than the staffing
ratio permitted in the rest of the school.   A random sample of 20
pupils was selected.

This group was compared with a typical guidance group
selected at random.   The pupils were interviewed one at a time.
Each pupil was given 20 cards with one name written on each.   The
pupil's own name and the names of the rest of his/her own group
were used.   Each pupil dealt three cards, sorted them into the two
most like each other and one different, then explained the
similarities and the differences.

The home base group used a wider range of constructs and
appeared to be more perceptive when it came to describing people.
Among the constructs used were phrases relating to leadership
qualities, ability to take decisions, responsibility, oganisational
attributes and relationship skills.   The language used reflected
conversations the pupils had been involved in with staff in the
home base.   They were also able to relate the phrases to a variety
of real situations they had been involved in.   It seemed that the
pupils were actively using the constructs and not simply repeating
language they had heard adults use.   To a greater or lesser extent
this appeared to be true of all the home base pupils regardless of
ability, and clearly the conversations of the most able were much

more mature and thoughtful than those of even the most able pupils
in the selected guidance group.

Both groups were then presented with pairs of constructs and
asked to deal out the cards ranging between that pair.

The person most likely to take charge.	The person least likely to take charge.
The person who is best best at making a decision.	The person who never makes a decision.
The person who gets on best with others.	The person who cannot get on with others.

The home base pupils appeared to sort their cards with more
confidence than the members of the guidance group.   When an
attempt was made to correlate the patterns of cards, however, the
results were inconclusive, whether sorts between group members, or
over time on a test-retest basis, were used.   The sample was also
too small to allow for extra pupils to be included or for a
comparison of the most able pupils.   It could not be increased
because the home base was a limited experiment.

It did seem, however, to be worth comparing other selected
groups of pupils across the year group.   A group of about 20
mature pupils was selected.   They were nominated by guidance
leaders on the basis of work they had been involved in, in their
guidance group, on residential trips and as members of pupil year
councils.   Once again the pupils were interviewed individually.

They were asked to write their own names and the names of ten pupils they knew well in class.

A second group of pupils was selected, who seemed to be the least mature pupils, and finally a middle group was selected. As before pupils were nominated by their group leaders. It was quickly realised that, in order to get a response from members of the immature or the middle group, a very specific, recent incident was required. These pupils found it very difficult to think in general terms and the incident had to be fully discussed with the pupil to fix it in the pupil's mind. The pupils in these two groups also tended to find incidents of disruption easier to remember than incidents of work.

The pupils in each group were asked to recall a recent incident involving some kind of disruption of the class. They were then asked to deal the name cards three at a time, to sort the cards into two like and one unlike and to explain their reasons for the sort. It is accepted that the comments which follow are crude generalisations but they did appear, subjectively, to be substantiated by the conversations with these pupils.

The least mature group used 'blame' as a common construct. They tended not to accept responsibility and used the extent to which they blamed others as the basis for differentiating the cards. When the task was repeated in a later situation the sorts appeared to be random and no clear correlation or pattern of blame seemed to exist. Disruptions were clearly seen as fun and pupils

were sorted into those who joined in the fun and 'snobs' who refused to get involved.

The middle group also used blame extensively and also seemed to regard disruption as fun. They introduced in addition a reference to teacher control, distinguishing between pupils the teacher could control and pupils who were uncontrollable. Once again, however, there was no consistency in the sorts which might provide a basis for more precise analysis.

The mature group used blame with obvious precision and could describe incidents in such a way as to suggest it was reasonably assigned to those responsible. They also used phrases which suggested they were aware of those who were sufficiently self disciplined not to get involved. They did not regard disruption positively, regarding it as a waste of time. The mature group also showed they were aware of patterns of relationships between pupils while both the other groups referred to each pupil in isolation.

It was difficult to see what other observations could be recorded as much of the conversation and the constructs used were related to specific situations involving specific teachers. Familiarity with the teacher or the situation led to a specific interpretation which might not make sense outwith the school. The methods were however extremely productive in making available insights for guidance strategies with specific pupils.

One of the priorities in this study has been to develop methods available to teachers, pupils and parents. As we move to approaches based on existing theory and away from the earlier general approaches, the methods may become less accessible to those involved. Personal construct theory had also been used with teachers as an in-service training device and, given time, they were becoming more aware of its value. The methods were used with pupils and they seemed to grasp what was involved. Some pupils seemed to be able to learn not only from looking at their own constructs but also those of other pupils, but these were the more able pupils. With the less mature pupils it seemed that somehow the constructs revealed would need to be converted into actual experiences before learning would take place and it is on this aspect that section 5.11 focuses. Very little work was done using personal construct approaches with parents. This was because there was insufficient time available to introduce them sensitively rather than because they were seen as completely inappropriate.

5.11 Zone of Proximal Development

5.11.1

A guidance group was selected at random. The pupils were interviewed individually and given 20 cards on which were written the names of all the pupils in the group. They were also given blank cards and asked to add the names of adults they thought

affected the decisions they made in situations they encountered in school. The pupils then used the cards to discuss incidents they had recently experienced. Where possible at least one incident observed by the interviewer was included. The pupils first discussed those who were present then added extra cards to predict that person's reaction. Finally, the pupils were invited to use the incident to predict what might happen in a future similar incident.

A group of five pupils, three girls and two boys, were identified who seemed to be the most mature. These pupils were able to talk generally about situations and to point to similarities between incidents. They occasionally used abstract constructs and had little difficulty in talking about relationships, responsibility or leadership in situations. They were able to predict how those who were not present might have reacted and the predictions seemed reasonable to the interviewer. The pupils were also able to anticipate future situations and to show how what they had learned applied to these situations. The pupils needed adult help and prompting to complete these tasks but they were able to complete them with adult help.

A second group of seven pupils, four girls and three boys, were identified who, even with adult help, were unable to generalise and who could only relate specific incidents. They described situations simply in terms of what actually happened and had difficulty in using abstract concepts. They appeared to be

reasonably accurate in predicting how individuals who were not present might react but found it impossible to anticipate future situations and to show how anything they learned might apply, even when they received adult help.

The remaining group found it impossible to use the cards to describe the situations accurately. Incidents were selected which the interviewer had observed and, even when they were taken through the events stage by stage, the account given by the pupil differed from what had been observed. Typically the pupil gave an account which placed him in a more favourable light and it was assumed this was a deliberate strategy. Gradually, however, it became clear that, even when neutral incidents, or incidents in which the pupil had encountered success were selected, the pupils were still unable to recall and recount the incidents accurately no matter how much help they received. This group contained three girls and five boys.

In each case the approach seemed to have enabled the interviewer to begin to identify the pupils' zone of proximal development.

5.11.2

In a separate exercise the same pupils were presented with cards on which were written descriptions of incidents they might have been involved in. The pupils were asked to sort the cards

into incidents which they felt were similar and incidents which
bore no relationship to each other.   Only the pupils in the most
mature group were able to sort the cards with adult help.

5.11.3

The eight pupils, three girls and five boys, who had had
most difficulty in sorting cards were formed into a group and time
was set aside to involve them in a range of group work activities,
including group discussions, group interaction games and outings.
At various points the activities were suddenly stopped and the
group were asked to describe what had been happening.   Gradually
the pupils learned to describe what had been happening.

The pupils then selected individual behaviours they
themselves wanted to engage in.   Some simply expressed a desire to
be able to apply themselves to work without being distracted;
others wanted to get through a lesson without annoying anyone.
Each pupil had a history of disruptive behaviour in class but the
pupils really seemed to want to change.   To increase their
motivation, rewards such as free sessions in the swimming pool were
available.   Each pupil indicated the reward which appealed to
him/her.

First of all the new behaviour was discussed.   The pupils
were helped to plan simple strategies designed to keep their
attention on their work.   The subject teachers were asked to

reinforce the new behaviour if it appeared.   At the first attempt
none of the pupils sustained the behaviour for a period and three
failed within five minutes.

At the second attempt the adult helped the child to practise
the behaviour in the support group.   Failure was discussed with
the whole group and the behaviour was practised again.   The pupil
was returned to class with permission to leave the room if he felt
he could not sustain the behaviour.   Within a week about half the
pupils were able to sustain the behaviour for at least a period.

The remaining pupils required even longer in the support
group and were introduced to fewer subjects so that maximum
reinforcement by teachers could be ensured.   They learned only
with help in advance followed by continued adult support and
immediate reinforcement.   If the child misbehaved and the teacher
reinforced attention seeking behaviour by giving attention rather
than by reserving attention for evidence of concentration on task
in hand, the process almost had to start from scratch.

It seems reasonable to claim that these observations reveal
a spectrum of zones of proximal development and indicate the
variety of levels at which behaviour teaching must be applied.   In
contrast mature pupils could sit down with an adult, discuss and
learn a new range of study skills, and apply these with minimal
support from the teacher.   The conclusion reached in discussion
with the teachers was that, if schools were to be able to teach to
a child's zone of proximal development, a more flexible arrangement

would be required than that represented by the normal timetabled structure of the typical secondary school.

5.12   Attitudes and Beliefs

A guidance group was selected at random.   Each pupil made up a list of peers and adults the pupils themselves selected as having had a significant influence on their decisions. Individually the pupils were asked to identify situations in which they felt they were faced with making decisions.   The situations were discussed with the pupils and six situations were selected.

1)   Deciding whether or not to join in disruption in class.

2)   Making a decision about doing homework.

3)   Choosing to stay out late or go home at the agreed time.

4)   Choosing between helping at home or going out with friends.

5)   Making a decision when other children are shoplifting.

6)   Deciding about sexual activity.

An additional group of pupils was added and 40 pupils were interviewed using Fishbein's structure as the basis for an analysis of their responses.   In the course of the interviews a group emerged who seemed, by their responses, to be adult and most mature.   This subjective impression was checked against what was known about these pupils and was confirmed by guidance leaders.   A

group of immature pupils was also identified and this subjective
impression was independently confirmed by the guidance leaders.

Mature group

When these pupils predicted the outcomes of their behaviour
they generally seemed to make sense to the interviewer and it
seemed probable they would achieve the predicted outcome.   The
group were also highly selective about those they nominated as
significant influences;   they were able to explain the nature of
the influence and to show why they regarded those people as
significant.   In most cases the significant others, adults and
peers, were known to each other and were known to the child's
parents.

In general it seemed that there was a reasonable degree of
consistency in the views which the mature pupils believed these
significant others held.   Any disagreements they referred to
seemed to be highly specific and rarely was there evidence of a
basic disagreement.   The pupils could not suggest general views
held by a significant other, peer or adult, that they felt their
parents would disapprove of though there were specific conflicts.
The pupils also made it clear that their own position was important
and could refer to decisions they made because they themselves felt
it was right.

When the mature pupils made a decision they seemed to weigh their beliefs about the behaviour against the beliefs of significant others and to reach a considered decision. It also appeared that there was a reasonable chance that, once a decision was made, it would be implemented. It was also usually implemented in line with the intention formed.

Least mature group

The least mature group tended to predict outcomes which were totally unrelated to those predicted by the interviewer.

The pupils identified a wide range of significant others who they claimed influenced their decisions. When these others were checked out by the interviewer, many of the peers and adults seemed almost unaware of the pupil or of the influence they were having. The significant others were often unknown to each other and most were not known to the family. It was also noted that the group tended to change fairly frequently.

It seemed clear there were basic inconsistencies in the views of individuals nominated as significant influences by these less mature pupils. The pupils also suggested these individuals held beliefs and opinions which a subsequent check by the interviewer revealed were not held by them. Pupils were also aware that conflict existed between the views of significant others

and that often the views were in basic conflict with the views held by their parents.

When these pupils made decisions they tended to be influenced solely by their belief about the outcome or by the importance they attached to the opinion of significant others. They did not appear to weigh up alternative influences. These pupils were also less likely to carry out decisions as intended and revealed that they frequently changed their mind.

The approach was extremely productive of subjective insights into pupil behaviour. Difficulty emerged, however, with the immature group, in sharing these insights with teachers and parents. To begin with, information about attitudes and beliefs raise questions of trust and confidentiality not evident when only cognitive ability is being discussed. Even when the pupils trusted the interviewer and were prepared to share insights with teachers or parents, the problem of confronting teachers or parents with their relative non-significance created further problems.

5.13   Specific Instruments

From the outset it was anticipated that the main advantage to be gained from developing specific instruments would be in using them to stimulate and perhaps to structure discussions with pupils. Experience gained in piloting a wide range of questionnaires or

inventories with pupils at the school had indicated that it was less likely that they could be used in other ways. The Lewis Counselling Inventory (Lewis, 1978) and the "What I do in school" scales (University of Lancaster, 1973) had proved themselves to be instruments which produced a reasonably consistent and informative response from the pupils.

When the Lewis Counselling Inventory was used, however, the value was limited to individual items. Scales such as "Relationship with teacher" or "Relationship with peers" did not produce consistent responses from many pupils and, as a result, were less informative than the instrument designers had suggested. A considerable time was spent discussing their responses with pupils. It became clear that in some cases the pupil responses made sense but the pupils had not responded in the direction suggested by the scale. In some other cases the pupil had difficulty with the item or with the response. In most cases, however, it seemed the pupils had difficulty associating an item presented in a scale with the actual experiences they had encountered in real situations. Because they could not relate real experiences to items contained in the scales, the pupil response tended to be random.

To begin with every effort was made to elicit items from pupils which would result in more consistent responses. It was assumed that, if items reflected patterns of personal construct or patterns of common constructs shared by groups of pupils,

sub-scales based on common constructs might be established.
Within the study a considerable amount of time, almost one-third of
the total time devoted to the study, was spent eliciting items,
designing instruments, applying those with sample groups, and in
follow-up interviews to analyse the response.

Two instruments were planned. One consisted of
relationship scales based in the first instance on items from the
Lewis Counselling Inventory. Only items relating to teachers or
peers were selected because there was concern that items relating
to family might appear to parents to be intrusive. To begin with,
additional items were based on conversations with pupils about
their relationships with peers and with teachers. An approach
based on personal construct theory was also used to see whether
items relating to specific patterns of constructs could be
identified. The elements used were either peers or teachers and
the constructs pupils used to compare and to contrast peers or
teachers were used as the basis for additional items.

Pilot work with the "What I do in school" scales revealed
that the items were a mixture of items relating to actual
behaviour, and items relating to attitudes to behaviour. While
the pupils found the simple behaviour items relatively easy to
respond to, they had great difficulty in relating to the attitude
to behaviour items. Additional items were based on comments
elicited from pupils when their behaviour was being discussed.

Two instruments, a relationship questionnaire and a
behaviour questionnaire were prepared. The relationship
questionnaire contained items which had originally appeared in the
Lewis Inventory and permission had been granted to use them. None
of the "What I do in school" items were used in their original form
though similar items, relating solely to behaviour, were used.

In August 1981 the first instruments were used with several
pilot groups. At this stage important lessons were learned. The
attention span of the majority of the pupils was limited and they
quickly lost concentration on the task in hand. This was so
obvious it could be observed as they completed the questionnaires.
Pupils began to look round, to talk to each other; they could be
observed ticking responses without allowing time to read the items.
When this was discussed with the pupils, they did not claim the
forms were boring and most expressed interest and denied that they
had not been completing them properly. They volunteered to
complete them again and, with adult encouragement, they were helped
to concentrate on each item.

It was also noted that their attention span could cope
better with a shorter format. It was observed, and subsequently
confirmed by a drop in correlation coefficients, that the simple
act of turning to the back of the instrument, caused a dramatic
drop in concentration and resulted in random ticking.

The instruments were shortened at this stage to two questionnaires: one based on 12 behaviour items; the other on 20 relationship items. Each was piloted with six new guidance groups, making a total of 114 second year pupils. None of these pupils had been involved in earlier trials. The pupils completed the forms in groups of about 15 pupils. Pupils who were felt to be less mature and whose attention span was likely to be most limited, completed the instruments in even smaller groups of about four pupils at a time.

The instruments and the secured responses were then used as the basis of follow up interviews with the pupils in the context, as far as they were concerned, of their subject choice. In this way it was possible to compare the observations made in an interview with the assumptions which might be made on the basis of their scores. It was also possible to ensure that in terms of their subject choice the pupils gained from the insights.

The pupil responses were also analysed using SPSS (Nie et al., 1981). A considerable amount of time was spent on this analysis, consideration being given to correlation matrix and to a range of factor analyses. As time passed, however, it became increasingly obvious that the mathematical methods being used in the analyses were considerably more sophisticated than the instruments warranted.

More and more it began to appear that further thought needed to be given to the instruments. If pupils' personal constructs were to be used as a basis for the instruments, and if the items selected could be grouped into common construct patterns shared by groups of pupils, then factor analyses might indeed reveal interesting factorial patterns corresponding to shared constructs. In order to achieve this, however, a larger range of instruments, considerably more items, and certainly a larger sample of pupils would be required. In order to generate the items, a school would require a group of teachers trained and convinced of the value of personal construct theory and familiar with factor analyses. This group would help to generate the items, enable a large number of pupils, probably over several years, to complete a range of instruments and then carry out follow-up interviews with every pupil. Such an approach was clearly beyond the resources of this study.

At this point in the study it was accepted that the instruments developed would have a limited use. The relationship instrument consisted of 20 items grouped in four potential sub-groups. The behaviour instrument consisted of only 12 items grouped in three potential sub-groups. Copies of the instruments and details of the simple correlations achieved with the various samples of pupils can be found in Appendix B.

As well as the difficulties already considered, a major
difficulty encountered in the introduction of inventories was that
the theory behind them was not easily accessible to most teachers
and certainly not to parents and pupils. They reinforced the
concept of the researcher as the external expert which is foreign
to the view expressed throughout this study. It was not clear
whether resorting to complex technical analyses of inventories
would increase or decrease the alienation of the various groups
involved in guidance.

5.14 Summary of Initial Study

In the course of the study a number of insights were
generated which either contributed to individual staff development
or stimulated the development of specific strategies. It is to be
hoped that the study also helped the pupils involved to make more
informed decisions and that, as a result of the methods developed,
more parents became involved in the process of education.

The content analysis of school publications developed one
particular approach to accountability. It also appeared to
reinforce the teachers' awareness of the fact that the problems
they encountered, involving pupils, should not be seen as isolated
events but were best viewed in the context of developmental

processes.   Once this was established, it became clear that the methods required by teachers were those which enabled them to understand the processes they were engaged in.

When the contents were discussed with parents and with pupils, it became clear that not only must schools communicate ideas in language which is meaningful to parents but also that it is unlikely that parents will gain access to that meaning unless they share in the experiences to which the language relates. While it is more likely that pupils will share experiences with teachers, it was increasingly clear that they need to explore their perceptions of these experiences with the teachers.   If teachers, parents and pupils are to share experiences and to reflect together on these experiences, then this has resource implications for schools.   Not only is time needed for meaningful contact but teachers also need training to develop their expertise.   It is unlikely that outside experts will be available and it seems vital that methods be developed which enable teachers to evolve their own expertise.

Teacher talk revealed a wide consensus between the views expressed in the reports and in the day to day conversations of the teachers.   As the teachers reflected on the specific difficulties they encountered in relating to families, the relative inconsistency of the responses of some families was identified as a priority consideration.

A review of pupil records revealed the inadequacy of existing reports on pupils. It was realised, however, that any attempt to introduce improved reports was dependent on the prior training of teachers which in turn required that teachers have access to methods which enabled them to gain insights into the process they were reporting on. The discussions of the observations made also indicated that it was important to involve

pupils in self assessment and also to involve parents if the records were to provide a real basis for decision making.

The development of accounting as an approach to teacher training created a more critical awareness by teachers of the process they were engaged in. In the course of reflecting on their encounters with parents, the teachers once again focused attention on the inconsistencies they identified in many of these relationships.

Structured conversations with parents revealed the potential of home-visiting for establishing relationships with many parents who might not contact the school. As these relationships were examined from the parents' perspective, it became evident that parental views were not always consistent with school views. It became clear that many parents encountered the same difficulties as their children and that, until the school attempted to develop the competence of the family, it was unlikely it would succeed in

educating the children. In other cases inconsistency between home and school might only be resolved by the teachers learning from the parents.

Personal construct methods appeared to be useful though unfortunately they could not be used as precisely as grid analysis implied. The responses of these pupils were rarely consistent enough for statistical analysis.

Identification of the pupils' zone of proximal development was attempted and it did seem that the methods offered a way for teachers to identify specific aspects of pupil development where learning was most likely to take place.

Analyses of pupil attitudes and beliefs also appeared to generate insights into the way pupils develop. These methods required sensitive use and raised issues of confidentiality and trust. It was also clear that it might be difficult for some teachers and parents to come to terms with the implications of the insights gained. It was unlikely, however, that competence could be developed until these difficulties were resolved.

Although a considerable amount of time had been devoted to attempting to produce specific instruments, it was concluded that these instruments were likely to have a limited application at present. Two, admittedly superficial, instruments were produced and these will have a limited application in the final stages of the study.

In the course of the study, consistency of learning experience was identified as the alterable variable on which attention will now focus.

CHAPTER 6

THE FINAL STAGES

6.1   Selection of pupils

The thesis was conceived as a study in guidance.   It is an attempt to move beyond a description of guidance practice by developing approaches which will allow those involved in guidance to explore their experience and to assess the impact of their strategies on the development of each pupil's ability to make decisions.   Consistency of the learning experiences encountered by pupils was identified as an example of a specific alterable variable.

The rationale on which this chapter is based depends on the acceptance of a developmental view of decision making.   Two groups of pupils were selected who appeared to represent the extremes in maturity to be found within a year group.   The nature of the consistency of the learning experiences encountered by each group was analysed and an attempt was made to establish whether it was possible to alter these learning experiences so that they became more consistent over time or in a variety of contexts.   It was accepted from the start that while it might be possible to reveal an absence of consistent learning experiences, it would probably not be possible to establish specific cause effect relationships.

Group M: Most mature pupils.

Pupils who consistently appear to be in control of their behaviour, who seem able to accept responsibility, to make and to implement decisions and to relate easily to peers and to adults.

Group L: Least mature pupils.

Pupils who appear to be rarely in control of their behaviour, who seem to avoid responsibility, are unable to make or to implement decisions and who relate poorly to peers and to adults.

The descriptions were discussed fully with those guidance leaders and subject teachers involved in nominating pupils. Once again it became clear, from the initial disagreements which occurred, that when a school introduces new concepts of ability or potential, then the in-service support given to staff to enable them to adapt their perception of pupils is important.

In each case the guidance leader and at least four teachers involved with the pupil were consulted. A total of 24 most mature and 30 least mature pupils were nominated. All the pupils were observed by the researcher and by the guidance leaders for over a month. Contact was established with the families in the context of preparation for subject choice and the school's perception of the pupils was matched with the family's. Where possible, the pupils' behaviour in the wider community was also

taken into consideration.   Reference was made to the pupils'
records to establish a longitudinal picture of their development.

Eventually agreement was reached on 20 mature pupils, 10
boys and 10 girls.   The pupils covered a reasonable spread of
ability and were not the 20 most able pupils in the year group.
On a similar basis, 20 least mature pupils were selected, 10 boys
and 10 girls.   None of the group L pupils was making good progress
in the school though some were known to have ability in number
work, creative writing or art work, but they rarely applied
themselves to developing their potential.

The mature group contained pupils who surprised some
teachers because the evidence for the pupils' maturity was to be
found outwith the school.   The immature group contained no
surprises.

6.2   Analyses of the range of competence evident in each group

What follows is a summary of conclusions reached, based on
the observations made.   The evidence relates to conversations and
observations which have not been recorded because in themselves
they are fragmented and can only be understood in specific
contexts.   It is, therefore, not suggested that these conclusions
are substantiated;   simply that, by making use of the methods
already discussed, teachers will be able to make these types of

observations on their own pupils and are likely to reach similar conclusions.

In individual and group interviews using personal construct approaches, the pupils in group M demonstrated an ability to recall precisely events which had occurred up to two weeks previously. Their recollections tallied with those of the adults involved. The descriptions were specific and expressed in concrete terms, but with adult help they were able to generalise and to make abstract observations whilst explaining their behaviour. These pupils were also able to use past experience to predict what might occur in future incidents and were prepared to accept responsibility for their actions.

When discussing subjects, they appeared to be aware of the nature of the subject and not simply to view lessons as collections of specific discrete activities. Their attitude to the subject could be independent of their attitude to the teacher. When they indicated a need for help, they saw this in terms of specific short term problems rather than as long term strategies and even with adult help found it difficult to develop study skills though revision for specific examinations was evident.

When group M pupils completed the relationship and behaviour questionnaire,[1] their responses rarely varied more than three points on a five point scale, both in test-retest situations and

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1. See Appendix B, pp. B14 and B15.

when responses on any items within a group of items were compared.[1]
The direction of the responses was not always as predicted by
adults who knew the pupils but these pupils could always explain
the thinking which lay behind any expected responses. The pupils
were also able to engage in conversations about the profiles[2]
completed showing their responses and to compare these profiles
with the profiles of other, unidentified, pupils.

Without exception group M pupils were involved in a wide
range of activities in and out of school and in these situations it
was evident that they formed deliberate intentions and almost
always carried these intentions out. In discussions about career
intentions, group M pupils tended to focus on short term decisions
and few had clear long term objectives. They were always
realistic in their expectations of the outcomes of their behaviour.

In nominating significant others, who the pupils perceived
as having an influence on their behaviour and their decisions, the
group revealed several interesting characteristics. They tended
to nominate a fairly restricted group of peers and adults. There
was a marked tendency for their significant others to know each
other or at least for the pupil's parents to know both the pupil's
friends and also the other adults who influenced the pupil. While
the pupils could indicate areas where they discerned specific
differences in the beliefs and attitudes of significant influences,

1.   See Appendix B, pp. B10 and B11.
2.   See Appendix B, pp. B16 and B17.

in the main they gave the impression that these individuals represented a fairly consistent set of attitudes and beliefs.

It appeared that these significant others provided fixed references which helped the pupils to make sense of their experiences and, to the extent that they represented similar views, they appeared to present the pupils with a consistent set of learning experiences.

In the course of the interviews these pupils could indicate where their own attitudes and beliefs differed from those of identified significant others. The pupils indicated that there were clearly situations where their own attitudes and beliefs were dominant though the examples they gave tended to relate to specific rather than general, and to immediate rather than long term activities.

In all cases the parents were identified as significant influences though in specific situations they were not always the most important significant influence. The pupils tended to nominate peers and adults who they felt respected their rights as individuals to make decisions for themselves. They appeared to reject demanding peers or adults who attempted to exert undue authority or to dominate their behaviour.

A group of about eight pupils was identified in group M, six of whom were girls, who appeared to be beginning to challenge the influence of their parents. The available evidence suggested that they related well to their parents but no longer accepted their authority without question. In these cases the pupils nominated

older pupils, members of the community, individual teachers or relatives as the most significant influence on their activities. These pupils also appeared to be more likely to be in conflict with the school and several had been the subject of discipline referrals. The incidents seemed to be the result of the pupils trying to assert themselves and to act independently rather than examples of immature disruptive behaviour.

In general, the pupils seemed to weigh both their beliefs about their behaviour and their beliefs about significant others in reaching a decision. In selecting subjects, for instance, these pupils referred to the assumed outcomes of completing the course, to their attitudes and beliefs about peers who might or might not select the course, and to their attitudes and beliefs about the teachers who might teach the course. Pupils were identified who had selected a course because they perceived it as important even although they expressed concern about the other pupils on the course, or more frequently about the teachers who taught the course. They also indicated courses they themselves felt were important without being able to refer to significant others they felt would support this view.

In contrast, group L pupils found it impossible to recall recent, highly specific incidents. Teachers assumed that these pupils were attempting to deny responsibility and to blame others. It was possible, however, that because they focused on what they felt, rather than what they observed, these pupils were relating accurately and reflecting their lack of control of events.

Several teachers rejected this explanation, yet there was evidence in observation and debriefing of these pupils which appeared to support such an explanation.

Even with adult help, group L pupils were unable to integrate their experiences or to generalise. Subjects were seen as assortments of discrete activity, "We get to talk a lot", or "You have to do a lot of writing". As a result, subject choice was a relatively meaningless event. The anticipations and predictions of less mature pupils were rarely shared by adults and often seemed irrational. This could explain their inability, even with adult help, to engage in long term strategies. When an adult was engaged in activity with a small group and it was possible to focus the group's attention on incidents as soon as they occurred, there was evidence that with practice the pupils began to perceive the incidents more clearly and were able to demonstrate this by the comments they made immediately following an incident.

Group L pupils also completed the relationship and behaviour questionnaire.[1] In their case the responses were almost random.[2] There was little correlation in a test-retest situation or between responses to items within a particular group. The pupils were unable to draw any conclusions from seeing their profiles and the whole approach was too abstract for them to cope with.

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1. See Appendix B, pp. B14 and B15.
2. See Appendix B, pp. B12 and B13.

There was no evidence, in spite of careful checking, of any sustained involvement in voluntary activities either in or out of school. Even where pupils claimed an interest, this claim was not substantiated in practice. Non-involvement did not reflect lack of opportunity or even lack of inherent ability; rather it seemed to indicate an inability to sustain interest in even minimally demanding pastimes.

Most of their behaviour and the activities they engaged in were reactive rather than pro-active. Where they did use school or community facilities, the activity they were engaged in was designed to provoke the organisers. The community swimming pool was a place where attendants chased you rather than a place you went to swim. Even on popular school activities, such as skating, the teachers commented on the inability of the pupils to relate positively to the activity.

Where adults were able to negotiate with a pupil and enable that pupil to form a specific intention, it required additional support and reinforcement, often by additional rewards, before the child was able to implement the decision. This was true even when the pupil desperately wanted to succeed and the desperation was evident in the despair which followed failure. This level of adult support was possible in the special unit but problems arose when an attempt was made to reintroduce the pupil to classes. There was clear evidence that a similar level of learning was possible by supporting pupils in class but it was extremely expensive in teacher time. The teachers who discussed these

insights were clear that the only practical solution involved a restructuring of schools and the training of teachers to provide support for specified pupils.

In nominating significant others, group L tended to nominate a wide range of peers and adults. Their group of significant others changed frequently and, when the pupil was discussed with the pupils or adults nominated, there often appeared to be no evidence of these others relating in any meaningful way to the pupil who nominated them. These pupils found it very difficult to distinguish between casual acquaintances and real friends. In fact they seemed to have many acquaintances and no friends.

Within any group of significant others nominated it was common for those involved not to know each other. Certainly the parents rarely knew the other adults and frequently did not know the other children involved. It was not necessarily the case that the parents would have objected to the influence of those others but the pupils themselves could point to specific differences of opinion between their parents and the other influences.

It seemed likely that these influences would provide a range of less consistent views than those encountered from the significant others nominated by the mature group. Group L pupils appeared not to weigh up varying points of view but to be influenced directly by whichever individual was most significant in each situation. In the course of these discussions the group L pupils never referred to their own point of view. When they were

asked, they usually responded by agreeing with the views of the dominant significant other.

These pupils rarely nominated their parents as significant influences. They tended to select others who made few demands on them and who encouraged them to make undemanding choices. The pupils were able to identify able or mature pupils who they admitted had tried to help them but they had rejected this influence when they perceived that the activities would be too demanding or less immediately rewarding. The pupils nominated individual teachers or members of the community. These were people who obviously had devoted considerable effort to establishing a relationship with the pupil and the pupil reported that they had tried to do what these people wanted but, when specific incidents were examined, they admitted that they rarely succeeded.

In most cases the pupils' belief about the views of significant others was more important than their belief about the outcome of the behaviour. The influence of others dominated their choice of courses and their behaviour in class and in the community. In spite of this, it was difficult to identify examples of well established relationships. Most of the significant others denied that a relationship with the pupil existed. Relationships tended to be short-lived and to change frequently. Where a longer term relationship seemed to exist, it was often based on the fact that the pupils involved were isolated by the rest of the peer group and they found each other available

for company.   They formed small antisocial groupings engaged in destructive or disruptive behaviour.   Their attitude to each other was frequently hostile but the need for company seemed to preserve the grouping.

6.3   Study of the consistency of pupils' learning experience

It was clear that 'consistency' was used in a variety of ways by those engaged in the discussion.   It seemed more important to consider the range of meanings used than to attempt at the outset to establish a clear definition.

The teachers perceived consistency as being provided for group M pupils by the nature of the subjects studied.   It was evident that these pupils were aware of the nature of the subjects they were engaged in and that this helped them overcome any differences in approach adopted by their teachers.   A range of individualised material was available to supplement learning in every department and the material was suitable for a wide range of cognative ability.   Observation suggested that mature pupils were able to make use of these materials to supplement their learning.

In contrast, group L pupils were clearly unaware of the logic which lay behind subjects and regarded each lesson as a collection of discrete activities.   They were unable to make use of individualised materials because they had not developed sufficient self discipline to work unsupported.   Without a grasp

of subject structure they were clearly more vulnerable to different styles of teaching and unable to grasp the different ground rules involved.

Discussions with teachers revealed that they realised it was easier to be consistent with mature pupils. Group M pupils were engaged in subject learning and every teacher was a trained subject specialist who knew how to reinforce learning. Teachers also realised that under pressure they were likely to be less consistent with group L pupils. They were aware of falling into the trap of reinforcing undesirable behaviour if they rewarded disruption by attending to that pupil. The extensive use made of case conferences revealed the extent of the problem. Inconsistency in this case meant rewarding both positive learning and disruptive behaviour. The teachers realised that just as materials must be prepared at a variety of cognative ability levels so must classroom activity be suited to cognative aspects of the pupil's development.

Consistency between home and school caused considerable debate. Teachers were clear that differences between home and school need not imply inconsistency and that dissonance was an aspect of learning. Inconsistency was found in situations where an element of illogicality or confusion existed and where the parents and the teacher were unaware of the effect this had on the child. Examples were found where the teacher was attempting to convince the pupil of the value of schooling and also work with the parent without realising that the parent held the opposite view of schooling. The child was confused by a teacher who appeared to be

saying "take school seriously" and "listen to your parents" in a situation where the parents were encouraging truancy.

Other examples were found where once the teachers knew more about the parents they were able to point to conversations where the parents erratically changed their position on the matter being discussed. The teachers agreed that this inconsistency had probably always existed but that, until a close relationship was formed with the family, they had been unaware of it and had not taken it into account. Parents identified cases where teachers had failed to realise how much effort it took for a child to conform to the demands in a particular class. To begin with, the parents themselves had been unaware of this and as a result they felt that they had confused the child by being supportive at home, yet by requiring the child to attempt to meet teacher requirements in class, had made excessive demands on the child. In all these examples a key feature appeared to be lack of awareness of the illogical and inconsistent experiences to which the child was exposed.

A study of the consistency of the experiences the child encountered at home was attempted once a relationship was established with the family. Only inconsistencies which were recognised and confirmed by the family were recorded.

Group M parents indicated that their children were exposed to a clearly structured set of experiences. The families operated a regular and consistent routine; meals occurred at regular intervals; children were assigned specific responsibilities and

clear limits were placed on their behaviour. This is not to suggest that all the families were regimented. A range of styles was evident. Some families appeared rather chaotic and disorganised; some were less formal and more casual; some, especially single parent families, placed more responsibility on the children; but in every case it was possible to identify clear limits and to establish that parents and children were aware of the limits.

Some children were allowed more flexible limits than others but it was clear that the limits were consistently applied by the parents. The parents agreed that this could be an extremely demanding task and that they were frequently tempted to relax but it seemed clear that any change which took place was intentional and planned and that changes rarely took place by default. The families also indicated that a considerable amount of time was spent on negotiating and changing limits and that both children and parents were involved in these discussions.

The situation with group L parents was more difficult to establish. To begin with, some of the families appeared to set more rigid limits than group M families. A few families with an ex-Army background appeared to have very fixed lists of duties and very clear times set for children to be in, in the evenings. It seemed possible that these rules may have limited the pupils' ability to develop independent behaviour. However, although this may have been true, contact with the families over a period

of time revealed that the rules, although clearly stated, were inconsistently applied.

The main characteristics of group L families were the inconsistency of the limits set for the children, the variety and inconsistency of the sanctions used and the total absence of rewards or positive reinforcement. Mealtimes were irregular; the children appeared to have been allowed out late from a very early age and in many cases did not have an agreed time to come in at. Parents were frequently unaware of where their children were.

Sanctions appeared to be applied in a random fashion, reflecting the need of the parent rather than the incident to which they were reacting. Parents agreed that they could not predict how they would react to specific incidents and admitted that, if they were tired and conflict was involved, they often simply ignored the incident or failed to implement the sanction.

When school was discussed with the parents of group L pupils, they gave inconsistent and conflicting views often within a single conversation.

Group L father: "You lot should be much more firm with them. You let them away with murder. He would not dare try that at home. I'd soon sort them out."

Later in the same conversation:

"Most of the teachers don't like him. They keep picking on him. You've got to make allowances .... I was just as bad at school."

Group L mother: "She's no trouble at home.   I send her to
                    school, it's not my fault she truants.   You've
                    got to do something about it."

Later in same conversation:

                    "They're all the same.   She never helps, I
                    can't get her to tidy up and she comes in when
                    it suits her.   It's only since she came to
                    this school. Isn't there anything you can do?"

Several weeks later:

                    "You lot spoil her.   Fancy taking her away
                    skating just because she has gone to school for
                    a month without truanting.   No wonder I can't
                    get her to do anything at home."

In both cases the parents seemed to be responding at a level of
feeling rather than of rational discussion.

When an attempt was made to discuss a strategy which might
help the parents, the tactics involved had to be very specific and
the parent had to be frequently reinforced if there was to be any
chance of success.   It is realised that these may appear to
represent a very paternalistic view of this section of parents but
they were formed in a situation where the school was able to
establish a relationship of mutual independence with the majority
of parents and in which many parents who seemed to be over anxious
or overdependent were encouraged into fully autonomous
relationships.

The teachers realised that, when assumptions were made about families, it was vital to have them checked out by an independent observer. Use continued to be made of triads and the practice of introducing new perspectives through the observer role was critical.

6.4   Attempts to improve the consistency of the child's
       learning experience

Following conversations between pupils, parents and teachers, it became clear that the inconsistent experience which was being identified was associated with irrational differences and that often there was a lack of awareness, of the illogicality of the experience as perceived by the child, by those engaged in educating the child. Several of the strategies adopted by the school appeared to reflect an intuitive desire to create a more consistent set of experiences for the pupil by creating, through the involvement of a key teacher, a greater awareness of the inconsistencies to which the child was exposed.

Guidance leaders were in a position to expose inconsistency provided they received the training and had access to methods which enabled them to identify and to confirm inconsistency. The danger of strategies reflecting a subjective teacher orientated bias was guarded against by involving the pupils, parents and other professionals in interpreting the experiences observed. Once

agreement was reached in the light of available information, a strategy could be negotiated, and the guidance leader could assess how consistently that strategy was applied. When it was possible to implement strategies consistently, pupil development took place but it was clearly not possible to prove that this was a direct result of the strategy. What did emerge, however, was clear evidence of the difficulties encountered in working agreed strategies and the need for a change in teacher training and the way schools were organised if such strategies were to be adopted.

Difficulties were also identified at the interface between home and school. Although it was not always possible to influence parental behaviour, it was sometimes possible to make parents more aware of what was happening and of the effect it had on the child. Even where this was not possible, at least the school was aware of the nature of the child's experiences and was able to support the child and to try to create a more consistent learning environment.

The parents pointed out that they found it difficult to work with the school because they did not always understand what was being communicated. It was not only that the language was difficult but they also lacked the experiences the language related to. Parents used to encouraging pupils to revise for terminal examinations pointed out that, with the introduction of continuous assessment, their support was often too late and that they had been involved in arguments with their children about preparing for examinations which never took place. Many parents were also suspicious of concepts of positive reinforcement and the use of

rewards. It was observed that discussion of these approaches did not alter parental opinion and it was only once the parents experienced the tactics through involvement of their own child that they began to appreciate that they might have a place in teaching. Those parents who became involved in the school activities indicated that they began to have a clearer understanding of their child's experience.

The present study did not produce substantive evidence of a link between consistency of experience and development but it did open up the possibility of new criteria for assessing the development of pupils. Pupils in group L, who had clearly been unable to control their behaviour, learned to control their behaviour. They also began to consider the importance of their own point of view.

These cases were too few to use to establish a direct cause/ effect link. The assessments made were dependent on a close and inevitably subjective knowledge of individual pupils. Much work remains to be done to convince teachers that the changes which resulted suggest progress and development. If it can be accepted that this study has revealed methods which enable teachers, parents and pupils to begin to be more aware of the nature of pupil development, of the criteria and assessment possible and of the strategies required, then perhaps this new awareness might be regarded as a contribution to their understanding.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Attention has been drawn to the insights which only parents
can provide into the basic learning experiences of their children.
It has been established that, where a school invested time and
effort in initiating contact with parents, not only did the level
of parental involvement increase but the teachers also found
themselves in a better position to identify and to develop the
potential of the pupils.   Emphasis has been placed on the
responsibility of every parent for their child and on the parent's
right to be placed in a position where they are able to make
educational decisions, with the child.   It was demonstrated that,
where the teachers resisted the temptation to make decisions for
families and devoted their efforts to involving the parents, then
not only were most parents able to exercise responsibility but also
it was probable that the autonomy of the family and, as a result,
of the pupil was enhanced.

Involvement of parents was shown to be more than an exercise
in communication.   Not only did parents and teachers need access
to a common language, they also needed to share experiences in
contexts in which both parent and teacher were able to learn from

each other. The focus of this learning was the pupil and it seemed evident that, where a relationship of trust and mutual respect existed between parent and teacher, then the family was less likely to be alienated from the school. In order to ensure that alienation was reduced, priority was given to developing methods which were as accessible to parents as they were to teachers. It is argued that the methods and approaches developed in this thesis serve as a model for involving more parents in the education of their children.

In the course of this study considerable stress was laid on considering the pupil's insights into his own experience. Methods were selected which would give teachers access into the way individual pupils learn to make decisions and it is argued that these approaches illuminated the process of development involved. Decision making was shown to require competencies which included the ability to recall and to reflect on experience. The pupil had to be able to perceive and to construe situations, to engage in the range of behaviour required to achieve an intended outcome and also to be committed to implementing decisions. Decision making also involved monitoring the actions of self and others, forming and identifying belief both about the outcome of action and the attitude of significant others, weighing these, then deciding the relative importance of each and forming an intention.

It is claimed that the methods developed will enable any teacher to identify criteria which will indicate the level of

development attained by a pupil and from that point to assess progress. Rather than develop a limited number of methods fully, this study has attempted to provide a broad base so that teachers, acting in their guidance role, can generate their own insights. This approach was selected because it is calculated to involve more teachers in what is seen as an important line of enquiry.

As well as developing methods which could be used by teachers to involve parents and pupils in learning to make decisions, it is also argued that these methods allow teachers to assess specific aspects of development. Particular attention was paid to the relationship between consistency of learning experience and the development of competence. It was observed that different pupils involved in identical situations encounter a range of learning experiences related as much to their competence as to the situation itself. Less mature pupils were shown to be at a considerable disadvantage and to be more susceptible to inconsistency both within and also between situations. It is argued that this has major implications for the way learning is structured in schools and also for the relative importance of the home-school relationship.

If the least mature pupils in our secondary schools are to learn competence, there is evidence that greater attention must be paid to identifying the present level at which they will learn and then providing appropriate experiences. This is likely to call for structures and also for teacher expertise which may not be

readily available in schools. It is claimed that, if guidance teachers adopt approaches similar to those suggested here, they will be able to develop their own understanding of the process involved and to provide the training needed by other staff.

If guidance is to develop beyond being a series of tasks assigned to selected teachers or to become more than a responsibility given to promoted guidance staff to develop systems which reflect the priorities of the school, then there is a need to establish that aspect of education on which the guidance teacher is an authority. The future contribution of guidance is likely to depend on guidance teachers accepting this role and having confidence in their expertise on a a major aspect of education. The guidance role involves teachers, parents and pupils and has at its heart the development of decision making competence. The evidence in this thesis indicates that, if guidance teachers adopt approaches such as those suggested, they will be able to contribute a new expertise to schools.

The promoted guidance teacher, as an authority on the way in which the individual learns to make decisions, will be in a unique position to suggest new ways in which the school can structure the learning experiences required and to train the staff for the new roles which emerge. This expertise is important if guidance is to respond to each individual child, vital if every family is to be involved and essential if a majority of schools introduce a first level guidance responsibility for all teachers.

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APPENDIX A

CONTENTS

1. GENERAL POLICY

1.1 THE CENTRE ETHOS

RELATIONSHIPS, GUIDANCE, CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, DISCIPLINE

The success or failure of WHEC will depend, probably more than in most educational establishments, on the quality of relationships between staff and students, whether children or adults.

OUR FIRST PRIORITY MUST BE TO ESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

We encourage relationships which are warm, caring, personal and open. We reject relationships which are cold, uncaring or impersonal.

The creation of good relationships depends on many factors.

We require a GUIDANCE SYSTEM which provides every student with the security of an adult to whom the student may turn in times of difficulty and with whom a continuing relationship may be fostered.

We require a DISCIPLINARY SYSTEM which is fair, reasonable and unobtrusive and is recognised as such by our students.

We require a CURRICULUM designed to enrich ALL our students, which provides frequent experience of success and offers sufficient choice over a wide range of academic, recreation and leisure courses.

We require an ASSESSMENT SYSTEM which gives positive motivation to ALL of our students.

We require an agreed policy on our INVOLVEMENT with the COMMUNITY.

Information about these is given in -

       1.1.1 GUIDANCE SYSTEM

       1.1.2 DISCIPLINARY SYSTEM

       1.1.3 CURRICULUM POLICY

       1.1.4 ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

       1.1.5 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT and

       THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

1. GENERAL POLICY
1.1 THE CENTRE ETHOS

1.1.1 GUIDANCE SYSTEM

We would like every youngster to feel valued as a person.

We see that as being the concern of all the members of the community that comprises Wester Hailes Education Centre, not the prerogative of Guidance.

By setting up a structure of Guidance Groups, Leaders and Specialised Staff, we hope to ensure that every student knows that there is an adult in school who takes an interest in her or his progress — an adult to turn to for help and support, a person who can enable a student to form relationships in new surroundings.

At a practical level, it may be listening to a youngster who wants no more than to let someone know how hard things have been that day; examining with older student the alternative of further study or taking the first job that comes along; talking to the youngster who refuses to attend a class or classes despite the efforts of Guidance Leader and Specialist; helping students choose work in which they will be reasonably contented and successful.

It is crucial that all those involved work as a team. Guidance Leaders form the first contact, Guidance Specialists provide back-up expertise, resources and links with agencies. Each must know the part the others play if the aims of the Centre are to be reached.

A - GUIDANCE GROUPS

Students from S.1 to S.6 are allocated to Guidance Groups consisting of approximately twenty pupils. Each group is random and mixed-ability. The students in each group are drawn from a single stage (eg S.1) of the Centre, but this policy is open to reconsideration for future sessions.

Each group relates to a teaching member of staff, known as the GUIDANCE LEADER, whom the group meets each morning from 08.45 to 09.15.

Each group is allocated a space in the Centre as the Group Base.

Groups are known publicly by the name of their Guidance Leader, eg Mr. W. Brown's Group, rather than by the traditional codes such as 1a, 1b, etc which are used in routine office returns.

B - THE DUTIES of GUIDANCE GROUP LEADER

The job of the Guidance Leader is to establish caring relationships with his or her students and contact with their parents; to create an atmosphere in the group which will allow the students to benefit from the support of the other students as well as the Guidance Leader.

(a) Student Care

(i) The first responsibility of the Guidance Leader is to establish contact with his or her students. The GL should be prepared to assist in the development of their students as they progress through the Centre. The GL should be prepared to liaise with subject teachers to support students in class. The GL should also be willing to help re-integrate vulnerable students 'squeezed out' by the pressures of the school system.

(ii) Each Guidance Leader will be asked at appropriate intervals to provide a report on each Group member to the Year Guidance Team. In addition, the GL should be vigilant in observing changes in attitude or behaviour patterns amongst his charges so that an immediate report can be made to the Year Guidance Staff with a view to further investigation.

(iii) The Guidance Leader should try to give his Group Base an identity. This may be done quite simply by decorating a corner of the classroom allocated as a Group Noticeboard, using brightly coloured materials. Apart from the list of Group Members, this can then be kept up-to-date at Wednesday morning meetings with Notices, examples of students' work, photographs of students or of their families or pets, etc. Individual inventiveness will pay off here.

(iv) The daily Guidance periods may be used for the following purposes:-

      (i) Student Profiles (See Section 1.1.4)
      (ii) Course and Module reports
      (iii) Social and health education
      (iv) Routine administration
      (v) Student-and teacher-initiated discussions
      (vi) Recreation, board games, music
      (vii) 'Homework' assignments
      (viii) Mini-assemblies

The Guidance Leader is free to decide how to structure a weekly pattern of activities, except in the case of social and health education. Major topics on this will be planned and co-ordinated by promoted Guidance Staff in consultation with GL's

(b) Parental Liaison

    (i) The Guidance Leader should be involved directly in liaison with parents. He or she should come to be seen as the person from the Centre who contacts parents, and whom the parents should contact. He or she should ensure that every parent visits the Centre or is visited at home each year.

    (ii) Our experience to date suggests that one valuable way is by inviting parents to visit the Centre to meet with the GL. Group activities could also be fruitful. For example, arrangements can be made for students of the group to prepare a tea for their parents, using either the facilities of the Home Economics Department or some of the Centre social areas at which the GL can meet parents. The appropriate PT (Guidance) should be kept informed so that a promoted member of staff can make himself available as a support at such group activities. The desirable aim is to create a climate in which the parent feels free to visit the Guidance Leader in the Centre and the GL feels welcome and free to visit the home.

    (iii) Apart from such informal social evenings, a GL will be involved in primary transfer contacts. Another area is that of curriculum choice, where the GL in co-operation with the promoted Guidance Staff will arrange an interview involving both parents and students.

(c) Developmental Work

The GL's will also be encouraged to extend their role by

        - one-to-one counselling
        - small group work
        - home visiting
        - attending Children's Panels
        - organising social activities
        - residential experiences

These may appear to be unrealistic aspirations, but in fact many of our Guidance Leaders have already begun, with support, to explore these areas and to develop the relevant skills and expertise.

NOTE by PRINCIPAL: I am aware that I am asking all Staff to make an unusually high commitment in this system of Guidance. I believe it to be fundamental to the whole venture of WHEC for staff to show positive and active concern for the well-being of young people in our care. Guidance Leaders will be given many opportunities of suggesting modifications and improvements in the terms ahead of us.

C - PROMOTED GUIDANCE STAFF

Their basic philosphy is 'to enable students to make real decisions, based on an awareness of self and others'. In order to make this statement mean something, we must be prepared to develop the range of professional skills involved. To help teachers, Guidance Specialists will make standard case notes available and establish a two-way system of communication.

Promoted Guidance Staff may operate with students through

- one-to-one conselling
- small group work
- Guidance Group meetings
- large group or year group assemblies
- student with parents
- student with other teacher
- student with outside specialist
- informal and social
- residential courses

The Guidance teams support the Guidance Leaders with professional advice, In-Service training in the Centre, direct assistance and clerical staff. Each GL is assigned to a specific member of the team for this purpose.

Three examples may serve to illustrate the kind of support that Guidance Leaders may expect.

(i) As regards student care, the Guidance team will take up all routine cases of students in difficulty who are referred to them through the 'Referral to Guidance' form completed at the end of the week. In addition, the team will take up the more demanding, time-consuming cases. The Guidance Leader may expect to be kept informed at every stage of developments in each case.

(ii) As regards support for the social and health education element of the guidance period, the promoted guidance staff will specify the topics, resources and methods required for a four year SE/HE programme; will provide back-up including the production of resources and the running of in-service courses; will coordinate the programme for GG's in each year; and will conduct lead lessons and be available for follow-up and discussions.

(iii) As regards course choice and careers, the Careers team have their own well-stocked office and library displays, and provide vocational guidance during the morning Guidance periods from S.2 onwards.

1.   GENERAL POLICY
1.1. THE CENTRE ETHOS

1.1.2 DISCIPLINARY SYSTEM

Our basic goal must be to create an atmosphere of mutual respect
and collective responsibility within the Centre.   Discipline is
not just a matter of punishment or deterrence.

A - CLASS DISCIPLINE

Learning can take place only in an orderly and controlled environ-
ment.   It is the responsibility of every teacher to create such
a teaching situation.   The following factors are worth bearing
in mind.

(a)   Adequate preparation is essential.   The teacher
       must plan in advance WHAT THE STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED
       TO DO.

(b)   Instructions to students must be clear, simple and
       direct.   Students should be trained in proper class-
       room procedures.

(c)   The teacher must establish the standards of acceptable
       behaviour of students on entering the classroom, within
       the classroom and on leaving the classroom.   We must
       aim, not at rigid institutionalism (eg. no lining up
       to enter or leave rooms) but a controlled informality
       (students enter and leave in groups or individually in
       a quiet manner).   With a new class an initial famil-
       iarity can prove disastrous subsequently, and it is
       recommended that a tight control be established right
       from the start.

B - DISCIPLINE OUTWITH CLASSROOM

Only vigilance and commitment on the part of all staff can ensure
adequate standards of behaviour outwith classrooms.   Our aim
must be to train students to move around the Centre without direct
supervision.

C - DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

It is of great importance that fairly uniform standards and
sanctions are used throughout the Centre - nothing is more un-
settling in its effect on student behaviour than a wide discrep-
ancy between the sanctions operating in different departments.

It/ . . . .

There is a clear need to provide, as part of the P.7/S.1
induction programme and during the first few weeks of
secondary school, training in very basic modes of behav-
iour in and around the Centre.   Linked to this is the
need for us to devise a strategy to reinforce approved
behaviour.

KEY TASK 20

Extension of the *"Guidance meets departments"* in-
service programme.

Action by Depute Principal
Target Date: January 1981

KEY TASK 21

A programme to provide training in the basic routines
associated with each of our different learning areas,
and in the use of our public areas, should be devised
for S.1 pupils.

Action by H.L.S & L.S Guidance
Target Date: August 1981

5.   MIDDLE SCHOOL

5.1   Curriculum

With Middle School we enter the arena of unresolved dilemmas.
Is the curriculum to be a selection from our culture, a
training for work, a preparation for citizenship, an oppor-
tunity for personal growth?   Is the process of learning to
be teacher-dominated, child-centred, individualised, coll-
aborative or personalised?   Is the organisation to be
founded on subject-based option columns or a home-base team
teaching system as outlined in a recent paper presented to
the Curriculum Committee?   Are we to have Dunning Certif-
icates for all or Mode 3 internal assessment for all or
no national certification at all?

There would appear to be no resolution of these dilemmas in
the short term.   There are too many unknowns.

However, there are a great number of positive developments
in train which can and should be pushed ahead.   Much
excellent work has taken place in developing

-    20 Certificate of Secondary Education courses.

-    W.H.E.C. courses (e.g Photography and Film-Making,
     Music, World of Sport).

-    modular courses (e.g Living in Families, Careers,
     Drama, Computers).

-    mixed-ability teaching in Physics and Chemistry

-    a special course for school leavers

At present, the national scene is dominated by proposals
arising out of the Munn and Dunning reports, with courses
being piloted initially for Foundation Level in English,
Maths and Science (W.H.E.C. is a pilot school for English
and Science).   We feel that our major contribution will
be in two areas which offer real scope for innovation in
education - multi-disciplinary courses and experimental
courses/modules.   Over the last three years our staff
have developed considerable expertise in constructing and
assessing the courses listed above.   This will pay div-
idends as we respond to national development of Foundation/
General/Credit Level courses, and especially of new multi-
disciplinary courses and of new experimental courses/modules
on topics more usually associated with the hidden and in-
formal curriculum.

5.3   Special Guidance Unit

The Unit has been a most successful venture.   It has had considerable success in keeping a number of youngsters in contact with normal schooling, children who would other-wise have been sent to residential institutions which can so often merely postpone their ultimate re-integration into family, social groups and neighbourhood.   It has also begun to develop new techniques to develop decision-making among students, and has acted as a challenge and stimulus to our thinking on the needs of youngsters in school in general.

KEY TASK 24

A pamphlet should be produced outlining the work of the Special Guidance Unit, its aims, methods, successes and failures, with suggestions for future development.

Action by D.P and P.T(Spec Unit)
Target Date: for May 1981

5.4   People with special needs

Within our community are adults and students who have attended or are at present attending one of the Region's special schools.   We need to widen the educational facil-ities within W.H.E.C. to include appropriate provision for people with special needs.   This could be done on a part-time basis in conjunction with the local adult training centres and local special schools, or indeed on a full-time basis.

KEY TASK 25

Discussions should be held with the Department of Special Educational Services with a view to develop-ing appropriate provision in W.H.E.C. for people with special needs.

Action: Centre Council
Target Date: September 1981

"Most teachers (and many parents) want the society of the school to reflect order and authority, not openness and conflict: school has a clearly defined job, teachers have statutory responsibility, and there is an established hierarchical structure of authority. Is this the kind of school we want?"

Nisbet Report

Comment: This is the "tightrope" we all walk!

"A good educational system should have three purposes - it should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives; empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them; and, finally, furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make this challenge known."

Ivan Illich
Deschooling Society

"In stress, people regress to a closed society. Openness develops only where there is confidence."

Nisbet Report

"But community education is not simply a structure but also a process. Consequently it is realised through relationships. If teachers have no say in school affairs, they will not favour involvement of the community in decision-making. And if pupils are enrolled in an ordered environment in which they have no part to play except obedience, they cannot learn responsibility. Therefore the starting points for the community school are in the relationships within the school, among head-teachers, teachers and pupils and in a genuine account-ability to the community for the decisions and ordering of the life of the school; and in relationships between the school and the community, between professional staff and members of the public. Where such relationships exist, there is a possibility of achieving the ideals of the community school - and the provision of community facilities within a school is no substitute for this essential element of attitudes."

Nisbet Report

Comment: We endorse this statement completely.

"As we grow, the problems we will meet will increase rather than diminish. So we must become more efficient and sophisticated in our handling of problems. We must continue to bring to the situation in Wester Hailes the best minds and the most generous hearts."

Alex Goodall

WESTER HAILES SCHOOLS LIAISON

REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT, RECORD KEEPING & REPORTING

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report our review of Assessment, Record Keeping & Reporting in the Wester Hailes schools to promote discussion of assessment practices and procedures and to facilitate further development work.

The review is based on verbal and written submissions presented by each member of the group for discussion at our working party meetings. The P.S. submissions were based on a questionnaire which provided very useful detailed information on the quality and quantity of assessment, record keeping and reporting. We are grateful to those teachers who volunteered much of the information which is the substance of this report.

(Appendix

1.2 The information can be categorised and summarised as follows:

Assessment:

Measuring or estimating performance:

a) informally by observing the pupils response to learning activities, orally by questioning and discussion;

b) formally by marking set work, teacher tests, standardised diagnostic tests and by noting performance and response to graded work (often in ability groups).

Record Keeping:

The systematic recording of informal and formal assessments:

a) by the teacher in mark books, individual and group checklists, records of work, reports and continuous assessment records;

b) . by pupils in checklists, student profiles and other forms of cumulative work.

Reporting:

Communicating assessments:

a) to parents through standard L.R. reports, modular 10-weekly reports (WHEC only) and directly at parents' evenings and meetings;

b) to WHEC through the P.P.Rs, L.R. Transfer Forms, Remedial Report Forms and staff liaison meetings.

5. THE WAY AHEAD

In our discussions we recognised that marks and grades may not afford the best means of recording attainments, skills and concepts that have been encountered and understood and therefore that some form of profiling may be both appropriate and desirable. Ideally, what we require is an on-going record of attainment which operates from P.5/6 through to S.2 eliminating the need for a special transfer form. However, as this would take considerable time and effort to develop and must be regarded as a long term goal, in the short term we could produce a transfer report which adequately summaries the primary school assessments for transmission to WHEC. We feel that, having completed the necessary preliminary work and acquired an understanding of mutual problems, the group should continue to work in consultation with the teachers to achieve the following goals:

5.1 Short term goals

(i) produce an interim transfer report which takes account of present practice and recent regional developments.

(ii) review the means of transfer of Guidance information in order to produce clear guidelines.

(iii) promote discussion of assessment practices and procedures in our schools using this review as a starter paper in order to enhance further development work.

5.2 Long term goals

(iv) promote a common approach to assessment in our schools which takes account of individual differences in organisation and practice.

(v) produce a transfer report which is useful and practical and compatible with regional policy.

(vi) promote liaison on communicating the curriculum to parents.

6. SUMMARY

There is a high level of interest and activity in assessment and record keeping in our schools with present practices subject to continuous review. What has emerged is that our schools share a common aim which is to develop a system that makes regular checks on the development of pupils using appropriate techniques of assessing and recording attainment beneficial to teaching and learning and not overdemanding to the teacher in terms of time. Although there are differences in emphasis between schools, there is an awareness that we share common problems which may best be tackled by sharing our ideas and experiences. In the long term, through planned liaison, we may be able to develop a common approach to assessment in general, and in particular to produce a practical and useful transfer report.

RGB/HC

2. THE HISTORY

The Special Guidance Unit was established in 1978, when the school opened, because the Principal assumed that there would be a number of pupils who would not fit into the normal school system.

The original allocation of staff was one P.T and one class teacher and we were given two rooms in the community section of the school. A school-based social worker also started in Summer 1978, whose work is drawn entirely from school. By November 1979 the demand for places in the Unit was great enough for the appointment of another teacher, making up the present complement of one P.T., two teachers and social worker. We also moved into a 'T.U. hut' because it offered us the chance to create a practical, self-contained operation.

3. THE ATMOSPHERE

The heart of that operation is the relationships among the individuals that make up the 'unit community'. The first component of that relationship is trust, a word often abused by teachers who assume that they are due trust and respect as a right, and not things to be earned. We seek also an atmosphere that breeds tolerance and loyalty, that challenges each member yet supports those who fail.

So many pious words (like those I've just used) have been applied to schools and institutions working with young people, without the full implication being anticipated.

4. THE PHILOSOPHY

The attempt to apply the above concepts has forced us to create systems to carry out our philosophy. That philosophy is easily articulated as an attempt to allow each child to look at himself, assess himself, and decide for himself, taking account of the feelings and opinions of others.

Very nice. But if we really mean 'decide for himself', then we are talking about giving pupils power and the right to decide important things, and responsibility so that they can learn to reject irresponsibility. We must, I believe, share power with pupils, and if that sharing is not to be mere pretence, then it must have a guaranteed system of implementation.

A further complication is that pupils, when given power, may not use it to arrive at socially desirable conclusions - but these conclusions must be accepted by staff in the face of natural criticism from other teachers, parents and other pupils. That is hard, but in practice we find that pupils are (almost tediously) conservative and responsible.

The great strength of a philosophy that involves sharing power with pupils is that it invalidates all the teacher 'types' who have done so much damage - from the self-righteous authoritarian, through the wet charity worker, to the left-wing cult figure.

If one thing has become clear to me over the last three years it is the effectiveness of peer group pressure as a means of changing behaviour and attitudes. Of course it requires delicate handling, needs time to mature and in the wrong adult hands could be a prescription for anarchy, but if the motivation is a desire to create a therapeutic community for young people and not a desire to cleverly manipulate them to conform, then it can succeed.

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Over the last three-and-a-half years, a number of provisions have grown up in response to particular student needs identified by members of WHEC staff.

The first point to note about them is their variety. Some have been running for several years like the Special Guidance Unit, others for only a few months, and one is even now still on the stocks. Some are full-time, like the Leavers' Course, others last a day or afternoon once a week for a number of weeks. Many are for students with behavioural difficulties, but by no means all. Some are managed by a team working together, others are managed by one person only.

One way or another these provisions supplement the considerable pastoral and curricular work carried out by WHEC staff for the 1350 youngsters in our care. We have developed these alternative ways of working in an attempt to respond to the needs of sixty or seventy youngsters who have very great difficulty in coping with normal schooling, or for whom the normal curriculum is not considered to be wholly relevant or meaningful and needs to be supplemented in this way.

We are still in the process of finding out just how best to respond to student needs, and it would be wrong to think that we have produced a comprehensive structure of support services for youngsters. We have not done so, as yet. But we are learning valuable lessons to guide us in the future. At the moment these provisions represent alternative ways of working with youngsters which have value, as the reports below show, but in a limited sense. Apart from the Special Guidance Unit and Leavers' Course, they are still operating basically within the schooling system.

Another point to note is that because these provisions are experimental, new or untried, we cannot legitimately expect to have clarity and precision on every point of their operation. What we do just now, and will continue to develop is our practice of evaluating and monitoring these provisions at regular intervals.

What we have at present is a differentiated provision, not a graduated provision. A youngster does not go up an escalator of referral. There are, of course, and need to be stages in considering the how, why and what with regard to a particular provision for a particular youngster, but that's it. Nor do we say that this provision is for isolates, that for truants, that other for disruptives, this exclusively for youngsters with special learning difficulties. It is not possible, and we should resist any attempt to label youngsters or impose such categorisation. Only by studying the reports and examining the individual case studies will a clear picture emerge of the why, the how and the what. Gaining that deeper understanding is not easy, but it never is when one is working with youngsters whose difficulties are pretty intractable.

It is also important to bear in mind that the need is greater than the resources at our disposal. When a report talks of 5 or 6 or 15 youngsters, these figures refer to the actual number of youngsters catered for. They are not the figures of youngsters who need or could benefit from this kind of provision. The figure of six represents the maximum number who can be coped with at any one time by a particular kind of approach: quite often fifteen or twenty other youngsters have been identified or referred, but only these six could be taken on.

These provisions clearly stretch our resources. They are expensive in staffing, though much less so in accommodation. They demand a ratio of 1 to 5 or 1 to 6, whereas schools are normally staffed in Lothian nearer 1 to 12 (for which latter figure, we yet give grateful thanks). However, they are very cheap when set against their true alternatives, which are special schools and residential schools run by the Department of Special Education and Social Work services. It would be very unfair were all the costs and claims on resources to be met out of a school's budget.

It is also worth bearing in mind as one begins to read the reports that the way a particular provision has grown up, the youngsters in it, the ways it operates with youngsters, and so on, all reflect the personality and style of the member or members of staff and others who are involved. This point is often over-looked, but it is of fundamental importance. If one bears it in mind, it will add immeasurably to one's understanding and appreciation of the skill, the enthusiasm, the commitment and the humanity which shine out brightly from these fascinating reports.

Alexander Goodall
DEPUTE PRINCIPAL

AG/HC
23.12.81

HEARD AT A HEARING No. 1.

CHILDRENS HEARING

".... TOGETHER WITH 27 SIMILAR OFFENCES; AND YOU WISH TO PUT THE BLAME TOMMY SQUARELY ON YOUR PARENTS AND SOCIAL WORKER HERE?...."
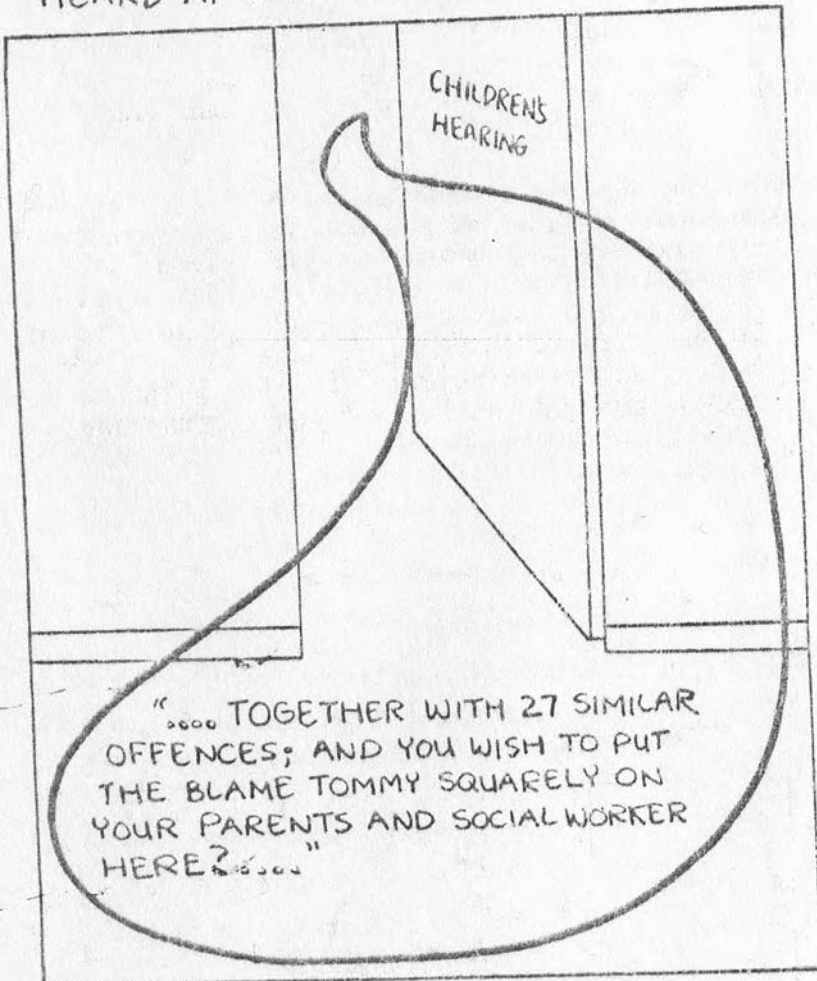
The Home Base was set up to deal with the problem of ALIENATION among pupils, S.3 in particular.   The term 'alienated' didn't sit easily for some time uptil it was defined as 'not having control over the means of production'.   Production in our case we took to mean education.

Our aims have been to give our students a greater measure of control over their education; to get them more involved in the process; to give them a feeling of belonging.   The Working Party identified these needs amongst others and recognised that they were a re-statement of the ethos.   We feel that insight, understanding and personal growth for the students (not to mention staff) are more likely to occur when students are involved and have the commitment that feeling you belong brings.   In non technical language we were set up as an experiment and we have been trying many things.   Here are some:

1.   A team approach by the staff on the ground support from promoted guidance staff.

2.   A social area for students.

3.   A flexible group approach to guidance time, especially extended guidance time.

4.   A drop-in facility from classes —
      giving responsibility to youngsters.

5.   A different method of reporting from teacher to G.L and thence to parents.

At the lowest level we are trying to know our students' needs and the highest to give a more coherent, less fragmented experience.   The above list can't convey the feeling of community that we feel now exists in the Home Base and the way that all the aspects are wrapped together.

Some facts

In August 1982 we took in 3G7, 3G12 and 3G18 - a group of 53, right across the ability range.   Since the session began there have been 3 new admissions and 1 re-admission.

Present roll	57
Attending residential establishment	2
Attending WHEC from Children's Home	1
Students with an interrupted family background i.e divorce, single parent, step-parent	28
Students using drop-in facility	15

1.

1. INTRODUCTION

"   There's an increasing number (or at least an increasingly noticed number)
of working class children who are responding to their schooling with apathy,
vandalism, indiscipline and truancy -)"

>   Simon Frith and Paul Corrigan
>   "The Politics of Education" in
>   "Society, State, and Schooling"
>   Ed. Young and Whitty.

The above quotation refers to a pattern of behaviour that some staff felt was very
much in evidence at Wester Hailes Education Centre. Apathy, vandalism, indiscipline,
and truancy were the symptoms of what was referred to as "ALIENATION" - where
students had no control over the means of production re "their" education.

In an attempt to give students a greater measure of control over their education,
to get them more involved in the process, to give them a feeling of belonging the
Home Base Project was set up in August, 1982. The details of how this was done
have to some extent been dealt with in the documents "Interim Report of The Working
Party On Alienation" (March, 1982) and "Report On The Home Base" (March, 1983).
At this point, it is sufficient to say, that an important in-school innovation was
set in motion, and as a significant requirement for successful innovation the
provision for evaluation was essential.

The Evaluation Study has attempted to report on the congruence between intended
outcomes and procedures, and what actually occurs. A comparison of the Home Base
group is made throughout with three matched guidance groups following the normal
S3 course pattern. The study is both descriptive and judgemental in style and
content.

One of the most important tasks in an evaluation of any educational innovation is
the collection of reliable data on which to base ones analysis and eventual con-
clusions. For the purpose of the Home Base evaluation a variety of research techni
have been employed:- observation, use of records, interviews and questionnaires.
A further break down of how each technique has been used is given below.

(i)   Observation:
       (a)   home base in action
       (b)   team meetings

6. HOME BASE (i) SOCIAL DIMENSION
(ii) ALTERNATIVE CURRICULUM?
(iii) UNDERACHIEVING A HOME BASE CONCERN

The Social dimension undoubtedly captured the imagination of the (E) group students. In our interviews and questionnaires students constantly referred to the social opportunities afforded by the Home Base.

" — a chance to make new friends outside your S2 guidance group "

" — its somewhere to go, there is always something to do and someone to talk to. "

" — you can really get to know the teachers - now they don't seem like teachers, just people who can help us. "

" — having a choice of teachers is important when you need help or want to do something! "

Many of the (E) group students measured success in terms of their ability to get on with others and make friends. Although very unhomely in appearance there is no doubt that the majority of (E) group students regarded the Home Base as a "home" in school - somewhere to go no matter what.

In spite of poor facilities, lack of space, inadequate furniture and furnishings, the social activities were well organised and well used by students. The tone of the Home Base in social sessions was impressive, relaxed, and friendly, with students and teachers mixing freely.

The activities were organised by the students, for the students who by and large accepted direction from those in charge of the activities. Students were directly involved in making, and implementing policies regarding the code of conduct to operate in the base, the organization of the social activities and the finances through a series of committees. Because of the high level skills involved and the self discipline required the students initially found the committee approach, which developed in the Home Base, extremely difficult to handle. The patience, tolerance, sensitivity and manipulative skill of the Home Base Team was most impressive throughout this difficult phase as they nudged the students towards taking control of the running of the social life

9.

"SUMMARY"

"It was emphasised that this is principally a curricular development to enable students to get more out of schooling."

"We will be looking for evidence of progress."

Quotes from support group meetings.

From our experience of the Home Base project we would suggest that it is principally a guidance development with its roots in the W.H.E.C. approach to guidance. The "force" behind the project and the senior teachers in the Home Base team are guidance staff. The aims are primarily concerned with relating to school as it is and the non-hierarchical management style, the relationship with students, the content the five hours, the methodology and means of problem solving are all derived from the sphere of guidance and councelling rather than in established classroom practice.

As further evidence of this the majority of issues raised by the Home Base team at support group meetings were esentially guidance issues e.g. lateness, truancy, relationships with subject departments, and social behaviour of students. It must be pointed out however, that there was no lack of concern for the alternative curriculum.

"What is being offered in the base is not yet a radical alternative to traditional education, yet something special is required to meet the needs of drop out students.

This search for alternatives to department/class based courses was a cause of

siderable anxiety to the team.

...... is still anxious about how to keep those students who spend a considerable
in the Base fully occupied."

ill the base become a mini-unit?"
en the other demands on the Base team, the inadequate accommodation, lack of
sources and support they have worked hard to provide attractive alternatives to
et the needs of the most difficult and demanding of our students, but much more
ll have to be done in this area if the Home Base project is to fulfill the
incipal aim of the development, and establish a truly alternative curriculum.
ere can be no doubt however, that it has enriched the curriculum by providing
portunities in a way that no other section of the curriculum does for students
learn and display such qualities as leadership, initiative, responsibility,
lf-discipline and vital communication skills. This is a major achievement of
e project.

rom our observations and interviews it is evident that the (E) group students
ave developed "a sense of belonging," one of the main aims identified at the
utset, and that this has enhanced and supported their relationship with school.
his is also verified by the attendance analysis. It demonstrates that the (E)
group students are good attenders. Furthermore they have not, as was originally
feared, dropped out of mainstream courses in large numbers for the "soft option"
of the Home Base, but have so far remained committed.

Although we have some evidence to indicate that the (E) group students tend to have
a more positive attitude to school than the control group we do not as yet have
sufficient evidence to show that they are performing better in their courses.

A recommendation was made that any comment reflecting regression should also contain a suggested strategy to help rectify the situation.

Finally on this section, grave concern was expressed as to the number of lost attendances in individual subjects which were not necessarily related to parents and that an attendance check from each subject on the report form would rectify this.

COMMUNICATION

As a staff we still prefer the parent/teacher communication through the guidance leader rather than full staff meetings. This however leaves the onus on the Guidance Leader whether he wishes to make contact or not, and in some cases it seldom happens. The present W.H.E.C. system in theory is preferable to the traditional parents evening but we have to structure it in such a way as to ensure that the contact is available to all parents and that it definitely occurs at crucial times e.g. course choice.

To overcome the present situation we make the following suggestion. That a parents evening should take place after Module 6 in preparation for course choice. The guidance leader should be on hand with subject information and a departmental representative be available to discuss any problems. In February the same facility should be available to the parents of S3 and S4 students for a progress report. This would serve to clarify any reports which were not understood.

Reports should be phrased in such a manner as to encourage parents to comment and should perhaps reinforce this in the format of the report which should afford parents the opportunity to make an appointment.

AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

The comment section of the report was the aspect to which the parents related and understood most, and yet some of the comments were at best as pathetic as they were meaningless (as endorsed by the appendix supplied by Jim Dunlop). Perhaps some teachers were unaware of the areas on which they should comment or that they felt compelled to make a comment because the space invited it, where they would normally have said nothing.

The areas on which comment should be made and the guidelines to the comment were the main areas of discussion. It seemed that the possible areas for comment were endless encompassing everything from interest to social competence, whatever that is. On sifting through this verbage we decided to concentrate on interest, effort, co-operation, punctuality, perseverence, behaviour, confidence and responsibility and that these as well as other aspects should be part of a questionnaire for parents who would nominate in order of preference the three areas, from the above list, on which they wished to see comment. (The intention was that the questionnaire would also be a P.R. exercise to let parents see that we were willing to innovate and involve them in the process).

/Commenting

SUMMARY REPORT ARISING FROM DHC LAETARE WEEKEND AND

SUBSEQUENT GROUP MEETINGS - SEPT. 1983

Following the DHC weekend at Laetare 22/23rd. April 1983, and the groups
that met subsequently, this Report summarises the issues raised and the
recommendations made. I am proposing it is considered by the Executive
when it meets on the 26th. September 1983.

GROUP A - 1. Concern with the high level of stress amongst staff at WHEC.
Therefore three proposals :-
   i. An investigation be made into the feasibility of changing
   the please-take system so that staff would, in normal circumstances,
   have to cover no more than half of a period at one time.
   ii. Proposal that each member of staff could have a priority
   please-take period when he/she would not plan to do anything
   else during that time in case they were called for a please-take.
   iii. Proposed that principal teachers could receive all please-
   takes for issue by them to members of staff. In this way, where
   two members of staff are free at the same time it could be
   decided in the Department who was to take it.

2. Proposed that a number of staff - say six - teaching/non-
   teaching should be selected and invited to act as staff
   counsellors. They would be offered a programme of training and at
   the end of it be available as counsellors. It is envisaged that
   such counsellors would be used, for example, to help with problems
   encountered by probationers who might not wish to bring difficulties
   to their respective principal teacher.

3. Proposed that a management training package be set up and designed
   to cover all aspects of management training. This should be done
   in small groups and should be in the first instance be offered to a
   women's group.

(Appendix - Paper from Jane Howells on the subject of please-takes)

GROUP B   1. Expressed anxiety about the apparent decline in the priority given
   by the Centre to community issues.
2. Proposed that a group be formed (maybe a continued Post S4 Group)
   which would monitor departmental use of TOIL time. This could help
   to clarify "what the Centre has to offer the community", as well as
   what the community wants of us.
3. Proposed that a detailed study be carried out into the use of the
   extra time we benefit from as a community school - where is it used
   and to what purpose ?
4. Proposed that the time has now come to pose the question - "Does
   the alternative contract inhibit community education ?". A small
   group should be established to look at its advantages and
   disadvantages.

GROUP C   1. This group felt a serious lack of time to debate the curriculum and
   its development - they would like to have further meetings for this
   purpose.
2. Decision-making by students was of concern - particularly the lack
   of opportunity.
3. Proposed that a study be undertaken of the contribution of the whole
   Centre to the community, including a review of the TOIL system. A
   member of the Executive should be charged with overseeing this task.
4. A concern about staff stress, the high level of staff absences, and
   a suggestion that the please-take arrangements be reviewed, and plan
   for better staff support be drawn up.
5. Concern expressed about the attitudes of students to staff, WHEC,

<div align="center">

WESTER HAILES SCHOOLS

TRANSFER FORM 198

</div>

PUPIL		SCHOOL	

D.o.B		PRIMARY TEACHER	

ATTENDANCE

Regular / Irregular

LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT/INTEREST:

Make a general statement of level in the most appropriate category and qualify
it if necessary, by recording specific items against these categories.

1.   Committed to:-

2.   Willing to:-

3.   Reluctant to:-

4.   Rejects:-

SELF CONTROL

Please tick the most appropriate and comment if necessary.

* 1.   Specific Difficulties.
  2.   Dependent on close supervision.
  3.   Requires teacher support.
  4.   Independent of teacher supervision.

* Comments are required for this category

APPENDIX B

CONTENTS

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Relationship Items

Positive relationship with peers

Item No.	Item	Origin
3	I get on well with most of my group	Lewis.15
8	I have many friends	Lewis.40
15	I enjoy going out with my friends	Lewis.35
18	I usually agree with my friends	Lewis.22

Inter item correlations: 1981 sample (114 pupils)

8	.398***		
15	.456***	.303***	
18	.456***	.325***	.320***
	3	8	15

Inter item correlations: 1982 sample (100 pupils)

8	.581***		
15	.234***	.324***	
18	.466***	.331***	.316***
	3	8	15

Note: Pearson product-moment correlations.
The significance levels are .05, .01 and .001
and will be flagged *, ** and *** respectively.

B1

Negative relationship with peers

Item No.	Item	Origin
1	I worry what other pupils think of me.	
2	I worry what my friends think of me	
7	I worry about getting into trouble	
11	Other children don't like me.	
14	When we work in groups I get left out.	
16	I worry about other children picking on me.	

Inter item correlations: 1981 sample (114 pupils)

	1	5	7	11	14
5	.596***				
7	.357***	.465***			
11	.428***	.431***	.371***		
14	.493***	.460***	.274***	.398***	
16	.485***	.437***	.375***	.456***	.303***

Inter item correlations: 1982 sample (100 pupils)

	1	5	7	11	14
5	.717***				
7	.388***	.517***			
11	.450***	.412***	.383***		
14	.472***	.472***	.264***	.574***	
16	.621***	.546***	.366***	.491***	.691***

Positive relationships with teachers

Item No.	Item	Origin
2	I find most teachers reasonable.	Lewis.14.
6	Teachers are generally quite helpful.	Lewis.28.
10	I like talking to my teachers.	
12	Teachers are very friendly.	
17	I get on well with teachers.	Lewis.44.
20	Teachers listen to my ideas.	

Inter item correlations: 1980 sample (114 pupils)

6	.622***				
10	.488***	.564***			
12	.462***	.517***	.601***		
17	.299**	.395***	.488***	.448***	
20	.255**	.373***	.483***	.422***	.282**
	2	6	10	12	17

Inter item correlations: 1980 sample (100 pupils)

6	.600***				
10	.494***	.601***			
12	.554***	.547***	.621***		
17	.483***	.608***	.526***	.561***	
20	.437***	.509***	.573***	.535***	.597***
	2	6	10	12	17

Negative relationships with teachers

Item No.	Item	Origin
4	Teachers ignore me.	Lewis.5.
9	I argue with the teachers.	
13	When my friends mess about I join in.	
19	Teachers are always picking on me.	Lewis.23.

Inter item correlations: 1981 sample (114 pupils)

9	.405***		
13	.371***	.531***	
19	.361***	.506***	.419***
	4	9	13

Inter item correlations: 1982 sample (100 pupils)

9	.478***		
13	.358***	.533***	
19	.331***	.519***	.394***
	4	9	13

LEWIS COUNSELLING INVENTORY: PART 1   (Revised Form)

Item		Area	Direction
1.	I don't often lose patience with friends	3	+
2.	I get most of my fun outside home	2	−
3.	I never bother what my classmates say	4	+
4.	My friends are not very important to me	5	−
5.	I feel that teachers ignore me	1	−
6.	I do not have many headaches	6	+
7.	I like spending a lot of time with my family	2	+
8.	I like all teachers very much	LS	
9.	I enjoy making decisions	4	+
10.	Sometimes I find it difficult to hear what is being said	6	−
11.	I seldom feel tired	6	+
12.	I don't mind being noticed in class	4	+
13.	Family outings are often boring	2	−
14.	I find that most teachers are reasonable	1	+
15.	I get on well with most of our form	5	+
16.	I always get what I want	LS	
17.	I don't often feel angry	3	+
18.	I enjoy going out with my family	2	+
19.	I often lose my temper for no reason at all	3	−
20.	I wish I could leave school	1	−
21.	I always do what I am told	LS	
22.	I usually agree with my friends	5	+
23.	Teachers are always picking on me	1	−
24.	My eyes often ache at the end of the day	6	−
25.	I never tell a lie	LS	
26.	My parents are not very understanding	2	−
27.	I don't mind talking to persons of the opposite sex	4	+

B5

28.	Teachers are generally quite helpful	1	+
29.	Children in our neighbourhood annoy me	3	-
30.	I usually understand what is taught in class	1	+
31.	Teachers never find fault with my work	LS	
32.	There are many people I cannot 'stand'	3	-
33.	I like talking to my parents	2	+
34.	I don't find it easy to say what I think	4	-
35.	I enjoy going out with my friends	5	+
36.	I have missed a lot at school through illness	6	-
37.	I like only one or two special friends	5	-
38.	Teachers do not understand me	1	-
39.	I look forward to arriving home each evening	2	+
40.	I have many friends	5	+
41.	I often worry about what others think of me	4	-
42.	I never feel tired	LS	
43.	Members of my family often annoy me	3	-
44.	I get on well with my teachers	1	+
45.	I do not like speaking out in a crowd	4	-
46.	I get a lot of small aches and pains	6	-

Area Key:

1. Relationship with teachers
2. Relationship with family
3. Irritability
4. Social confidence
5. Relationship with peers
6. Health
7. Lie scale

Note: The Area and Direction references for each item do not appear
in the group form of the inventory presented to the pupils.

Behaviour Instrument

a) 1 My mind wanders during lessons

    3 I daydream a lot in class

    5 I fool around when the teacher is not looking

    8 I look around the room when I should be working

Inter item correlations: 1981 sample (114 pupils)

3	.403***		
5	.303***	.554***	.423***
8	.445***	.570***	.513***
	1	3	5

Inter item correlations: 1982 sample (100 pupils)

3	.598***		
5	.442***	.480***	
8	.473***	.526***	.489***
	1	3	5

B7

b)　　2　I keep my folder neat and tidy

6　When I am finished work I ask for more

9　I make sure I have everything I need for the lesson

11　I help the teacher by giving things out and collecting
　　them in

Inter-item correlations: 1981 sample (114 pupils)

6	.253**		
9	.283**	.487***	
11	.243**	.411***	.302**
	2	6	9

Inter-item correlations: 1982 sample (100 pupils)

6	.240**		
9	.357***	.327***	
11	.270**	.319***	.236**
	2	6	9

c)   4 I stop my friends disturbing the class

7 I work harder than most of my class

10 I join in guidance projects

12 When we work in small groups I take charge of the group

Inter item correlations: 1981 sample (114 pupils)

7   .177*

10   .311***   .349***

12   .326***   .351***   .249***

          4   7   10

Inter item correlations: 1982 sample (100 pupils)

7   .401***

10   .235**   .410***

12   .433***   .254**   .348***

          4   7   10

SCORES OF MATURE PUPILS (BOYS):　NOVEMBER 1982 and APRIL 1983

| Pupil No. | Year | RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY | | | | BEHAVIOUR INVENTORY | | |
		Peer +ve	Peer -ve	Teacher +ve	Teacher -ve	(a)	(b)	(c)
1	1982	1 222	555 443	111 222	4 454	4 455	3 332	2 112
	1983	1 121	555 445	221 221	4 554	4 345	3 323	2 211
2	1982	1 122	554 545	211 222	4 445	5 554	2 211	1 112
	1983	1 222	544 445	121 212	4 545	5 554	2 112	1 112
3	1982	3 323	332 242	212 223	4 545	4 455	2 331	2 222
	1983	3 313	432 243	112 224	4 545	3 544	2 332	2 223
4	1982	1 121	553 454	112 112	4 454	4 443	2 333	2 222
	1983	1 221	543 343	222 212	4 554	4 443	2 333	2 322
5	1982	4 423	221 242	111 221	4 535	4 444	3 323	4 114
	1983	4 413	322 232	121 222	4 445	4 444	3 223	4 115
6	1982	1 221	555 445	112 211	5 545	5 444	3 333	2 212
	1983	1 222	554 545	211 121	5 444	4 544	3 333	2 222
7	1982	2 111	454 454	543 445	2 222	3 311	4 342	4 311
	1983	2 121	445 454	544 445	2 222	3 111	4 342	4 411
8	1982	3 522	111 231	111 221	4 543	4 445	3 323	4 113
	1983	4 523	121 331	112 211	4 543	4 444	3 324	4 113
9	1982	2 112	55 445	221 111	5 445	4 554	3 323	2 212
	1983	2 212	55 443	212 111	5 445	4 554	3 324	1 223
10	1982	1 211	555 555	443 344	2 111	3 321	4 443	4 211
	1983	1 111	555 545	443 344	2 111	3 211	4 443	4 412

SCORES OF MATURE PUPILS (GIRLS): NOVEMBER 1982 and APRIL 1983

| Pupil No. | Year | RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY | | | | BEHAVIOUR INVENTORY | | |
		Peer +ve	Peer −ve	Teacher +ve	Teacher −ve	(a)	(b)	(c)
11	1982	1 122	545 555	111 122	5 545	5 555	3 212	1 111
	1983	2 122	535 584	121 121	5 555	5 355	3 321	1 111
12	1982	2 111	524 445	111 112	4 545	5 555	3 331	2 212
	1983	1 111	424 555	211 112	4 445	5 544	2 231	2 222
13	1982	4 412	121 121	112 211	4 444	4 554	2 231	2 111
	1983	5 422	121 121	221 111	4 434	4 554	2 212	1 211
14	1982	1 112	443 455	112 313	4 445	5 555	2 223	1 111
	1983	1 111	444 354	112 323	4 444	4 555	2 223	1 111
15	1982	2 111	32 445	444 344	2 111	3 321	4 424	4 311
	1983	2 112	42 534	444 334	2 211	3 221	4 434	4 312
16	1982	2 111	44 444	222 233	5 554	5 454	2 212	2 111
	1983	2 211	33 545	223 223	5 554	5 533	2 112	1 111
17	1982	5 421	111 221	112 232	5 455	4 532	1 112	2 111
	1983	5 511	112 221	112 323	5 445	4 553	1 111	1 111
18	1982	2 221	544 345	211 112	5 555	4 345	1 111	1 111
	1983	2 321	444 534	112 111	5 554	5 544	1 111	1 121
19	1982	2 211	443 344	111 112	5 434	5 554	1 213	2 211
	1983	2 112	434 455	111 112	3 444	5 555	2 213	1 111
20	1982	2 122	423 445	112 211	5 434	4 445	1 112	1 112
	1983	2 211	424 554	111 221	5 443	5 445	1 122	2 113

SCORES OF LEAST MATURE PUPILS (BOYS): NOVEMBER 1982 and APRIL 1983

		RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY				BEHAVIOUR INVENTORY		
Pupil No.	Year	Peer +ve	Peer −ve	Teacher +ve	Teacher −ve	(a)	(b)	(c)
1	1982	1 133	554 115	512 344	1 213	5 551	4 334	4 134
	1983	1 331	553 333	423 333	1 333	5 451	3 433	3 254
2	1982	3 333	333 333	333 333	3 333	1 111	1 111	1 111
	1983	3 155	511 111	322 313	5 511	3 314	4 112	2 554
3	1982	4 411	452 311	551 111	3 111	3 343	3 333	4 343
	1983	4 311	441 413	544 114	3 113	3 431	1 134	1 144
4	1982	1 111	515 111	111 114	3 411	1 143	1 554	1 441
	1983	1 112	515 115	133 145	1 311	3 343	3 224	2 324
5	1982	3 331	355 115	143 315	3 111	3 224	3 344	2 244
	1983	1 131	115 155	155 315	3 144	1 223	1 344	3 333
6	1982	3 433	333 422	334 343	3 143	3 343	1 343	3 411
	1983	4 411	114 411	113 114	1 411	1 551	5 434	1 415
8	1982	1 133	511 513	551 133	3 343	4 413	5 514	2 141
	1983	1 141	151 421	144 144	4 413	1 132	4 332	1 154
10	1982	5 511	141 323	331 135	1 434	1 134	2 314	1 441
	1983	1 113	142 444	551 443	1 531	1 424	3 433	4 221

B12

SCORES OF LEAST MATURE PUPILS (GIRLS):   NOVEMBER 1982 and APRIL 1983

		RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY				BEHAVIOUR INVENTORY		
Pupil No.	Year	Peer +ve	Peer -ve	Teacher +ve	Teacher -ve	(a)	(b)	(c)
1	1982	1 111	515 515	511 154	1 111	5 555	4454	4 433
	1983	1 511	115 555	111 155	5 113	5 544	4 455	5 544
2	1982	5 153	515 131	112 313	2 412	3 334	1 111	2 324
	1983	1 122	213 211	333 313	3 333	1 151	5 513	5 411
3	1982	3 333	325 511	221 155	5 441	1 123	3 355	2 433
	1983	1 111	111 122	112 211	1 111	4 451	3 334	3 341
4	1982	1 115	553 411	441 141	1 155	3 345	1 334	1 214
	1983	3 321	333 112	551 511	5 115	1 245	4 113	1 541
5	1982	5 511	111 322	111 111	5 551	5 514	4 415	1 144
	1983	5 533	333 411	111 333	5 511	3 334	5 333	3 344
6	1982	1 111	155 155	11 115	3 511	3 433	3 223	3 314
	1983	1 111	555 115	533 315	5 111	3 351	3 345	3 234
7	1982	1 231	555 554	2 333	3 333	3 451	1 442	5 151
	1983	5 411	531 514	5 533	5 531	1 443	2 114	3 344
8	1982	2 224	115 583	1 115	2 211	2 434	1 144	2 123
	1983	1 551	333 333	1 113	3 333	4 431	4 133	3 341
9	1982	5 555	115 551	1 155	2 151	1 144	3 333	1 543
	1983	5 515	511 133	5 135	5 512	4 314	3 333	1 441
10	1982	3 334	444 445	1 215	3 351	4 414	3 334	1 451
	1983	4 411	333 411	1 551	2 215	4 333	3 554	3 334

Relationship questionnaire

		All of the time	Most of the time	Half of the time	Har'dly ever	Never	
1	I worry what other students think of me	1	2	3	4	5	A
2	I find most teachers reasonable	1	2	3	4	5	D
3	I get on well with most of my group	1	2	3	4	5	B
4	Teachers ignore me	1	2	3	4	5	C
5	I worry what my friends think about me	1	2	3	4	5	A
6	Teachers are generally quite helpful	1	2	3	4	5	D
7	I worry about getting into trouble	1	2	3	4	5	A
8	I have many friends	1	2	3	4	5	B
9	I argue with the teachers	1	2	3	4	5	C
10	I like talking to my teachers	1	2	3	4	5	D
11	Other children don't like me	1	2	3	4	5	D
12	Teachers are very friendly	1	2	3	4	5	D
13	When my friends mess about I join in	1	2	3	4	5	C
14	When we work in groups I get left out	1	2	3	4	5	A
15	I enjoy going out with my friends	1	2	3	4	5	B
16	I worry about other children picking on me	1	2	3	4	5	A
17	I get on well with teachers	1	2	3	4	5	D
18	I usually agree with my friends	1	2	3	4	5	C
19	Teachers are always picking on me	1	2	3	4	5	C
20	Teachers listen to my ideas	1	2	3	4	5	D

Relationship

Behaviour questionnaire

		All of the time	Most of the time	Half of the time	Har'dly ever	Never	
1	My mind wanders during lessons	1	2	3	4	5	A
2	I keep my folders neat and tidy	1	2	3	4	5	B
3	I daydream a lot in class	1	2	3	4	5	A
4	I stop my friends disturbing the class	1	2	3	4	5	C
5	I fool around when the teacher is not looking	1	2	3	4	5	A
6	When I am finished work I ask for more	1	2	3	4	5	B
7	I work harder than most of my class	1	2	3	4	5	C
8	I look around the room when I I should be working	1	2	3	4	5	A
9	I make sure I have everything I need for the lesson	1	2	3	4	5	B
10	I join in guidance projects	1	2	3	4	5	C
11	I help the teacher by giving things out and collecting them in	1	2	3	4	5	B
12	When we work in small groups I take charge of the group	1	2	3	4	5	C

Behaviour

Relationship profile

> (Each pupil's score was extracted from table on
> pages B10–B13 and entered below.)

<div align="right">1981 – Score – 1982</div>

How do you feel you get on with other pupils?

I get on well with most of my group
I have many friends
I enjoy going out with my friends
I usually agree with my friends

I worry what other people think of me
I worry what my friends think of me
I worry about getting into trouble
Other children don't like me
When we work in groups I get left out
I worry about other children picking on me

How do you feel you get on with teachers?

I find most teachers reasonable
Teachers are generally quite helpful
I like talking to my teachers
Teachers are friendly
I get on well with teachers
Teachers listen to my ideas

Teachers ignore me
I argue with teachers
When my friends mess about I join in
Teachers are always picking on me

> Scores: 1 = all of the time
> 2 = most of the time
> 3 = half of the time
> 4 = hardly ever
> 5 = never

Behaviour profile

(Each pupil's score was extracted from table on
pages B10-B13 and entered below.)

1981 - Score - 1982

How do you think you behave in class?

a)   My mind wanders during lessons

       I daydream a lot in class

       I fool around when the teacher is
       not looking

       I look around the room when I should
       be working

b)   I keep my folders neat and tidy

       When I am finished work I ask for more

       I make sure I have everything I need
       for the lesson

       I help the teacher by giving things
       out and collecting them in

c)   I stop my friends disturbing the class

       I work harder than most of my class

       I join in guidance projects

       When we work in small groups I take
       charge of the group

           Scores: 1 = all of the time

                    2 = most of the time

                    3 = half of the time

                    4 = hardly ever

                    5 = never

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Reasons for rejecting the theoretical constructs and research methodology used in cognate research

This appendix was prepared at the request of the oral examiners following the rejection of the thesis for an award of Ph.D. Because the nature of cognate research is a basic element in the thesis, the criticism made is obviously relevant. It was argued that the thesis failed to grapple with the epistemiological and measurement problems which suffused the attempt to redefine the research process. The examiners also argued that there was a failure to distinguish between the practice of educational guidance and research into that practice.

The thesis was based from the outset on the belief that interpersonal research was in its infancy and that it was naive to expect that the methods required to contribute to understanding would of necessity be found within the existing parameters of cognate research. It was argued that there was little evidence in a comprehensive survey of guidance related research of that research making a substantive contribution to the development of guidance in Scotland. This lack of impact was viewed as evidence of a need to challenge the academic construction of cognate research, to question the assumptions implicit in the acceptance of a restricted range of methods and to consider whether the authority of accepted approaches did not determine those aspects of experience which could be researched.

While it may be reasonable to argue that research needs time to have a major impact on guidance policy and practices, it is argued that there is a complementary need to develop approaches

relevant in the day to day situation. It is not implied in this thesis that novel methods are a necessary prerequisite of research into guidance practice, simply that the existing and essentially limited range of methods available at present could be extended.

Until relatively recently research in social sciences had been dominated by an experimental tradition. Only those aspects of experience which could be presented in an experimental situation could be studied by methods which would be validated and accepted by the academic community. Parlett and Hamilton (1972) challenged these assumptions and illuminative research emerged as an attempt to move beyond the restrictions of the then existing limitations. This thesis has been an attempt to extend the criticism of artificiality and to consider the implications of continuing to move beyond the present constraints of cognate research.

The attempt is based on the development of logical debate between those actually involved in the guidance practice being studied. The methods adopted are an attempt to enable practitioners to question their belief and assumptions, to make and to share a range of observations, to modify their actions, not in the light of certain knowledge, but in the light of a critical and sceptical attempt to understand their experience.

The approaches adopted were based on the theory of Kelly, Vygotsky and Fishbein and are designed to engage those involved in examining not only their experience but the language they use to assign meaning to that experience. The methods encourage teachers, parents and pupils to share experience and also to consider the ways they each construe that experience. The study builds into a disciplined approach designed to systematically and

progressively focus on issues identified by those involved in a specific school.

As the title suggests, this study was an attempt to work from within the guidance process, to enable those involved to gain insights and thus to control guidance. Guidance has as its main aim the development of pupil decision making. Pupils are more likely to learn competence from adults who are competently in control of their own decision making. To this extent it was clearly not expedient to separate the process outcomes from the process practices. Guidance practice should be self evaluative and should generate its own developing understanding and competence. This thesis is more than a description of practice; it is an attempt to contribute directly to the development of that practice.

It was for these reasons that the decisions about research methodology were unavoidable. The thesis is based less on the participant researcher and more on the need for process managers and innovators to acquire research skills. Rather than adopting a definitive approach to language, the thesis develops approaches which permit those involved in the practical situation to become more aware of the range of meaning inherent in the language they use.

The nature of the relationship between key variables and the nature of the evidence relating to that relationship were also important considerations within this study. In any developmental process the nature of the relationship between the development and the factors which contribute to development are likely to be complex and simple cause-effect links may be difficult to

establish. It may simply be evident that in many cases where a specified variable is absent, particular aspects of development appear to be delayed. Although, in such circumstances, substantive evidence may not be available, there would appear to be a case for forming tentative logical assumptions based on the best available evidence provided these are tentative and the speculative nature of the evidence is acknowledged.

There is a tendency for the authors of research documents to see themselves primarily in the research tradition. Participant observers are primarily researchers who base their authority and the validity they claim for their methods on acceptance of the methods by a well established academic community. These methods, however, dominate and dictate the forms that research is able to take. Ultimately a balance must be struck between the requirements of research, that the methods be valid and reliable, and the requirements of guidance, that we respond immediately and cannot afford to wait for improved methods when faced with immediate problems. It is argued in the thesis that, if the priorities of those involved in the process are the predominant factor, then a wider range of methods may become available designed to generate insights and that, provided these insights are treated critically and with disciplined scepticism, they may contribute to the development of a logical line of thought.

Insights like introspection are both subjective and private. The thesis was faced with the issue of public evidence. In the past researchers were engaged both in the search for evidence and also in developing techniques and tools for use in research. In a sense the work engaged in during this thesis was like inventing the

microscope. The outcome was not the hypothesis about consistency but rather the techniques developed in the process of its formulation. Like the visual technology of the microscope, the techniques developed are content and value free, designed to enable participants to gain access to evidence and to gain insights.

Dialectic research is also dependent on precise use of language. Within a close-knit academic community or in a disciplined research team it may be possible to specify meanings assigned to the terms used. In the present study, however, a priority was placed on developing methods which enabled those involved to become aware of the meaning in use of the language they adopted and of the ways in which those involved gave expression to the experiences they encountered.

Frequently research sets out to examine a cause/effect relationship between variables. Given the methods adopted by this study, no such claim is made. The thesis attempts instead to establish a developmental relationship; to provide evidence that development has taken place and to study the nature of that development. Consistency of learning experience is selected simply as an example of a factor which, rationally, could be expected to contribute to pupil development. There is evidence that a greater degree of inconsistency existed than was initially assumed by the teachers involved. There is also evidence that consistency can be improved; that it is in fact an alterable variable. There can be no evidence at present that a specific strategy rather than general maturity must have caused development to take place.

Traditionally there is an expectation that research will produce objective evidence. Whether this evidence is always substantive, reliable and valid must be open to question. More importantly, the interpretation of evidence tends to change dramatically as we learn to reconstrue the experience it pertains to. In the present study the development of methods can be compared to the development of the microscope. The approaches enable those involved to make their own observations, to engage in new levels of critical consciousness, and continually to challenge the assumptions on which their individual and group decision making is based. The methods developed, like the microscope, enable practitioners to make their own diagnosis and, as more adopt methods such as these, the evidence will begin to become more publicly available.