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SWANSEA UNIVERSITY.

**HOW DO THE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE
SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE
CLASSROOM INFLUENCE CHILDREN'S
LEARNING DISPOSITIONS?**

Submitted to the University in fulfilment of the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

CAROLYN MARIAN MORRIS.



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SUMMARY.

How do the relationships in the socio-cultural context of the classroom influence children's learning dispositions?

Classroom relationships create the socio-cultural context that influences children's learning dispositions. Children contribute to the plurality and richness of discourses in this context, but the class-teachers take the lead roles in selecting and guiding the discourses of interactions and relationships they share with children. The framing of the curriculum to provide sensitive classroom discourses of inclusion encourage children's involvement and support their 'social identities'. Through 'active' participation, the 'habits of mind' (Katz and Raths, 1985) and the 'participation repertoires' (Carr, 2001) of the socio-cultural context strengthen children's 'learner identities' to influence their learning dispositions. Children's discourses reveal an awareness of their teacher's sensitivity, responsiveness to their needs and the stimulation of their learning. Their relationships with peers, contribute to their sense of belonging, well-being, involvement and participation.

Teachers' perspectives and pedagogic practice reveal contradictory notions of children as 'active' or 'passive' learners. The discourses of the National Curriculum and directives contribute to these contradictions and are interpreted by these teachers as constraints to practice. Classroom discourses that offer autonomy to children are most prevalent in small group situations where they can be 'active' learners who take responsibility for their learning. Welsh cultural discourses related to National Identity and language in the Welsh medium school provide stabilizing influences in children's education at a time of change, when 'commodification' discourses have entered the classroom arena. The discourses of 'commodification' are more apparent in the newly established English medium school, but its provision of innovative educational experiences ensure children's involvement and participation. The study was based on exploratory, qualitative, interactionist research in two case-study primary classrooms in Wales, one English medium, and the other a Welsh medium school. The methods were in-depth interviews with head-teachers and class-teachers, classroom observations during lessons, writing activities and focus group discussions with children.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation has not previously been submitted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed: _____ (candidate)

Date: 22/10/07

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigation and all other sources have been duly acknowledged through referencing in the text and in the bibliography.

Signed: _____ (candidate)

Date: 22/10/07

STATEMENT 2.

I hereby give consent for this thesis to be available for photocopying and inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed: _____ (candidate)

Date: 22/10/07

Dedication.

To my mother Margaret Verona Davies.

For the crucial first relationship to influence my learning
dispositions.

**HOW DO THE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE
SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE CLASSROOM
INFLUENCE CHILDREN'S LEARNING DISPOSITIONS?**

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PREFACE.

This thesis is a contribution to contemporary educational sociological ontology. The writing of the study cannot be considered apolitical, as it is based on the researcher's design, selection of methods, implementation, and mode of analysis, construction and (re)construction of socio-cultural contexts, interactions, relationships, and discourses of social practice. Throughout the text, the aim was to communicate the significance of the teacher's role in creating the socio-cultural classroom contexts for children as learners, focusing on the influences of relationships between: (a) class-teacher and children; (b) children and their peers on children's learning dispositions. The research settings were two primary schools in Wales, one English medium and one Welsh medium. Although culturally and linguistically dissimilar, both were subject to similar constraints of statutory curricula, high child-teacher ratios and limited physical space in their classrooms.

The researcher's aim was to produce a reflexive account of the study in a genre that represents the diversity of discourses that create a context and classroom culture for learning. It is an interpretation that is a brief glimpse in time of dynamic classroom socio-cultural processes and relations that have an enduring impact on children's '*learning dispositions*'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS.

EAL- English as an Additional Language.

IWB-Interactive Whiteboard

NC–National Curriculum.

PTA- Parents Teachers Association

SATS–Standard Assessment Tests

URDD–Welsh league of Youth.

WAG- Welsh Assembly Government.

KEY TO TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

A–Adult.

b-boy

C–Classroom.

C1 -class 1 - Welsh medium

C2- class 2 - English medium

ch –child

chn–children

chq–child questioning

g–girl

gchn- group of children

H- Head-teacher

H1–Head- teacher School 1

H2 –Head- teacher School 2

Level – refers to level of N.C

R– Repeats.

S-school

S1- School 1 – Welsh medium

S2- School 2 – English medium

T-Teacher

T1- Class teacher school 1

T2- Class teacher school

V- Vicar

y3– Year 3 (7- 8 years)

y4– Year 4 (8-9 years)

[] [Commentary and analysis].

FONT STYLE OF TRANSLATION OF DIRECT QUOTATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS IN THE WELSH LANGUAGE ARE PRODUCED IN ITALIC FONT. DIRECT ENGLISH QUOTATIONS ARE PRESENTED AS PLAIN FONT.

S1gNy3 [School 1 girl N year 3]

S2 b J y4 [School 2 boy J year 4]

INTRODUCTION.

This chapter will introduce the argument developed in this thesis, discuss how interest in the area began and its significance at the present time. It will establish the aims of the study and identify the research questions. The locations for the study will be described and the parameters for the research outlined. A rationale for the research is discussed and the original features of the study will be highlighted. An outline of the study's overall structure is presented and the key concepts introduced.

There are three strands to the argument developed in the thesis. The main argument is that giving consideration and attention to '*learning dispositions*' as hierarchically, complex conceptual levels of learning and longer term outcomes, is as important as the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding (Katz 1987; 1993). In an era of change, there is a need for children to be 'life-long learners', with the characteristics of knowing how to go on learning with strong, rich dispositions and to be able to transfer skills, and ideas across contexts. Linked to this main argument is the significance of the influence of relationships with 'others' on children's '*learning dispositions*' at the primary stage of education. These classroom social relationships are at two levels: (a) the class-teacher and children; (b) children and their peers. The second strand of the argument considers the importance of the socio-cultural characteristics of the classroom context for children's involvement and participation and teacher's significant contributions in establishing this socio-cultural context through the development of a curriculum that foregrounds relationships to create inclusive, authentic learning environments that influence children's learning dispositions. The third strand is related to children's political positioning in schools and the level of autonomy afforded to them in their learning.

The research for the study was conducted in two primary schools, one a Welsh Medium setting (S1) and the other a predominantly English Medium setting (S2), situated in economically affluent areas, of two geographically adjacent Counties in Wales. However, the main focus of the study is on classrooms (C1) and (C2) and the classroom processes associated with learning in these Class 1 in the Welsh medium setting is a composite class of Year 3 and 4 children (aged 7-8 and 8-9 years respectively) and Class 2 is a Year 4 class of children (aged 8-9 years).

Outline of the structure of the study.

There are six chapters to the study that follow the Introduction. The first, *Chapter 1*, The Literature Review, is in five sections; the first section situates and discusses the concept of '*learning dispositions*' in the literature emphasises their importance, value as educational goals and how they are influenced. The second section considers whole school influences on children's learning dispositions, the direct and indirect influences of National and Primary school level policies and school ethos. The third section focuses on the classroom and the teachers' perspectives, whilst the fourth explores children's perspectives on their learning and the value of consultation '*with*' them and '*for*' them. The fifth section will focus on relationships and their influences on children's learning dispositions.

The second, *Chapter 2* explains how a Theoretical Framework was developed for the study and the appropriateness of a Symbolic Interactionist perspective for the research. There is a discussion of the various theories of learning to highlight the need for a cross-disciplinary approach to gain full understanding of classroom processes. Finally an analysis of contemporary theoretical models for the study of childhood is developed.

Chapter 3, Methodology discusses the research design, methods and reasons for their selection, ethical considerations, researcher influences, sampling, reliability and validity concerns and the strategies for data analysis.

Chapter 4, presents The Findings of the study in four sections. Section 1 discusses the findings from Head-teacher interviews in Schools 1 and 2 and observation of whole school events, section 2 gives the findings from Class-Teacher Interviews in Classes 1 and 2. The third section presents findings from the researcher's classroom observations of whole class lessons, group work and peer interactions. The fourth section presents findings from the children. These give children's interpretation and prioritisation of the teacher's messages in relation to learning and their responses. Children describe how they perceive their 'self'-identity as learners, the 'learner' identity of peers and their construction of learning.

Chapter 5, provides an Analysis and Discussion of the Findings. It is presented in three sections related to data collection levels, but not exclusively. The discourses of School and Teacher (Head-teachers and Class-Teachers level) is presented in the first part. Discourses from the Children in the second part and Shared Discourses from (a) Class-teachers and Children; (b) children and peers in the fourth. Data from the four levels of collection that contribute to the analysis e.g. to validate the statements made by the respondents will be integrated where appropriate. References to other relevant studies will be woven into the discussion

Chapter 6, presents the Conclusions to the study which are in three sections. The first will answer the research questions and discuss the corresponding findings. The second section will develop conclusions to the whole study. The third section will discuss the strength and weaknesses of this exploratory study, evaluate its methodology and make recommendations for future practice and research.

Throughout the study the terms '*learner/s*' or '*child /children*' are used in preference to the term '*pupil*'. In the U.K '*pupil*' has connotations of 'passivity' and 'dependency'.

How interest in this area began.

Interest in this study arose from my observations, as an experienced teacher, of the significant role of the teacher and the impact of classroom relationships and processes on children's learning. I had always been aware of the importance of school ethos, teacher-child relationship, peer-relations and classroom dynamics on children's inclusion, well-being, involvement and progress in learning in the school setting. However, I had not fully appreciated the significance and interplay of affective and social dimensions in cognition and meta-cognition and their possible enduring impact on children's learning and their learning dispositions.

The training I received as a teacher had been at a time, [late sixties] when educational policy was based on a child centred philosophy, with a less structured curriculum than the present and strongly influenced by Piagetian principles and behaviourist psychology. From many years of observation during practice as a classroom teacher, what was noticeable were the approaches adopted by children towards their learning, that seemed to follow almost predictable patterns. Some children demonstrated the characteristics of successful learners, and were able to interact effectively with both their teachers and peers. During classroom activities these children participated fully and showed a strong disposition towards learning. Other children despite having ability, appeared to have little interest, involvement, motivation or persistence towards learning. In fact they exhibited a diminished sense of children's natural curiosity. These observations stimulated my interest in this area of study and to research extensively around the topic.

The initial ideas for the study's research design were stimulated by a several studies Brint *et al.*'s. (2000) organisational analysis of 'Socialization Messages in Primary Schools, Edwards and Mercer's, (1987) socio-linguistic study 'Common Knowledge', with its emphasis on language for the mutuality of classroom processes; the Sociological Educational studies of Pollard, (1996); Pollard and Filer, (1999) and the theoretical expositions of Katz , (1985, 1993, 1995, 2000); Carr , (2001) and Claxton (2002) on '*learning dispositions*'.

The significance of the topic at the present time.

The topic of the research is particular significant at the present time in the U.K. where a '*performativity discourse*' (Jeffrey, 2002:531) seems pervasive in educational policy, whilst concurrently there is the somewhat contradictory emphasis on '*lifelong learning*' that indicates renewed interest in authentic learning. A further concern in today's society is that of '*disaffection*', a term applied by Dowling towards relationships (disaffection with partners and family break up) as well as to children's disposition towards learning (adolescent disaffection, truanting among primary pupils) (2005:78). The focus of this study on the importance of classroom relationships and how they create the socio-cultural contexts and culture for learning and their influences on children's learning dispositions is particularly opportune.

Aims of the study.

The aims of the study are:

- To elicit the views of the head-teachers and class-teachers on children and their learning in the primary school classroom context;
- To explore the messages communicated by the teacher to socialize children as learners;
- To elicit children's interpretation of the teacher's messages, their prioritisation and responses to these;
- To explore children's perception of their own learning and that of their peers;
- To explore how the social relationships in the socio-cultural classroom contexts influence children's learning and their learning dispositions;
- To examine what promotes or limits positive interactions between:
 - (a) children and the teacher,
 - (b) children and their peers;
- To explore whether there are identifiable cultural differences between a Welsh medium primary school and an English medium primary school in the way they influence children's learning dispositions.

Research questions.

The following research questions will be addressed:-.

1. How do the head-teachers and class teachers in both settings view children as learners in the classroom context?
2. What messages are communicated by the class-teacher to socialize children as learners? Are these consistent with the school ethos? What messages are prioritised?
3. How do children interpret and prioritise these messages and how do they respond to them?
4. How do the children perceive: (a) their learning and identity as learners
(b) their peers as learners.
5. How do social interactions in the classroom with the class teacher and peers influence children's dispositions towards learning?
6. What promotes or limits positive child-teacher and peer interaction in the classroom?
7. Are there identifiable cultural differences between an English medium school and a Welsh medium school in the way they influence children's learning and their dispositions towards it?

Parameters of the study.

This is a micro-sociological empirical research study mainly focused on the socio-cultural contexts created for learning in the classrooms. The whole school influences are explored to gain an overview of the schools' philosophies, policies, ethos, management and organisation that impact on the learning communities created for children's learning. It is appreciated that macro and meso-systems of the schools' and children's communities impact on these micro-sociological classroom processes and cannot be separated from them. However to limit the scope of the study these are not explored here. The researcher is also aware of how children enter the settings as individuals with their own '*socio-history*' (Haste, 1987), '*social and cultural capital*' and '*habitus*' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) based on their prior and diverse home experiences, see below for discussion of '*cultural capital*' and '*habitus*'.

Brooker's (2002) study has analysed the divergences that may exist between the cultures of home and school and how the '*habitus*' of the home may not prepare children adequately for active participation in a setting. These cultural differences may cause children confusion and conflict on a daily basis. For some children, whose heritage language is not that of the setting, there can be the additional pressures of communication, whether this is in English, Welsh or other minority languages. It is through language that culture is communicated and linguistic differences can create symbolic barriers to understanding and effective learning (according to Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) theory '*Symbolic Violence*'). Adult, child and peer interactions in other fields such as the home and playground have profound effects on children's emotional development and levels of social competence in the classroom and would produce further dimensions of interest; these aspects are not pursued here to limit the scale of the study.

The class teachers' roles are highly significant to this study's interest, as are the characteristics of the cohort of children in each classroom. Since, the majority of children at the primary stage of education generally remain with the same cohort for a minimum of six years, unless they leave the school; peer effects are strong and enduring.

The study did not attempt to quantitatively measure children's learning dispositions, but explored the views around the relevant concepts from various perspectives. Currently there is no consensus on what the key learning dispositions might be the difficulty is in their cultural diversity and in making conceptual '*distinctions*' between the terms in practice (Carr and Claxton, 2002:12 -13).

Rationale.

The purpose of the research is both policy and practice focused; the findings would be useful for teachers, teacher-trainers and curriculum developers to aid their understanding of the direct and indirect effects of classroom processes and practices on children's learning and their dispositions towards it. This study could thus inform and sensitise, those who are concerned with equity and social justice to help them appreciate some of the dangers of over prescriptive curricula, assessment procedures and policies (Vithal *et al.*, 1997). Macleod and Golby state that ...

Teaching is by definition the promotion of learning and ought to be informed by the best of our knowledge about learning (2003:353)

They explain how neither the

... practice of teaching nor the U.K. official curricular assessment policies show much sign of acknowledging the complexity, indeed the mystery at the heart of learning (2003:353) .

Their statements relating to the disjuncture that often exists between teaching and learning that hinders effective practice. Understanding the social relations and the

socio-cultural context created for learning from the perspectives of the head teacher, teacher and children is of fundamental importance in improving educational practice.

A school has the role of educating young children to become upright citizens with rights in society. Educational practice which gives children a '*voice*' and encourages their active participation can be regarded as '*political*' and in line with the CA 89 and Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989). Participation is of fundamental importance for inclusion and ensuring children's involvement in all aspects of learning. Consultation can also encourage children to take more responsibility for their learning, thus strengthening their dispositions, improving their achievement and possibly combating disaffection.

The actual processes of developing the skills, competences and strengthening the dispositions of learners are as important for all children as the content of the learning that takes place in the classroom. Curricula change through time with emphasis on differing subject areas and perspectives, but the social processes of learning are life-long and required by children in all contexts of life. Ensuring that children's dispositions are strengthened during their '*learning career*' (Pollard, 1999) is crucial for them to realise their learning potential.

What is original about the study?

There are several elements of the study that are original:

1. It is a small scale qualitative, empirical micro-sociological study that explores the socio-cultural context created for learning through interactional processes and practices in two primary school classrooms, one an English-medium setting and the other a Welsh-medium.
2. It elicits the perspectives of the head teacher, class-teacher and the children on learning. There are only a few studies e.g. Cooper and McIntyre, (2002); that

have examined the perspectives of teachers and children in the same classrooms. Teachers and children are subject to the same classroom constraints. The mutuality of these classroom processes is of fundamental importance to children's learning and their learning dispositions.

3. It looks at the interactions and nature of relationships in these classroom contexts and explores their influences on children's learning dispositions.
4. It elicits children's interpretation, prioritization and responses to the teacher's messages in relation to learning and their perception of their own learning and that of their peers.
5. It explores and identifies cultural differences in the way the two schools socialize children as learners.
6. The worksheet approach followed by Focus group discussions adopted for data collection with the children, are novel, child friendly methods. A combination of elicitation techniques that to my knowledge has not been previously used. Research involving Focus group discussion has not been used extensively with children although it has been used with young people (Katz, 1996).

There are few studies that have been conducted in Welsh-medium primary schools. Delamont identifies Nash, (1977; 1980) and explains how there has been a 'rural emphasis' in his Welsh and Scottish research (2002:14). A more recent Welsh study, Jones, (2000) focused on Bilingual elements of lessons. Delamont also points out that in the U. K. there can be 'a twist to racism', too many researchers equate '*Britain*' and '*England*': they do not '*see*' the other three nations (2002:37).

Definitions of key concepts.

This section will introduce and explain the three key concepts of the study; these are ‘relationships’, ‘social- cultural classroom context’ and ‘*learning dispositions*’.

Relationships.

First let us look at Hinde’s , (1979) discussion of the concept of ‘relationships’ which establishes how their formation and maintenance is a fundamental aspect of human life in all cultures. The concept is one of interest to psychiatrists, anthropologists social psychologists and child developmentalists...

.. who have seen that children’s social and cognitive development depend on the changing patterns of relationships in which they are involved (Hinde, 1979: 3).

He explains that despite the fact that the term forms part of everyday language and initially seems clear there is no integrated science of interpersonal relationships. The difficulty for definition is

... the diversity and complexity of phenomena involved make any attempt to define what does and does not constitute a relationship inevitably somewhat arbitrary (1979:14).

The dynamics of interactions and the course of relationships.

Hinde’ s analysis first establishes the criteria that constitute an interaction; these being intermittent interaction between two (or more) people involving interchanges over an extended period of time. These interchanges having some degree of mutuality, in the sense that the behaviour of each takes some account of the behaviour of the other. This mutuality does not necessarily imply cooperation and generally the implication is that there is some degree of continuity between successive interactions. Each interaction is affected by interactions in the past that influence future interactions. The effects of one interaction on subsequent ones ...dependsnot only on what actually happened but also on what each partner thinks about what he experienced during the

interaction. Whilst the interactants are apart, they may review previous interactions and imagine possible future interactions, the effect of which can influence the course of the relationship (Hinde, 1979). What becomes clear from the definition is that a relationship has a past, a present and a future and that in order to understand 'relationships' it is necessary to consider the behavioural, affective and cognitive aspects. Hinde explains how in order to distinguish between an interaction and a relationship

...an essential character of a relationship is that each interaction is influenced by other interactions in that relationship (1979: 16)

and that

The behaviour in social interactions usually, but not invariably involves meaning (1979: 17).

To describe an interaction one needs to look at the 'content' and 'quality' of the behaviours, whereas with relationships there are three dimensions these are, 'content, quality and patterning' (Hinde, 1979:19-20).

Properties of interactions and relationships are to be seen as properties of the dyad, not as properties of one or other individual. Dyadic relationships always exist in a social context, and cannot be understood without reference to that context (Hinde, 1979: 38).

Further criteria for the analysis of relationships are related to their reciprocal nature and the effect of context.

Formal or personal relationships.

Relationships may be described as 'formal' or 'personal' and the individuals involved may use their 'agency' to guide their behaviour, however individual behaviour may be 'understood in terms of lower order mechanism (Hinde, 1979: 39).

A further point concerning relationships is that they are generally dynamic, each interaction affects future interactions (Hinde, 1979).

Socio-cultural context.

A classroom 'socio-cultural context' is the context created through ongoing interactional and relational processes in a school. Each context will be unique and influenced by the socio-cultural history of the individuals and of the school community in which the context is situated. A socio-cultural context is not static, but constantly evolving through internal and external influences. However, communities tend to develop ways of working based on their beliefs and values which form their routines of practices. These routines, ways of working, values and beliefs form the community's culture. Rogoff defines cultural processes as:

The routine ways of doing things in any community's approach to living (2003:3).

A socio-cultural approach forms a new theoretical framework for research to give a richer understanding of children's lives. Wertsch explains that:

..a basic tenet of a socio-cultural approach to mind is that human mental functioning is inherently situated in social, interactional, cultural, institutional and historical context (1985:86).

Rogoff distinguishes how research from a traditional perspective has examined ..

..the influence of culture on the individual child....[whereas] a socio-cultural approach examines not just the child, but the social, historical, institutional and cultural factors in which the child is embedded (Fleer *et al.*, cited in Anning *et al.*, 2004:178).

Rogoff's (2003) work challenges the traditional approach and emphasises how we gain deeper understanding of institutional and cultural practices if we analyse the meanings that people give to the 'cultural tools and 'rituals' processes by considering them;

.... in relation to the people who give meaning to the cultural tools and rituals (Fleer *et al.*, cited in Anning *et al.*, 2004:178).

In this study the 'socio-cultural context' refers to the context created for children's learning in the classroom by the teacher and peers. There is a full discussion of how this classroom context emerges in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.

Learning dispositions.

Dispositions.

The term '*disposition*' is defined in different ways according to the various disciplines of psychiatry, psychology, education and sociology. A simple dictionary definition defines it as

A tendency to behave in a particular way. When used by developmental or clinical psychologists, the term implies an inherited tendency, and is used interchangeably with predisposition.

When used in the context of motivation and personality, it is a general term for any relatively stable and behavioural tendency and no genetic basis is implied. (Hayes and Stratton 2003: 83).

A formal definition is given by English and English in the Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytic terms (1958:158)

2. a general term for any (hypothesized) organized and enduring part of the psychological or psychophysiological organization in virtue of which a person is likely to respond to a certain stateable conditions with a certain stateable behaviour: his disposition to think before acting; 4. a relatively lasting emotional attitude; a stubborn disposition ... 5. the sum of all innate tendencies or propensities.

This part of the definition describing '*disposition*' as a stable habit of mind and something called an '*emotional attitude*' with stubbornness being given as an example (Katz ,2005).

The dictionary continues;

Although all behaviour depends on a certain dynamic or propulsive readiness of the organism, as well as the stimulating conditions disposition gives sharp emphasis to the former. The resulting behaviour may then be described, to adapt to a distinction made by Skinner, as emitted by the organism rather than elicited by the stimulus (1958:158).

The significant point from this part of the definition signifying that disposition is internal to the individual as well as the environment. The final part of the formal definition indicates that the:

.... disposition concept is used to identify broad rather than specific categories of behaviour, or characteristic ways of responding to a variety of situations (Katz, 1993:3).

Katz explains how the difficulty with the term lies in the fact that there is not complete agreement as to what it constitutes or how it can be measured. Katz explains how in a report to the National Education Goals Panel (Technical sub-group 1991) the term 'disposition' was used with 'inclinations' and 'styles' as 'subcategories of the variable 'approaches to learning' (Katz,2005).Further definitions of the 'dispositions' concept including how they can be distinguished from some closely related concept such as 'habits' and 'traits' are included in the glossary in the appendix.

Let us now consider some further interpretations of '*learning dispositions*'. '*learning dispositions*' are longer term outcomes of learning. They are the higher conceptual outcomes and according to Carr (2001:5) form an accumulated continuum of complexity. [Carr's analysis is fully discussed in the next section.]

'*learning dispositions*' represent characteristic ways of responding or participating in various situations. They involve volition, use of the mind, sensitivity to occasion and ability (Carr 2001). Katz (2004) described dispositions as 'attitudes in action'. '*learning dispositions*' are observable through the actions and behaviours of children (Carr et al., 2000). They are the child's 'habitus'. This thesis argues that to develop rich, robust dispositions necessitates the creation of learning opportunities that develop positive, mastery approaches to learning , contexts and curricula that focus on the processes of learning and relationships rather than an early focus on curriculum formality and performativity that can damage them. The significant point in relation to

dispositions is that they are enduring habits, not subject to short term fashionable whims and therefore need to be strengthened and protected. The analysis of learning dispositions is continued in the next section.

This chapter has introduced the study, explained how interest in this area emerged and its significance at the present time. It has established the aims of the study, identified the research questions and outlined its parameters. An explanation of the rationale is given and original features of the study are identified. The three key concepts of 'relationships', 'socio- cultural context' and 'learning disposition' were defined. The various strands of this discussion require further development. A fuller discussion of '*learning dispositions*' forms the first section of CHAPTER 1, in the LITERATURE REVIEW.

CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW.

Learning Dispositions.

The first part of the chapter will develop the discussion and analysis of *'learning dispositions'* and situate the concept in themes in the literature related to the goals of children's learning before moving on to discuss the various disciplinary interpretations of the terms *'disposition'*, and *'learning disposition'*. The second part will discuss the culturally determined nature of goals for children's learning and how *'learning dispositions'* are influenced. An exposition will follow of why some dispositions are so important for children's learning and should be included as educational goals, whereas others are less desirable. The key learning dispositions that may be influenced through social relationships in a classroom context will be considered. There are two strands to consider when analysing the goals or outcomes of children's learning relevant to this study: (a) goals educators set for children's learning; (b) Children interpretation of these goals. They do not necessarily correspond.

Situating the study in the literature.

'learning dispositions' are discussed in the literature on the outcomes for the personal, social and emotional development of children (Dowling, 2005); *'learner identity'* (Pollard, 1996; 1997); motivation and volition (Snow, 1996) and within the new paradigms for assessment from a socio-cultural perspective (Carr, 2001; Carr and Claxton, 2002). They are *'longer term outcomes'* of children's learning, linked to the concepts of *'learning careers'* (Pollard, 1999) and the integral strand of *'assessment careers'* (Ecclestone and Pryor, 2002) and *'lifelong learning'* (Wells and Claxton, 2002). Each of these themes will now be discussed.

The personal, social and emotional development of children.

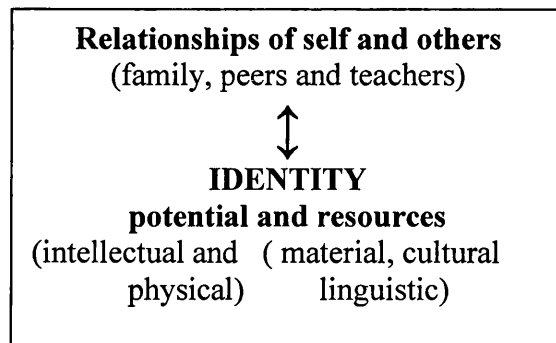
Children's personal and social development can be considered in terms of normative development (capabilities and limitations of most children at a given age; Katz gives the examples: e.g. 'the child whose development, needs to be looked at more closely as it differs considerably from the range expected norm for the age' or (dynamic (sequence and changes that occur in all aspects of the child's functioning as he grows; e.g. 'what the child needs to know before moving on to the next step) (Katz, 1987:1). Of relevance to this study is the influence of relationships on the mediation of these developmental processes. A key process in the personal, social and emotional development of children is identity formation. Let us first consider the influence of relationships on learner '*identity*'.

Relationships and their influence on learner '*identity*'.

The concept of '*identity*' is complex and multifaceted from the intersections of culture and structure (O'Connor, 2001). Pollard (1999) draws on Mead's analysis of '*self and others*' to explain '*identity*' or '*self*' in the symbolic interactionist tradition. Research findings from the 'Identity and Learning Programme' (Pollard, 1999) analyses how children's sense of '*self*' is dependent on the relationships they form with others.

Each child's sense of self is seen primarily as a product of their relationship with significant others. However, the influences of biological endowment and social circumstances are also considerable. Thus interpersonal factors in the development of identity are conditioned by both intellectual and physical potential and by the opportunities or constraints afforded by the material, cultural and linguistic resources available to each family (1999:16-17).

Fig.1.1.1 Three factors in Identity: Relationships, potential and resources.



(Pollard, 1999:21).

Pollard's research in primary schools conceptualises learner '*identity*' as a dynamic '*spiralling process*' that is influenced by the child's 'intellectual and physical potential, (biological factors) material, cultural and linguistic resources (social and cultural capital) and relationships with significant others' (2000:3. Interactions and relationships with others and their responses form the external components of the external-internal dialectic in self-categorisation processes of the child's '*learner identity*' formation. Lloyd and Duveen also discuss how '*identity*' can only be explained in the terms of relationships and that:

..a representation of the 'individual' divorced from the 'social' is theoretically inadequate. There is no pure 'individuality' which can be apprehended independently of social relations (1990:20).

'Learning career' and 'long term learning'.

Children's social-identity developed from interactions and relationships with their teachers and peers in the classroom influence their 'sense of self' or identities as learners. Over time their learning experiences in various contexts impact on their identities as learners which in turn influence the type of learning career they follow (Pollard, 1999: 22).The theme of '*learning career*' has been widely used to describe the learning trajectory of children and adults as they move through successive phases of their education.The progression of their '*career*' highly influenced by situational

relationships in the home and school. The term '*career*' originates from the early sociological life history research of the 'Chicago School' as a metaphor to theorise the social processes through which identities are fashioned and shaped (Atkinson and Housley, 2003: xii). Although first used in relation to the sequence of occupations during working life, it was refined by Symbolic Interactionists such as Becker (1963) and Goffmann (1961) to include the effects of social processes on subjective images of self (Marshall, 1998: 55). Pollard's detailed analysis of '*pupil career*' identifies three main components:

- '*Patterns of outcomes*' related to the learning and social context of successive classrooms together with those of the school and playground;
- '*Patterns of strategic action*' developed in coping with, and acting within, these contexts;
- '*The evolving sense of self*' which pupils bring to, and derive from, school settings and external contexts (1999: 25).

Motivation.

Research on students' motivation has identified different models for their approaches and responses to learning. Snow (1996) has discussed motivation and volition and Hartman and Sternberg (1993) motivation, attitudes and self-regulation (cited in Allall 2002:56). Katz identifies that research on motivation 'related to dispositions comes under the rubric of mastery motivation' (1993:9). Research on students' approaches to learning has identified that the goals students set themselves and pursue during learning are related to their theories of intelligence. Dweck's (1999) research on students' beliefs about their intelligence explicates how these can influence their learning goals. The first theory is of intelligence as a '*fixed*' entity, where intelligence is seen as global and fixed into adulthood with a corresponding emphasis on performance and normative goals. The second is a malleable incremental theory, with emphasis on intrinsic motivation and mastery orientated task goals. Too much

emphasis on performance can drive out learning goals, leading students to pass up valuable learning opportunities if they involve any risk of errors. The second effect of an overemphasis on 'performance goals' is that this can foster a helpless response. Whereas 'mastery learning' orientations focus on effort, application and resilience (Dweck 1999:16).

What are dispositions?

The term disposition was introduced by Katz (1985:1) as relevant to the education of young children and dispositions are described by her as a domain of human attributes (1988). Katz proposes the following tentative disposition for exploring the concept disposition.

A disposition is a tendency to exhibit frequently, consciously, and voluntarily a pattern of behaviour that is directed to a broad goal (1993:1).

Dispositions as 'habits of mind'.

Dispositions are considered to be '*habits of mind*' not as 'mindless habits' They are classes of intentional actions in categories of situations (Katz and Rath 1985:6)

For children's education and learning this is an important point since it highlights the intentionality of dispositions.

Differences in disciplinary terminology.

Carr (2001:10) discusses how the term 'disposition' is applied to individuals in the study of personality in psychology and has as its counterpart the term 'habitus' in sociology which is applied to the '*participation repertoires*' attached to a community. 'Habitus' is a term used by Bourdieu to explain the system of 'dispositions' acquired through explicit or implicit learning (Bourdieu, 198:1993). She discusses how 'habitus' (2001:10) refers to the...

..usually unexamined background set of assumptions about the world (Cole 1996:139).

A different interpretation of disposition is given by Perkins *et al.* (1993) based on the ideas of Resnick and Klopfer (1989) who explain the concept as having three components,

... skill, inclination and sensitivity to occasion Resnick and Klopfer (1989) Thus including the idea of '*capability*' within disposition. Their interpretation is also very scholastic often treating 'learning and thinking' dispositions as if they were the same thing (Perkins *et al.*, 1993) in (Carr and Claxton, 2002:10).

Resnick refers to the term 'disposition' when referring to 'cultivating higher order thinking'

The term disposition should not be taken to imply a biological or inherited trait. As used here it is more akin to a habit of thought, one that can be learned and therefore taught (1987:40).

However, Katz stipulates that 'dispositions' cannot be learned from instruction and that they are in Dowling's words, 'caught rather than taught' (2005:92). In a further discussion on the role of social communities in influencing 'dispositions' for thinking Resnick and Klopfer use the term 'disposition' synonymously with trait.

There is not much research on how intellectual dispositions are socialized, but we do know how other traits such as aggressiveness, independence or gender identification develop. By analogy with these traits, we can expect intellectual dispositions to arise from long-term participation in communities that establish expectations for certain kinds of behaviour (1989:9).

Interpreting learning dispositions along a continuum of situatedness.

From analysis a further dimension of the concept 'learning disposition' that emerges is that it can be interpreted along a continuum of 'situatedness'. Carr and Claxton's notion of disposition is intermediate between a psychological interpretation of the term which sees 'disposition' as a 'highly abstracted, de-contextualized notion' focusing on the individual. (2002:12) and the socio-cultural interpretation of Wertsch which sees 'learning' and '*learning dispositions*' as highly situated, with learning as always taking part of the context with it. He describes a child as a 'Learner in action' (cited in Carr, 2001:4-5) Lave and Wenger theory of 'situated learning' (1991) also

interprets the learners as a participants. They use the terms 'Legitimate peripheral participation' to explain learning as a process of increasing participation for the learner whom they view as an apprentice i.e. moving from a peripheral position of limited activity to a more central position or full active participation in a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991:29). In a similar way to Carr they talk about 'belonging' and they discuss the ways of belonging in the community of learners. Carr sees 'disposition' as being 'situated and interwoven with action and activity' (Carr 2001:47).

Carr communicates how her ideas on the assessment of the development of children have progressed from a '*folk-model*' of documented assessment which viewed learning as an individual process, to one which encompasses the environment and relationships within that environment (based on Olson and Bruner's 1996) ideas of 'Folk' Pedagogy). This perspective derived from Vygotsky's principle of '*mediated action*' (Carr 2001:5). This alternative model for learning interprets learning as a process which encompasses the environment and relationships

...that focuses on the relationship between the learner and the environment, and seeks ways to define and document complex reciprocal and responsive relationships in that environment (2001:4-5).

Cultural influences and the goals for children's learning?

In any discussion of the goals for children's learning, these are identified according to the culture and the aspects of the curriculum deemed as important at a particular time and place. Mushamp *et al.* make the very important point that:

...the most important *basic* is not a curriculum subject like reading, writing or arithmetic; it is the way in which learning takes place (1992 27).

Katz first principle identifies four types of curricular learning goals 'those related to knowledge, skills, dispositions and feelings', she describes 'knowledge' as

the specific remit of schools [what is regarded] as worthwhile, mind-engaging

'skills' as discreet, measurable and easily observable [and gives the following examples] computational skills—maths, verbal, social e.g. social approach skills, socio-cognitive skills. Skills get better with practice and need adult guidance and instructions (Katz June, 2004 lecture).

and

'Dispositions' as '*habits of mind*', intentions, behaved, frequent mindful behaviour'

(as defined on page 22). Katz argues that knowledge and skills are taken for granted

as educational goals, and that:

...most educators would also readily agree that many feelings (e.g. self-esteem) are also influenced by school experiences and are thus worthy of inclusion among learning goals. However, dispositions are seldom included Although they are often implied by the inclusion of attitudes (e.g. attitudes towards learning as goals) (1993: 1).

Katz second principle asserts that:

'dispositions' cannot be learned from instruction and can be damaged by instruction.

The third principle, that the disposition to learn is inborn in all children. Although children's dispositions may vary in strength e.g. some are more curious than others or are more actively disposed to learn. Katz explains how other people's feelings and interest help children to make sense of their environment and how that is difficult for children in a chaotic environment.

Young children need their own experiences to make sense of their learning and for a deeper sense of learning (Katz June, 2004).

Katz's fourth principle in relation to dispositions to learn is the importance of making dispositions observable by being around people that exhibit these skills through modelling, social confidence '*social disposition*' sensitive to those around them and the creation of natural opportunities.

Dispositions as educational goals?

Several reasons are given for the inclusion of ‘dispositions’ as educational goals, let us now consider these:

To ensure that acquired skills and knowledge are applied.

The most important are that ‘*skills and dispositions*’ are mutually inclusive, and as a means to ensure the use of skills and application of knowledge.

...the acquisition of knowledge and skills does not guarantee that they will be used and applied e.g. it is likely that most children have listening skills, but they may through appropriate experiences and interventions (Katz, 1993:2).

A crucial argument for the nurturing and inclusion of dispositions as learning goals is the need to strengthen them. Katz explains that a disposition must be behaved to have it strengthened.

To strengthen an individual child’s disposition and develop ability / capability.

Rogoff, Gauvain and Ellis (1999) suggest ‘dispositions’ that are seen as pertinent to education can be strengthened e.g. the inborn disposition to investigate can be strengthened through appropriate experiences and interventions such as ‘scaffolding’ during the process of learning. Carr and Claxton emphasise the correlation between ‘disposition’ and ‘ability’.

The fact that a child has ability does not mean that the child will apply that ability. However there is a correlation between the two attributes, having ability leads to success at learning and this success can encourage engagement and the cultivation of a disposition for learning which underlies the development of ability. (2002:10).

Strengthening learning dispositions is complementary to the development of learner capability in educational contexts. Claxton (1999) explains how there are two inter – related facets to ‘real–life learning power’, ‘capabilities’ and ‘dispositions’.

Capabilities are the skills, strategies and abilities which learning requires: what you might think of as the toolkit of learning. To be a good learner you have to be able. But if such capabilities are necessary, they are not themselves sufficient. One has to be disposed to learn, ready and willing to take the learning opportunities, as well as able (Carr and Claxton 2002:10).

To allow a credit based approach to assessment which is holistic and concept referenced.

Carr identifies that models of assessment have tended to adopt a ‘deficit’ approach towards assessment, looking at what a child can’t do, rather than focusing on what a child can do. She advocates a credit based approach towards assessment. A model that involves working closely with and listening to the ‘voice’ of the child whilst ‘describing, documenting and discussing’ what a child has achieved and ‘deciding’ on the next steps for the child to move forward in learning (Carr, 2001: 101.)

Next let us look at Carr’s model.

To attain a hierarchical complex conceptual level of learning.

Carr deconstructs the concept ‘*learning disposition*’ to show four conceptually hierarchical levels. The four levels (set out in table 1) making up a conceptual hierarchy rather than a developmental one.

Table 1.1.1 Learning outcomes along a continuum of complexity.

i) skills and knowledge
ii) skills and knowledge + intent = learning strategies
iii) learning strategies + social partners and practices + tools = situated learning strategies
iv) situated learning strategies + motivation = learning disposition (Carr 2001:5).

Carr’s framework for the analysis of learning outcomes along a continuum of complexity is valuable to explain learning dispositions. It shows clearly the complexity of learning and the relationship between the learner and the context and the ‘reciprocal and responsive relationships’ that contribute to that context. It acknowledges the ‘culture specific’ nature of learning (2001:5). Carr argues that

measuring the outcomes of learning at the level of the first outcome 'skills and knowledge' gives a simplistic view of learning that: a) ignores the specific contextual and social dimensions; b) presumes that learning is linear and c) omits consideration for the fragility of 'skills and knowledge' when they lack social and cultural meaning or are not embedded in 'motivating circumstances' (2001:6-7). At the next level, (ii), Carr explains that meaningful skills and knowledge give a purpose to learning, an intent. She draws on Nesbit and Shucksmiths's description of learning strategies and the examples they identify e.g. planning ahead, asking questions etc. and the work of Cullen (1991). Cullen explains learning strategies as patterns of 'behaviour and language which indicate an active, strategic approach to learning' that only emerge when classroom circumstances are affording. At the third level (iii), Carr incorporates 'social partners and practices' and the 'tools' of the culture giving a 'situative' approach which she identifies as situated learning strategies (2001: 8). Carr discusses how Perkins (1992: 8) explains cognition in terms of 'person plus' that is 'the surround'-the immediate physical, social and symbolic resources outside the person participates in the cognition, not just as a source of input and a receiver of output but as a vehicle of thought.

Carr argues that:

This notion of thinking or learning being distributed across social practice and partners and tools introduces the idea of learning as the product of reciprocal relations between the environment and the mind, of the learning process as transaction (2001: 8-9).

The fourth level of the framework adds 'motivation' to 'situated learning strategies' to form learning dispositions. Carr applies the terms 'ready, willing and able' to describe children who are motivated to learn and are able to apply the relevant strategies to the situation. Using 'communication' as an example Carr explains that 'being ready' refers to the motivation or inclination to communicate, 'being willing' involves

recognising that the situation is an appropriate one in which to express ones ideas and 'being able' entails having the appropriate communication skills and understanding for the occasion (2001: 9).

Learning Dispositions, the longer term outcomes of learning and essential for 'life long learning'.

Traditional teaching has tended to focus on curricular content and the development of learner capability. Carr emphasises the importance of the concept '*learning dispositions*' as a way of examining the 'longer term outcomes' of early childhood programs. She continues...

...learning dispositions are worthwhile outcomes for early childhood, using the definition of learning dispositions as '*participation repertoires*' from which the learner selects, edits, responds to, resists, searches for and concepts learning opportunities (2001:47).

Carr and Claxton continue this strand of the discussion and explain

Education for lifelong learning has, therefore, to attend to the cultivation of positive learning disposition, as well as of effective learning skills (2002:10).

Identification of dispositions as the goals for children's learning.

In the U.K. Pascal and Bertram 'identify the '*disposition to learn*' as one area out of four outcomes for Children's Development. These are:

...emotional well being, respect for self and others, the disposition to learn, academic achievements and scholarship (1996:19).

It is from their model that this study was developed and there is a full discussion of their conceptual framework in the Theoretical Framework (see page 126).

Goals for young children's learning in Wales.

In Wales the current curriculum for children under fives is the '*Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning*' (ACCAC) which leads into the subject based National Curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 for children from five to eleven. This structure will soon change with a new statutory '*Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage*' (QCA, 2000) for children from 3 to 7 years for children's learning leading into the National Curriculum. The '*Foundation Stage Curriculum*' is currently being piloted in Wales and can be considered a more creative, exciting and enlightened one, allowing greater freedom for the teacher's interpretation of learning experiences and opportunities to encourage children's active, experiential learning and encouraging play. The interesting point for this study is that it highlights the importance of the affective, social and cognitive dimensions of learning and actually identifies '*dispositions*'. It states :

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- personal, social and emotional well- being;
- positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning: in particular an enthusiasm for knowledge and learning and a confidence in their ability to be successful learners;
- social skills: in particular an enthusiasm for knowledge and learning and a confidence in their ability to be successful learners;
- attention skills and persistence: in particular the capacity to concentrate on their own play or on group tasks;
- language and communication:

- reading and writing:
- mathematics:
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- physical development:
- creative development;
(QCA 2000: 8).

Why then is it necessary to consider and track children's learning dispositions?

The consideration of '*dispositions*' as goals for learning and their tracking is vital for teaching and learning processes. In order to firmly establish positive learning dispositions as learning goals there is a need for teachers to give further consideration to the processes and social dimensions of learning; this forms an underlying theme to the discussion throughout this thesis. Some of the issues to consider will now be discussed:

To ensure that dispositions are not damaged or extinguished.

The consideration of '*dispositions*' is vital so that teaching processes by which knowledge and skills are acquired do not damage or extinguish the disposition to use them. Katz identifies the potential risk of introducing young children too early to formal learning

...one risk of early formal instruction in reading skills is that the amount of drill and practice required for successful reading of the English language at an early age may undermine children's dispositions to be readers (Katz, 1992 *in* ED).

Roberts discusses how the way we possibly think of dispositions needs to change. Instead of planning for 'supporting, fostering, promoting and developing' as the QCA (2000) suggests, she interprets the work of early years practitioners as being more one of conservation. The significant point being that young children have

...boundless curiosity, extraordinary powers of observation, ask questions relentlessly often demonstrate maddening persistence and sometimes 'obsessional' concentration (Roberts 2002:138).

All these are attributes that are in existence and ones that can be used to describe successful learners. It is not a question of planning for developing dispositions she continues and explains how young children are already '*voracious learners*'.

When it comes to learning dispositions these children are overflowing (Roberts, 2002:138).

Katz has also maintained that the disposition to learn is inborn in all children and questions, what contributes to the erosion of these dispositions in school?

During the course of these first years at school, what becomes of that powerful curiosity, exploration, questioning, persistence, concentration? This erosion may have as much to do with processes of social and emotional development as it does with cognitive functioning, and yet we need to ask ourselves what it is about our educational system that allows this to happen (2002:138-139).

To develop robust dispositions necessitates the creation of learning opportunities that develop positive approaches to learning rather than an early focus on formality that can damage them.

To ensure a mastery rather than a performance focus.

Dweck's (1991) theories of learning have already been discussed in the section on motivation (see page 21). Children may adopt mastery or helpless patterns towards learning depending on the theories of self they have developed. Ames (1992) discussed the importance of students developing mastery orientated learning goals as opposed to performance. Ames describes mastery orientated learners as those who are orientated towards developing new skills, trying to understand their work, improving their level of competence, achieving a sense of mastery / self referenced standard. In contrast Bruner introduces the concept of 'work-inhibition' (1992:38).

To prevent of work inhibition.

This concept was developed by Bruns (1992:38) in relation to children who are very able but do not apply themselves to work in school e.g do not stay on task, do not complete assignments do not finish homework on their own even though they have the ability to do so. He explains this concept:

... in terms of three personality characteristics: dependency, self-esteem and passive aggression.

Bruns case histories of work-inhibited children, identifies that work inhibition begins early

Although the manifestation of work inhibitions are not always apparent until the third or fourth grade (the time when the demand for independent academic work becomes more substantial, the origins begin during infancy...suggests that work inhibition could be more usefully classified as a dispositional issue. By the time children reach the elementary school grades, reluctance to engage in assigned tasks may constitute instances of damaged or very much weakened dispositions to learn, including the elements involved in persistence, effort and mastery goals (Bruns, 1992 cited in Katz 1993: 6).

What learning dispositions have been identified? Which are the key learning dispositions?

In the identification and analysis of 'learning dispositions' one of the difficulties with the terms in use are the different levels of generality that apply to them. A further significant point is the fact that all 'dispositions' are not relevant to learning. Carr and Claxton discuss how although it is possible to make conceptual distinctions between different learning dispositions, in practice 'they tend to be dynamically interwoven and hard to tease apart' (2002: 13). Carr identifies the following learning dispositions 'courage and curiosity, trust and playfulness, perseverance, confidence and responsibility' which are shown in the actions and behaviours of children within the five domains of learning dispositions. i.e. taking an interest, being involved, persisting with difficulty or uncertainty, communicating with others and taking

responsibility. These are the components of the bi-cultural early childhood curriculum of New Zealand (2004:17). Claxton (1999) identifies 'curiosity, mindfulness, selectivity, resilience, experimentation, reflection, opportunism, conviviality'. A crucial argument for the development of dispositions is the need to strengthen them. To develop robust dispositions necessitates the creation of opportunities that develop positive approaches to learning. In the analysis of social relationships and their influence on children's learning dispositions the domain of reciprocity is of primary importance. Claxton defines 'reciprocity' as 'ready, willing and able to learn alone and with others', this thus involves an awareness to articulate their own learning processes (2002:37). He deconstructs reciprocity into four elements these are communicating with others 'confidence, interdependence, empathy and listening, collaboration and imitation.

Are learning dispositions transferable?

There is consensus in the debate that dispositions are transferable across domains. Although research on human learning and performance has shown that learning can be context specific. Dispositions may increase in richness and sophistication, having a robust learning disposition in one area can see this spread to other areas and increase in sophistication. Claxton has identified four aspects of children's learning that are important in developing the mind to learn. He refers to these as the four R's of learning power. The first being 'resilience' which he defines as 'being ready and willing to lock onto learning'. The second 'resourceful' that includes being 'able to draw on a wide range of learning methods and strategies as appropriate. The third to be 'reflective', to think profitably about their learning and themselves as learners 'and

the fourth to develop their capacity for reciprocity through making use of relationships in the most productive, enjoyable and responsible way (2002:16).

Donaldson (1978:76) also explains how children's traits are not completely general and that there may be variable dimensions of disembodiment. Initially dispositions can appear to be closely linked to specific environments, tasks or materials but 'over time they can appear in an ever increasing number of domains and situations'. Whether they do so will, of course depend on the practices and intentions of people who may be framing learners' environments and on the opportunities to deploy a particular disposition and thus discover its value (Carr and Claxton, 2002:11). Dispositions are not fixed and may grow in complexity and subtlety, they increase in richness and sophistication. Having a robust learning disposition in one area can see this spread to other areas to increase in richness and sophistication.

Unresolved issues and alternative views.

Allal identifies some unresolved issues in 're-conceptualising the goals of learning and assessment in classroom settings' to include learning dispositions (2002:55). She advocates further research in at least three areas:

The first is the elaboration of a framework for defining 'families' of equivalent situations which teachers can use when assessing a given disposition... Secondly, the tracking of dispositions over time and place, i.e. across situational boundaries, requires a theory of transfer. A third area for further work concerns what would classically be called the 'scalability' of assessment situations. In order to talk about dispositional growth, it is necessary to be able to order situations in a way that allows inferences about learner progression with respect to a particular disposition (2002:57).

Sadler also questions whether dispositions which are so functionally dissimilar to capabilities are 'stable enough for their assessment to be valid or worthwhile' (2002:45). He also states that in practice, they are situation specific. Sadler argues that it is the knowledge of achievement or success that brings about closure in a learning

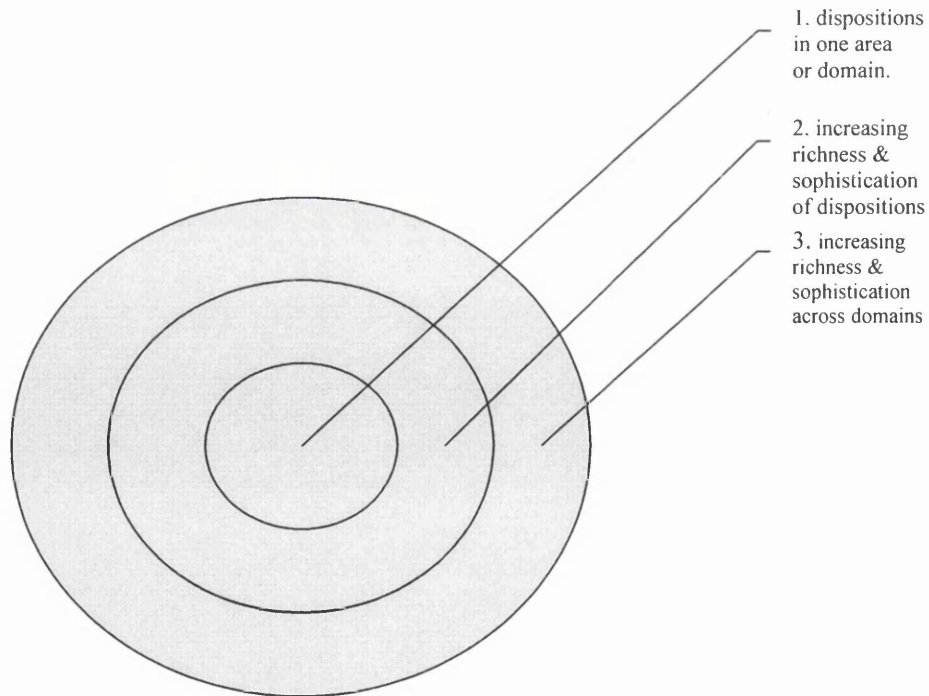
sequence and provides the feedback loop for reinforcement through satisfaction gained from achievement. He maintains that this motivational force of achievement is lost if the focus is simply on process.

It is the goal itself that gives learning meaning (Sadler, 2002:47).

Sadler's article is based on limited evidence and his reference is only to one case study. To consider motivational factors in relation to learning outcomes in terms of one goal is also rather simplistic. Seifert has identified four prominent theories of student motivation in educational psychology: self-efficacy theory, attribution theory, self-worth theory and achievement goal theory (Seifert 2004:137)

The diagram overleaf shows how dispositions increase in richness and sophistication and may transfer across other domains.

Figure 1.2.2. Diagram to show how dispositions increase in richness and sophistication and may transfer across other domains.



(diagram Morris, 2006 developed from Carr and Claxton 2002: 12)

How are learning dispositions influenced?

There are many factors that impact both directly and indirectly on learners and their dispositions in a classroom. These influence their social and ' *learner identity*' and involvement and participation in a classroom context. These include the effects of Educational Ideology, National and School policies on teachers' pedagogic approaches, classroom socio-cultural context, children's perspectives and classroom relationships. An analysis of each of these themes will be pursued in the sections that follow. The next section will explore the first of these themes and consider 'Whole school influences on children's learning dispositions'. This introduces the debate on providing contexts and curricula that strengthen children's learning dispositions. The following questions are raised and discussed in the subsequent sections. Do we consider the socio-cultural context created for learners? (Section 1.3). Do we consider children's perspectives? (Section 1.4). Do we consider the social relationships of learning ? (Section 1.5).

1.2 Whole school influences at primary level on children's learning dispositions.

This section gives an overview of the importance of considering whole school influences on children as learners and their learning dispositions at the primary level of education. The effects of whole school values or norms cannot be separated from classroom effects. The section considers the purpose of education in the 21st Century and the direct and indirect influences of National and Primary level policies and school characteristics on children's learning dispositions.

The purpose of education in the 21st Century.

The purpose of education varies according to time, place and culture and may be considered as a preparation for life and work. For today's children, living in the 'Information Age', education needs to prepare them for life and to cope with difficulties, in an ever changing, culturally diverse world, with major shifts in the nature of work and the increasing significance of new technologies (Coffey 2001). In these uncertain times the challenge for education is therefore to equip individuals with:

.. the capacity to operate effectively in this new world: individuals who are willing to go on learning throughout life, who are capable of coping with uncertainty (1998:28-29).

The primary school is highly significant to a child's '*learning career*' (Pollard 1999); as the child's point of entry to the social world of learning and can initiate the child's interest and involvement in learning. Durkin discusses how the primary school forms the link between the home and the child's entry to the exo-system (1995: 189). First let us examine the role of the school in children's education.

The role of the school in children's education.

The important role of the school in children's socialization as learners and education is widely acknowledged. This was recognised by Durkheim who emphasised the role of the school in introducing children to group life and the values of society:

I judge that the task of the school in the moral development of the child can and should be of the greatest importance. There is the whole aspect of the culture, and a most important one, which would otherwise be lost (1961:18).

In Western societies the school has a major role in socialization of children as future citizens. Denzin states:

... that schools have become the dominant socializing institution in Western Society and that it could be argued that experiences in them furnish interactants with their basic vocabularies for evaluating self and others (1979:196).

Shipman also explains that:

...schools are agencies of socialization operating alongside the family, religion, social services and the local community. In a complex society there is no guarantee that these will share common values, and pupils and staff may experience conflict as they play their parts in each of them (1975: 3).

Durkeim, Denzin, and Shipman interpret the schools' role as wider than purely academic. Husu and Tirri (2007) argue that it is a role with dual ethical or moral obligations; ethical implications for the form of pedagogical practice that guides teachers' decision making and ethical values that the school's community identify as goals for children's learning. Husu and Tirri emphasize that:

Schools can no longer afford to focus solely on delivering academic curricula; they are also responsible for establishing and maintaining school-cultures that empower students and teachers alike to negotiate the diverse values and social norms of their communities (2007: 2).

They identify how social curricula are:

...crucial for mutually productive interactions and durable interpersonal relationships students benefit not only socially, but also academically, when they are supported by a caring classroom and school environment (2007: 2).

The importance of 'interactions' and 'relationships' in children's adaptation to school life is yet again confirmed.

Socialization of children as learners.

Socialization is a process that starts from birth; this first stage, a period of primary socialization which is highly influenced by the parents / primary carers, family and

extended family. We also know that socialization continues throughout life. The question of interest to the study is how children are socialized as learners in the primary school. Barnes sees socialization as ‘an adult initiated process’ with asymmetry in the balance of power between adults and children (1995:133). This indicates that it is a process with political and socio-cultural dimensions. Corsaro, describes socialization as ‘the processes by which children adapt and internalise society’ (1997:8) and Schaffer as:

...the process by which individuals acquire the beliefs, values and behaviours considered by their culture or sub-culture (2000:2).

What is apparent is the correlation between adult interpretation of the socialization of children and principles in the theorization of childhood. Corsaro discusses how traditional theories of socialization have marginalized children and viewed them as somewhat apart from society, needing guidance and training by adults to become ‘fully functioning adults’ (1997: 8-9). Mayall has described the tendency for the adult to view the child as a project and for adult authority to impose institutional norms in the school context (1994). She recognises how schools have their own ‘social order’ arising from traditions and staffing (1999:74). She identifies the ‘social customs’ children are required to follow such as:

..obeying the teacher, fitting in with timetables, behaving in a reasonably orderly and quiet way , not interfering with other children’s work (Mayall 1999:74).

Different positions in society produce different experiences for children (Frones, 1993). Children as social actors, construct their own lives but as a minority group (Mayall 2002:20–21). An important factor for all children at the primary stage of education is the considerable contribution peers make to their socialization. To ensure that children develop competences as co-operative learners in the school’s learning

community is highly significant because of the longer term impact on their learning career.

School Ethos

A school establishes its own culture as a learning community through the '*ethos*' developed. '*Ethos*' (Rutter, 1979) is a term that has been used extensively in relation to schools to describe their values, history, tradition and culture. Chow-Hoy (2001), gives the following comprehensive definition:

Ethos can be thought of as the aspects of school culture (s), climate and philosophythat impinge directly upon pupils' affective and cognitive learning, and are perceived by all the school's stakeholders—staff, parents, employers, the community,.....It is constructed through an interaction between the culture mix of teachers, pupils, parents, the local community,the school's official value system, and is mediated through organisational structures and processes, and also by staff culture, climate and competence (cited in Smith, 2003:466).

Ethos can be thought of as durable and structured e.g.

...contributing to the social construction of teaching, learning, knowledge and arguably more significantly, the social construction of the realities that determine the engagement of individuals, pupils, staff, parents, employer within the school (Smith 2003:467).

According to the views of Bourdieu '*ethos*' 'generates and organises practices and representations' (1990:53). Smith argues that '*ethos*' can be defined an organisation's '*habitus*' (2003:463). What becomes clear is that '*ethos*' is not a static concept but a continually evolving concept formed under the influence of 'individual students' '*habitus*' and those of social institutions in the external environment'. '*Habitus*' is a complex term which has both a structural and processual meaning. The term was developed by Bourdieu (1990) to describe the enduring, elements of structure that limit or constrain people's lives that are in dynamic interaction with newly acquired patterns of thought which contribute to individual agency.

The '*ethos*' or '*organisational habitus*' of the school contributes to the everyday practices of teachers and how children and learning are perceived. These beliefs and practices become routinised to form the representations (Muscovici, 1984) on which education is based. Representational structures may limit the agency of individual teachers to change and introduce new practices. They may also constrain children and teachers' learning. Jenks argues that:

Social structures appear to societal members as 'facts' and as such have real and desirable characteristics: they are typical, that is, they are a series of normal or taken for granted manifestations; further they are constraining upon the actions of members either implicitly or explicitly; and finally they are to some greater or lesser degree, independent of their individual will. Social structures are 'facts', they are real and they are real in the consequences for human action (1996:34)

In a primary school setting there are also hierarchical dimensions to relationships with power differentials between head teacher, class teacher and pupils, the head teacher being one of the most influential people. In that role creating, contributing and steering the school ethos and policies in conjunction with governors and staff. A head teacher as manager and leader has the most powerful influence on systems created, the social relations of the setting and the agency of individual teachers.

The primary stage of education and its crucial importance in establishing children as learners.

Next, let us examine the characteristics of the primary stage of education and its crucial importance in establishing children as learners. Education is compulsory for children from the age of five years in the U.K and the primary school may have children from the age of four years to eleven years attending. Early childhood education and the primary phase of education are formative stages and arguably the most crucial phases for children's socialization as learners. The primary school can initiate children's interest in learning, motivate them, introduce them to skills, knowledge,

learning strategies, resources, social partners, enrich and strengthen their learning dispositions. It can also alienate them from the processes and pleasures of learning. It is during the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 stage of primary education that the first links are established between the culture of the home and that of the school and it is crucial for the children, that these links are meaningful ones so that the transitions are easy. Brooker's study of reception class children in what she describes as a poor, rather rundown, inner urban neighbourhood examines young children's '*changing habitus*' as they settle into school. On entry the children's dispositions reflect their early experiences within the family and the influence of their cultures, which they '*learn*' naturally and easily (2002:1).

....once settled their changing habitus was identified as the 'system of dispositions towards learning' they displayed in their interactions with the curriculum (2002: 148-149).

From observations she identified the attributes

...that seemed to be most frequently associated with learning ...the three attributes associated with pupil role [and being] a good learner were pro-social, compliant and independent behaviour . A fourth desirable attribute that she adds is that of 'involvement' (Pascal and Bertram, 1997; Siraj-Blatchford, 1999; Brooker, 2002:149).

The Brooker study illustrates the fundamental importance in education of inclusion, the need to accept children and support their socialization as learners whatever '*habitus*' their culture presents particularly in their early stages of education. Children need to feel a sense of belonging, to feel connected to their schools and local communities. Their identities as learners are being established, they are beginning to gain the required skills, strategies, knowledge and exhibiting their dispositions as learners. How their social competence is developed and their approaches to learning encouraged at this early stage of their education can have a profound impact on the kind of learners they become and on their future learning trajectory and career.

Characteristics of primary schools.

Let us consider some of the characteristics of primary schools. In general primary schools have closer links with their communities, than the much larger sized schools of the secondary sector and consequently feelings of a community can be more readily established, for several reasons, which will now be discussed.

The greater dependency of the younger children necessitates closer working partnerships between the teachers and parents or carers. Another characteristic of this stage of education in the primary school is the highly influential class group. Children at this stage of their education generally remain with the same cohort for a minimum of six years, unless they move from the area or to another school. A further characteristic is that most teachers have responsibility for teaching one class with whom they spend most of the school day. This means that they are very influential in the lives of the children in their class and get to know them very well. They may form close relationships with the children, feel protective towards them and may or may not enjoy their company. A classroom teacher is thus a highly significant person in children's lives at a particular point in time and therefore can have a major influence on their motivation towards learning and learning dispositions. Understanding the social relationships and the nature of the rapport that is developed between the class-teacher and children in the classroom and its contribution to the context created for learning, is of fundamental importance in informing teachers and improving practice. The class teacher is a mediator to bridge the cultural divide that may exist between the child's home and school. Class-teachers may also have additional responsibilities within a school as subject or year leaders, or managerial roles such as Deputy Headships and have additional influence in those roles.

Most primary schools have a parent-teacher or similar association and formal organisational links with their local communities in terms of governing body involvement. The governors work with the head-teacher to establish and maintain the school's ethos and develop school policies, interpreting centralised curricula, appointing staff, establishing priorities for children's education and contributing to the organisation and overall management. It is the head teacher, who manages the school on a day to day basis and leads the community of teachers, children, parents and carers. The managerial and leadership skills of the head teacher are fundamental to the establishment of a community for teaching and learning and a learning culture.

In Wales, there are some unique regional characteristics to the primary educational sector, which differ from the other countries of the U.K. these are related to its political, economic, linguistic and cultural heritage and are represented in the range of primary schools that exist. The Welsh Assembly Government categorises schools in Wales according to their traditional regional linguistic characteristics.

'Welsh Speaking' schools are currently defined for the school curriculum in Section 105 (7) of the Education Act 2002 which states that:

... a school is Welsh-speaking if more than half of the following subjects are taught (wholly or partly) in Welsh.

- a) religious education, and
- b) the subjects other than English or Welsh which are foundation subjects in relation to pupils at school.

In statistical publications Welsh medium primary schools are categorised as type A if at least half the pupils are taught wholly or mainly through the medium of Welsh, and categorised as B if some, but less than half the pupils are in Welsh medium classes or Welsh is used as a medium of teaching for part of the curriculum but not the major part.

- Traditional Welsh medium schools where Welsh is the language for teaching the curriculum and assessment and the main day to day language of the school and the local community.
- Welsh medium schools established in anglicised areas to offer Welsh medium education to children whose parents choose this. Many children who attend these schools have Welsh as a second language. Welsh is the day to day language of the schools and curriculum teaching and assessment are mainly through the Welsh language.

- Predominantly English medium schools where English is the day to day language of the setting and of curriculum teaching and assessment, with Welsh being taught as a second language at KS1 and KS2 as well as other languages.
- English medium schools in anglicised areas where English is the main language for teaching and assessment and where there has been no tradition of Welsh language teaching (WAG, 2006).

Schools will also differ in the characteristics associated with their being urban or rural and the socio-economic nature of their catchment areas. The cultural and linguistic traditions of the school will have considerable effects on the type of education offered.

Communities influence schools directly and there can also be the reverse effect .The interest in learning that can be generated in the classroom and the effects of education on children can permeate through to that of the family and home environment and subsequently to the local community.

To ensure that schools provide all children receive an appropriate, meaningful and effective education in which they feel included and able to participate is a major challenge. Some of the questions that need to be considered are:

How can we guide, encourage and get them involved in learning?

How can we ensure that children have the capacity to go on learning?

How can we strengthen their learning dispositions?

What and how should we be assessing to support lifelong learning?

The impact of current educational policy and ideology.

During the last thirty years, in a quest to improve standards, the ideology of the British State Education System has been one of increased centralization of policy and legislation for the education of children at both primary and secondary levels. Broadfoot explains how this concern was first expressed publicly by James Callaghan (1976), leader of the Labour party in the now famous Ruskin College Speech about ..

..supposedly falling standards and the failure of teachers to prepare young people adequately for the world of work (1996:206).

This triggered the movement towards a '*Core curriculum*' and more vocationally relevant training which gave central government the pretext to take over the authority of teachers in determining educational goals (Broadfoot, 1996:206).

The result of which was The Education Reform Act (1988) which introduced '*The National Curriculum*' to all state schools in England and Wales. The National Curriculum is a subject based curriculum in four Key Stages, Key Stage 1 for children from the age of five to seven years and Key Stage 2 for children from 7-11 years statutory for Primary schools with attainment targets and levels as measurable outcomes of children's learning at each stage. The current core subjects are English and / or Welsh, Mathematics, Science and Information Communication Technology and the Foundation Subjects of History, Geography, Technology, Art, Music, Religious Education, Welsh / English as a 2nd languages depending on the category of the school. The two main aims of The National Curriculum are:

The school curriculum should provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve.

The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the responsibilities and experiences of life (DfEE, 2001).

The introduction of the National Curriculum produced a major shift in philosophy and practice for Primary Schools. Teaching methods had traditionally been more child centred, dating historically from the recommendations of the Plowden Report (1967) and until the Education Reform Act (1988) primary schools were less subject to external curricular restrictions and the limitations imposed on them by examining bodies than those of the Secondary sector. First let us consider how the introduction of the National Curriculum has influenced educational practices in the primary sector.

The impact of the National Curriculum on educational practices in primary schools.

Broadfoot (1996) discusses how the introduction of the National Curriculum instigated a major policy change, that impacted on several domains that are discussed below. Coffey also explains how for the primary school sector it meant that ideologies, policies and practices developed for the secondary sector permeated through with an increase in the formality of curricula and assessment, audit and surveillance coupled with the corresponding weakening of teacher autonomy (2001). The impact of these changes are seen at national, school and classroom level. In the first instance let us consider those at national level

Broadfoot identifies the change to a 'hard' philosophy of 'external accountability' and 'summative assessment' A '*hard*' philosophy referring to the positivistic approach of Standardized Attainment Tests (SATS), quantification of children's educational attainment, and the production of comparative school league tables Broadfoot emphasizes that:

This signalled a quite specific change: the deliberate intention to intervene centrally in the shape and content of the curriculum. Much more significant, however, was the strengthening of product-base accountability through the provision for national assessment (1996:206).

The league tables subjecting schools serving socially, culturally and economically diverse catchment areas to comparison of their performances without any adjustment for factors likely to influence children's performance e.g. socio-economic deprivation and parental age and education. .

Forms of assessment.

Two main forms of assessment are used at the primary stage of education. These are:

Summative teacher assessment is assessment '*of*' learning and .

Is carried out at the end of a unit or year or key stage, or when a pupil is leaving the school, to make judgements about the pupils' performance in

relation to national standards. Teacher assessment is rooted in level descriptions but is often given a numerical value.

Teachers find standardisation and moderation meetings important quality assurance opportunities. Teacher assessment is a valuable part of the data held and used for management purposes.

Summative Assessment National Curriculum tests and tasks are designed to.

Provide a standard '*snapshot*' of attainment at the end of the key stages. A pupil's performance is described in relation to the national standards-levels. The optional tests for Years 3, 4, 5 also provide summative assessment information for schools to use to monitor their school performance (QCA, 2000).

One of the effects of such a model is to interpret the development of children's learning as linear and normative. There are parallels between these current testing practices and the psychological I.Q. testing of earlier periods. Haravay explains

..testing industry is central to the production of social order in liberal societies, where prescriptions of scientific management must be reconciled with ideologies of democracy (1989: 236-237).

There is much evidence to confirm that assessment is a potent an omnipresent factor in the classroom context. Broadfoot (1996) explains that often, what is valued by a society in education is what is assessed. She notes the point that the criteria that are used for assessment are often the easiest ones to record, assess or measure and possibly not the most conceptually advanced ones. She also comments that:

Assessment is arguably the most powerful tool in the education. Not only can it be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of individuals, institutions and indeed whole systems of education; it can also be used as a powerful source of leverage to bring about change (1996:21).

Bredkamp and Rosegrant have argued that

If we want to see real curriculum reform, we must simultaneously achieve reform of assessment practices (1992:29).

Let us consider what form assessment in the primary school takes and explicate how its effect can be so powerful. Assessments in educational settings, can be classified in

two main ways, summative assessment 'of' learning and formative assessment assessment 'for' learning (ARG, 2008). First a definition of formative assessment.

It is rooted in self-referencing; a pupil needs to know where s/he is and understand not only where s/he wants to be but also how to 'fill the gap'.

This involves both the teacher and the pupil in a process of continual review about progress. When teachers and peers provide quality feedback, pupils are empowered to take the appropriate action. Teachers adjust their plans in response to formative assessment

You may think why there should be this sudden concern with assessment when it has always been a feature associated with education. What is new about current practices is the increased formality and the use of summative assessment, standardisation and its application in the evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

Assessment has always been a major feature of education in the early years. It has been a planning tool ...it has been formative rather than summative , judgemental rather than statistical, holistic rather than incremental, building on strengths rather than identifying weaknesses . However the National Curriculum, with its elaborate arrangements for assessment, has imposed a different assessment model on early education—one which is incremental, summative, externally directed and designed to measure rather than guide the performance of pupils, teachers and schools (Blenkin and Kelly,1992:).

The impact of a formal curriculum on teaching and learning.

At school level the impact of the curriculum is seen in the increased formality of teaching and learning. The original National Curriculum has been streamlined since its introduction. This was in response to protests about curriculum overload and inconsistency of the levels. However, the structure it imposes on education remains and this has various levels of impact in schools and classrooms which will now be discussed .

a) Teacher and teaching methods.

Hanen emphasizes how government policy shows a lack of trust towards the teaching profession with a 'top down, teacher proof' approach to policy and programmes e.g. in the literacy and numeracy strategies (cited in Rudduck and McIntyre, 1998:152).

b) Impact on children and the status of children's knowledge.

Mayall (1996: 80) discusses how low status is often given to the knowledge children bring to the setting...

by and large the curriculum of the school is designed and implemented without regard for the knowledge children bring to it.

She explains that the National Curriculum has further reduced the opportunity for children's initiation of ideas.

.. imposes on the teacher through the sheer weight of the tasks to be accomplished: there will be no time in the day to introduce and develop topics through the knowledge, ideas and suggestions of children.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is a socio-constructivist philosophy of education which is based on a model of the learning process that respects the child's contribution and sees knowledge as being jointly-constructed with encouragement for the autonomy, individuality and competence of the child.

c) Assessment

The impact of assessment at National level and school level has already been discussed. Here the impact on pedagogic processes is considered. Broadfoot argues that assessment can be a powerful controlling and driving force in education

.. prevailing social pressures, both ideological and practical, may be analysed in terms of their manifestation in one of the defining characteristics of the education system, namely assessment (1996:168).

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) is one organisation which has contributed to the debate on assessment specifically baseline assessment, which is discussed here as it 'exactly mirrors the broader context of school based assessment (Wolfendale, 1993:35). One strand of the debate questions the motives behind assessment

Could it be a desire to examine practices currently being used, in order to improve records and profiles on children and ensure appropriate progressing, planning and curriculum?

Or could it be a more worrying reason with the advent of the NC, SATS and league tables for schools, that there was a need for teachers and head teachers to prove, in retrospect, that the children had made progress even if they appeared at 7 to be 'failures' in some imposed tests (Wolfendale *et al.*, 1993:7).

The significant point emerging in relation to assessment is how it can be used to influence teaching and the type of methods used and to some extent control it.

Broadfoot emphasises that:

Assessment activity now shapes the goods, the organization, the delivery and the evaluation of education (Broadfoot, 2002:365).

While, in educational settings, dispositions which represent a conceptually highly advanced level are rarely tracked or recorded.

d) Interpretation of learning as linear.

One of the consequences of formal curricula and external summative assessment involving the production of quantitative statistical data is the interpretation of learning as linear, thus producing a normalising effect on children's learning with emphasis on performance and a shift away from a mastery approach which is required for 'life-long learning'. The reality for children who attend primary schools at the current time is far more formal assessment than has been the case for previous generations. On entry to school there are baseline assessments for children, followed by SATS testing at the end of the Key stages. In England at seven years (Key Stage 1) and in both England and Wales at eleven years, Key Stage 2. (In Wales there has been some departure away from this formality at Key Stage 1 with the discontinuation of SATS testing of children at seven).

The debate surrounding the merits or negative aspects of the early assessment of children is a controversial one, which raises concern amongst many groups of people

as to its value. It is not a new phenomenon and has existed in various forms from 'on entry' testing to that set by the school or more informally by the class teacher.

The impact of earlier and increased assessment on children's long term learning and their learning dispositions?

What is new is increased summative assessment that has focused on the attainment of certain pre-determined criteria, the findings of which have often been used or developed for an external audience without the involvement of the child and the focus on what a child cannot do at a particular stage a deficit model of assessment. There are many consequences to this increased focus on the 'power' of assessment. Pressure of performance for children and pressure on teachers to achieve results. Some of the dangers of overemphasis on performance can lead to a movement away from focusing on the actual processes of learning and the more conceptually advanced and longer term outcomes such as learning dispositions. There are also many social consequences and one may question whose purpose it serves as autonomy and control over learning by both the teacher and child is certainly reduced.

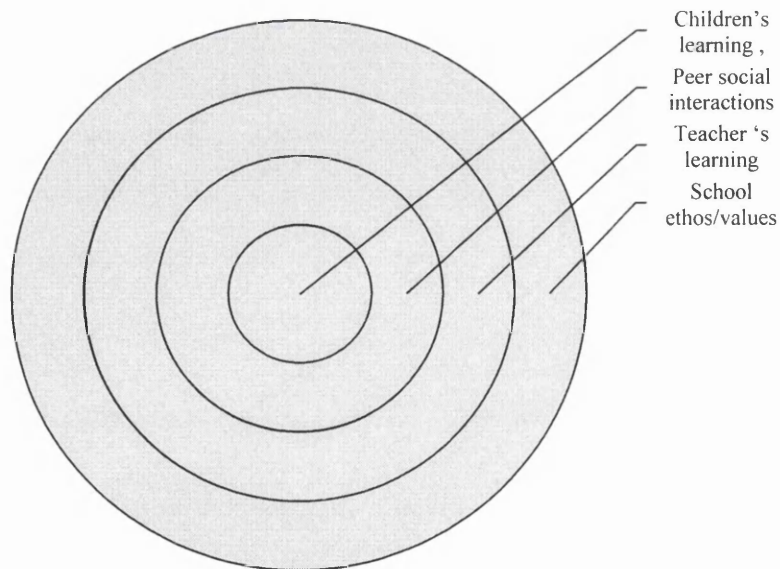
Section summary.

This section has examined the characteristics and the role of the primary school in children's education and their socialization as learners. It has considered the powerful impact of centralized National Curricula and assessment practices on current teaching practices and learning processes in the classroom. The effect of which are increased emphasis on 'formal' assessment and a 'performance' culture and a shift away from 'mastery' learning and longer term outcomes such as learning dispositions.

1.3. The classroom as a socio-cultural context for learning.

This section will examine how a socio-cultural context for learning emerges in a classroom and explore the factors that contribute to its formation. The key issues for this study are whether the context created is one where children are included and participate and a culture of learning developed. In a critical analysis of the learning context the important questions to consider are: Are children's identities as learners positively supported? Is the curriculum meaningful to the children? What are the constraints to learning in the classroom context? Further dimensions of the analysis include the teacher's ability to influence children's receptivity to learning.

Fig 1.3.3 Diagram to show the levels of influences on children's learning are embedded in the social context and social practices of their learning communities (Morris 2007).



Let us first consider the teacher's significant role in this context and how this is influenced.

The teacher's significant role in the classroom.

Each classroom's socio-cultural context is unique to the teacher and a particular cohort of children, whose effects on one another are bi-directional. The teacher has a significant status in this context and how the individual role is interpreted is based on socio-cultural influences at personal, professional and organisational level (educational and sociological philosophies of the period). The teacher's powerful influence is manifested in the curriculum selected, goals of learning identified, including pedagogic approaches, discourses including, forms of assessments and the imposition of adult authority e. g through rewards and sanctions to influence classroom behaviours.

Teaching is defined as both an art and a science with the teacher's role variously defined as pedagogue, instructor, mediator, facilitator and co-constructor according to the range of educational philosophies. All these roles involve 'engagement' with children in the processes of learning. In this study Pascal et al terminology is applied with the term 'involvement' (Leaver's 1994) used for children and 'engagement' for the teacher (1996:19). The teacher represents and communicates to the children her / his personal interpretation and selection of the curriculum both formal and hidden; based on the educational ideology of the setting and what is accepted as knowledge and practice by the culture of a particular society (Edwards and Mercer 1987). This point is re-inforced by Shipman.

....it would be inaccurate to imply that the knowledge and perspectives of teachers and children in school derive solely from their classroom and school experiences. Clearly, ideas, attitudes and beliefs are developed by each individual within a much wider social, cultural and ideological context and are only taken into the classroom to be moulded further
(Shipman,1995:95)

Influences on the teacher's perspective.

In the first instance it is necessary to explore some of the influences on the teacher's perspective that informs the ideology that underpins his/her management and practice. Hargreaves (1978:75) analysis positions the teacher as the central connection or mediator between the structural features of society and patterns of interaction in the classroom. This analysis focusing on macro-factors outside the classroom to include the effects of social, economic and political structures. Pollard (1982:21) has critiqued this model as it has neglected three important considerations.

- i) Children's influences on interaction in the classroom.
- ii) Teacher culture
- iii) Institutional bias.

This study will consider the above and extend the analysis; organisational/ institutional effects on the teacher's role were considered in Section 2.1.

Personal Influences on the teacher.

At a personal level a teacher's socio-history, culture, individual personality differences, education, values and beliefs will have a strong influence. Rogoff explains that:

Socio-historic theory offers a unique, social and historic seamlessness of individual, social and historical (or cultural processes) (1990:13).

Riehl (2001: 124) also discusses how interpretative qualitative research studies by Casey (1993) and Lubeck (1985) have shown:

How teachers' social origins and personal commitments shape their orientations toward teaching and their experiences as teachers.

In Lubeck's (1985) study patterns of teaching observed

.. were consistent with the teacher's cultural backgrounds and personal circumstances.

At a professional level the teacher's approach will reflect teacher training processes at university or during teaching practice periods. It will also reflect what Pollard (1982) describes as 'teacher culture' or 'occupational culture' that teachers draw on to guide their practice at a particular setting e.g. information shared in the group situation of the staffroom. Teacher culture normalises the interpretation of teaching and learning and situations defined as facilitating or constraining.

Practical classroom influences on the teacher.

A significant part of the teacher's role is to manage classroom relationships, to maintain order and what is described by Woods (1987) as a balance between getting on with children and maintaining control so that the classroom is productive.

Waksler explains that:

Seldom if ever, in its detailed daily manifestations, does behaviour fit the public image that exists of it. Whether that image is positive or negative, elements of the opposite moral cast are routinely present (1991:95).

The praxis of teaching is also based on acquired Professional Craft Knowledge. This refers to actual everyday practices based on the knowledge of what teachers see as practical for effective classroom practice. Cooper and McIntyre describe Professional Craft Knowledge as:

....the knowledge that experienced teachers gather throughout their careers that enables them to make decisions about how best to approach professional tasks This knowledge is firmly rooted in teachers' practical experience, and is directly linked to their daily practice (2002:75).

Professional craft knowledge can be informed by theoretical and cognitive knowledge but is essentially based on how each teacher reflects and deals with problems related

to the demands of the job. In their study Cooper and McIntyre found as in the Scottish study by Brown and McIntyre 1993:

.. that teachers' concerns with effective pupil learning are located among an array of other concerns about the need to manage the teaching and learning context, and that teachers' ideas about what it means to be an effective teacher encompass the full range of concerns among which pupil learning outcomes are but one (Cooper and McIntyre 2002:75).

They identified four main dimensions that teachers referred to when evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching. These were their long-term aims, in relation to pupil outcomes over an extended time scale (such as a term, year or pupils' school careers), and their professional commitments (e.g. 'coverage of syllabus'). Their short-term objectives, in relation to pupil outcomes and progress, over a narrow time scale (such as a lesson, group of lessons or half-termly unit. Their own performance, in terms of decisions made in pre-active and /or interactive phases of lessons, their management and presentational skills, and the success and appropriateness of their teaching methods. Finally their preferred image, in relation to the type of classroom state they seek to maintain, through the promotion of particular forms of interaction (social and inter-personal) and pupil behaviour.

Children's influences.

The classroom context itself is a bi-directional one, with children having an impact on teachers' actions as well as the reverse effect. Pollard (1982); Cooper and McIntyre (2002) discuss how some studies have neglected the impact of children on the way teachers teach. The pupils' interests can be demonstrated by their action such as e.g. bringing artefacts to lessons, their knowledge and understanding, motivation, preferred styles and ways of working (individual versus collaborative) and their expectations. Teacher's planning can also be influenced by pupils during lessons or modified in response to pupils. Pupil influence can be demonstrated in the choice of

learning activities, resources, teaching strategy and pacing of lesson Cooper and McIntyre (2002). Next let us examine teachers' perspectives of children.

Teachers' perspectives of children.

Various views of children are held by teachers. Pollard explains how there is :

Expectation and enjoyment from children's natural growth and the contrary view of children as the most pressing daily source of threat to the classroom teacher (1985:39).

Whether children are regarded as '*active*' or '*passive*' will influence the level of autonomy afforded to them in their learning. Hujala *et al.*, (1990:100) emphasize how a curriculum for young children's learning should position the child as a central actor and explain how this can be developed:

... child centredness and acknowledging ...the child as a social actor means supporting learning as a process developed through the child's own activities, initiatives and experiences.

She continues

The key issue in early learning is that the child is considered as a key actor. Therefore the child's own action and position as an actor rise to the centre of the curriculum (1999:102).

Learning processes that position the child as a central actor in curriculum development are more likely to gain the child's involvement and make learning meaningful. A further critical belief is the teacher's conceptions of ability.

Conceptions of children's ability.

Dweck has identified two frameworks for understanding intelligence and achievement (discussed with motivation).The 'fixed' theory of intelligence is associated with 'performance', an approach to learning that can produce a 'helpless response' in a child as the result of failure or challenge; whereas 'malleable' intelligence is associated with 'mastery learning', interpreting difficulty as a challenge. 'Mastery' is

associated with intrinsic motivation whereas 'performance' is associated with extrinsic. Donaldson discusses the dangers of giving external rewards to children.

..Rewards for success: prizes, privileges, gold stars. Two grave risks attend this practice. The first obvious reason being that some children will be identified as 'failures'.

A second reason for all children of the giving of an '*extrinsic reward*' is as Donaldson explains:

...there is now a substantial amount of evidence pointing to the conclusion that if an activity is rewarded by some extrinsic prize or token—something quite external to the activity itself—then the activity is less likely to be engaged in later in a free and voluntary manner when rewards are absent, and it is less likely to be enjoyed (1978:115).

The discussion of mastery motivation is further developed in Chapter 3.

The varying interpretations of educational and sociological ideologies, ability conceptions intertwined with personal, professional and organisational socio-cultural norms and values influence a teacher's performance in the classroom. The complexity of which contribute to the uniqueness of each teacher's interpretation and application of the curriculum, (in the U.K. the he Centralized National Curriculum) pedagogic practice, perception of children and discursive formations. Wood and Jeffrey discuss how teachers' respond to centralized policies and their implementation.

Thus some teachers are finding creative ways of working within guidelines imposed by these strategies and gaining a new professional discourse as a result....

Professional confidence may depend on many variables at both institutional and individual level, including personal biographies and career trajectories (1997:13 cited in Shelby and McCulloch).

How do interaction processes between adults and children influence learning?

The conceptual framework for the study Pascal and Bertram's EEL (1996) is discussed in the Theoretical Framework; the aspect of interest to this chapter is the mutuality or interdependent aspect of the interaction '*process*' between the adult and

the child i.e. Child Involvement and Adult Engagement. They describe the interdependence that develops between the adult and the child as a '*symbiotic relationship*' since 'when children show high levels of involvement, adults become more engaging and when adults are more engaging, children show more involvement' (1996:20). There are elements of negotiation involved in this 'educative interaction' from both interactants during this symbiotic relationship (1996:20). First let us examine the components of Adult / Teacher Engagement to understand its importance.

Adult Engagement.

Pascal and Bertram's measures of adult engagement evaluate three aspects of the *educative interaction* these are '*sensitivity, stimulation and autonomy*'. Research indicates that these elements may be the most important aspects of an educative adult interaction with his or her children (Pascal and Bertram 1996:20).

1. Sensitivity: This is the sensitivity of the adult to the feelings and emotional well being of the child and includes elements of sincerity, empathy, responsiveness and affection.
2. Stimulation: This is the way in which an adult intervenes in the learning process and the content of such interventions.
3. Autonomy: This is the degree of freedom which the adult gives to the child to experiment, make judgements, choose activities and express ideas. It also encompasses how the adult handles conflict, rules and behavioural issues (1996:20).

The complementary measure being *Child involvement*, this being described by Laevers (1993: 83) a quality of human activity:

- which can be recognised by a child's concentration and persistence
- is characterised by motivation, fascination, an openness to stimuli and an intensity of experience both at the physical and cognitive level, a deep satisfaction with a strong flow of energy.
- is determined by the '*exploratory*' drive and the child's individual developmental needs
- as a result of involvement there is evidence to suggest that development occurs.

To encourage children's volition towards learning stimulating and motivating elements are needed to ensure involvement. One of the major contributory factors to the nature of the context created are the relationships established and the significant process in relationship formation is social interaction. It is through day to day social interactions that relationships are established. The nature of these interactions can form a model for others to follow. Over time the interactions that occur can be seen to form a pattern or follow a particular 'interaction order' Goffman's (1959).

Classroom discourse.

In a classroom most interaction is linguistic although body language forms an important component of the interaction (which unless videoed can be difficult to document effectively). There will be physical action linked to particular tasks or activities. However, the dominant form of interaction is talk or discourse. Edwards and Mercer (1987:20) argue that the role of language (in the classroom) is characterised in two ways:

- as a medium for teaching and learning
- one of the materials from which the child constructs a way of thinking.

In this study one line of interest lies in the analysis of teacher discourse along the three dimensions of '*sensitivity, stimulation and autonomy*' (identified earlier). Shared discourses contribute to the shared meanings of classroom culture. The understandings created through discourse influences behaviour. Humans also have the ability to remember, this allows them to remember and respond giving consideration to the shared cultural knowledge they have. Cultures value different learning achievements, and foreground or neglect, different layers of learning e.g. one culture may reward intellectual prowess and ignore the development of empathy, another the reverse. (Claxton 2002: 1). There are varying theoretical perspectives for the analysis of the

significance of discourse. From one perspective the interaction of the child with others can be interpreted as a process of facilitation which can be viewed in two *ways*:

- 1 the adult scaffolding the child 's struggles to make sense of experience
- 2 the adult giving the child a set of grammars and scripts for making sense either directly or through ways in which the child's own behaviours and utterances are afforded legitimacy (Bruner and Haste 1987:20).

A second interpretation is centred on the social and cultural

The child's discourse with the adult is seen as a microcosm of more extensive social processes.

The development of the child is seen as closely related to the parent (in this study parent, teacher and peers).

'construction of the world and of frames of meaning, and to the wider cultural framework of which the parent (in this study parent, teacher and peers') of which the parent is part.

From this perspective language has a dual purpose, the first to provide a framework for the child's thinking and cognition and secondly to 'reflect and reproduce' cultural narratives, symbols, representations and conventions (Bruner and Haste 1987:21). It is through discourse that knowledge is shared and meaning is communicated. Through the analysis of the content and patterning (who talks to whom) of discourse much can be revealed about the social order of a setting (Edwards and Mercer 1987).

The establishment of joint-understandings takes place in the context of power relationships between teacher and pupils, with the teacher representing and providing for the pupils an accepted wider culture of educational ideology, knowledge and practice (Edwards and Mercer 1987: 16).

It is through classroom discourse the teacher exerts control and makes explicit the rules and norms of interaction. Waksler has demonstrated how understanding the rules and norms of a classroom requires quite sophisticated understanding by children since there are explicit rules and implicit rules which operate. In a classic study of children in a kindergarten classroom, she applies Becker's (1963) concept of 'deviance' to explain how in actual practice there is selectivity in the teacher's application of rules

that seemed to be related to previous categorisation of the children by the teacher. In essence, this categorisation of children and the application of 'taken for granted' rules developed by the adult and rarely explained are political acts related to the teacher's power over children in the classroom situation. She explains how a rule such as: Do not talk at 'inappropriate times' as an

..ambiguous category and that the data suggested that the children did too
(1991:103).

and how she identified the following criteria as violation of the rule

- If the sound of the child's voice was audible above the sound of the group as a whole;
- If the child talked 'frequently' during the course of a class;
- If the child talked when the teacher was talking or preparing to talk;
- If the child's talking seemed to be causing slow behaviour or poor work.

Waksler continues by explaining how understanding the above criteria requires advanced discernment in the first instance a knowledge of the 'volume of one's own voice in relation to those of others', the second an interpretation of what is 'enough' and 'too much'. The third a 'perception of the state of preparing to talk' and the fourth of 'understanding the causal relationship between talk and action'. Such analysis reveals how adult's notion of children's differences can be enough to label them as 'deviant'. Often as adults we expect children to understand quite sophisticated application of rules without explanation, rules which adults would find difficult to follow. Each component of discourse will have an impact on the next. In their study Edwards and Mercer (1987) describe teaching and learning as one long conversation with each segment of discourse having an impact on the next. In the past psychologists who studied child development thought of speech and practical intelligence as separate processes without fully appreciating how they intertwine. Children's adaptive behaviour and sign using activity being described by theorists

such as Piaget as 'parallel phenomena' (Cole et al 1978). Although the importance of speech was realised in terms of practical activity, its role in

.. the organization of the child's activities .. [and].. communicative functions.. was not fully realised.

Cole *et al* (1978: 24) explain

Although practical intelligence and sign use can operate independently of each other in young children, the dialectical unity of these systems in the human adult is the very essence of complex human behaviour.

They emphasise how the point of convergence between the two lines of development is the most significant point in course of intellectual development in humans, that enables both practical and abstract thoughts to occur. They continue and explain how speech enables the child to have

..new relations with the environment in addition to the new organization of the behaviour itself. The creation of these uniquely human forms of behaviour later produce the intellect and become the basis of productive work: the specifically human form of the use of tools (Cole *et al* 1978: 25).

Edwards and Mercer explain how it is through discourse that:

...both adults and children appear to reason about things (1987: 16). Logic and mathematics are not merely mental activities performed in some abstract domain of disembedded thought, but types of discourse which have recognisable forms, contexts and rules of interpretation. According to Walkerdine, logical and mathematical reasoning not only occur in discursive and communicative contexts, but are themselves forms of discourse, relations between statements, deriving not from actions and things, as Piaget has it, but rather from language itself (1987:21).

Barnes (1976:115) explains

Children must be encouraged to give form to their understanding, because by formulating knowledge for oneself one gains access to the principles upon which it is based.

The factors that contribute to whether this becomes a context where learning is foregrounded and children's learning dispositions influenced will now be considered.

Children in a classroom setting find themselves in the company of other children generally of a similar age sharing resources and working either individually, with

partners or in groups on tasks and towards goals that are valued by their culture. Allard and Cooper's study (2001) in three primary class rooms in Melbourne, Australia explored how the teachers and children together build classroom cultures through their 'contested' discourses, this referring to the plurality of discourses ((2001:154). Their small scale case study, of three schools that had some similarities e.g. a large population of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds and they were also schools which the researchers knew made every effort to encourage ..

....children to work together collaboratively and to take responsibility for their own behaviours (Allard and Cooper 2001: 153-154)

The findings from three case studies contribute to an understanding of

...how power relations operate to shape classroom cultures and to highlight the ways in which students and teacher's actively participate in such relations (Allard and Cooper 2001: 168)

Creating a context to influence children's learning disposition.

In order for a context to influence learning dispositions it must ensure children's inclusion, well-being and strong identity as learners.

Inclusion

In a classroom context the level of inclusivity and differentiation that exists within the curriculum will be a reflection of the teacher's understanding of these principles and the management of their application. The framing of the curriculum and the ways in which children's differences are accepted, necessitates a knowledge of subject content and an understanding of how affective and social processes impact on cognitive learning. An inclusive context is created when children's individual needs are identified and met. When children are included a sense of belonging is created for them

Well-being

Care and sensitivity are needed in the consideration of emotional well-being and the establishment of trusting relationships. In an analysis of children's learning Laevers

(2000) focuses on two dimensions ‘the degree of emotional well– being and the level of involvement’. He states

If you want deep level learning we cannot do without involvement
(2000 : 25).

A question that naturally arises in relation to children’s learning is why some children become successful learners, whereas others do not, apart from innate differences such as that of ability. The theories that explain children’s differing levels of achievement are complex, varied, intersect, overlap and are linked to gender, ethnicity, social class, culture and language. However, what is central to them all is the importance of children’s identities in relation to learning.

Identity

Let us now look more closely at ‘*identity*’ which is a key concept in understanding children’s competence as learners. It is not possible in this study to explore all the facets of ‘*identity*’ as the variations are enormous; what is relevant to consider is how classroom processes impact on children’s identities as learners. Siraj–Blatchford draws on evidence from research to explain how children’s identities are developed and explains that

...the way children feel about themselves is not innate or inherited but is learned
(2000: 3).

Let us look more closely at the concept of identity:

The complexity of identity.

There is little doubt about the complexity of ‘*identity*’ as a concept. Siraj–Blatchford refers to Hall’s (1992) metaphor ‘*kaleidoscope*’ in discussing the range of identities based on individual differences and ‘identity forming’ categories e.g. race. She advances Hall’s analysis of race and argues that gender, social–class and language are also subject to the same effects. She explains how individual experience is related to

where a person is 'situated' e.g. first or second generation immigrant, working or middle class etc. O'Connor endorses the point regarding the complexity of 'identity' and links this to the inadequacy of explanations about who succeeds or fails in school

our failure to make sense of identity in all its complexities (2001:164)

she explains that:

...like the class based theories, the cultural-ecological model is also unable to account for within group variation in achievement.

Self-esteem and identity.

Research evidence identifies that children's self esteem is a measure of how they feel they are perceived by others and have shown

...that positive self-esteem depends on whether children feel that others accept them and see them as competent and worthwhile (Siraj-Blatchford 2000: 3)

Roberts (1998)

.....argues that the process by which all children develop their self-esteem and identity rests heavily on the type of interactions and relationships people form with young children (in Siraj-Blatchford 2000:3).

Influences on children's identities.

Let us now consider what influences children's identities as learners in the classroom. In order to learn effectively children need opportunities to interact with their peers, environment, cultural tools, resources and significant others. In the socio-cultural context of the classroom social comparisons are frequent and vary in richness of meaning. Children's self-conceptions gain stability through the 'chronic and recurrent accessibility of relevant self-categorizations (Abrams in Abrams and Hogg 1999:206.)

The factors that contribute to the formation of the socio-cultural context for children's learning have been discussed in Section 1.2. In this section the focus is on the analysis of social relationships and their influences on '*identity*'.

The social relationships in the classroom and the people who contribute to the formation of the socio- cultural context are the teachers, friends and peers that the child has contact with. Extensive research by Pollard has established that the formation of a child's '*identity*' as a learner is dynamic and correlates with their successive learning experiences and relationships of the home and school. He found that ..

Children tend to feel vulnerable in school. They are aware of the power of teachers, of personal assessment, to which they are subject, of the control which is exercised over them and of the curriculum in terms of which they are expected to progress (1999: 4).

Pollard's (longitudinal ethnographic study closely tracked the development of case-study children's identities as learners, from the age of four to seven. He explained identity formation as a spiral pattern (rather than linear) related to how children were getting on with the significant others in their lives.

[to]...understand identity, we must pay particular attention to the 'significant others in a child's life; to those who interact with them and influence the way they see themselves (1996:9).

A major concern for children in the classroom was developing and maintaining an identity, a sense of self, and a sense of being valued. The maintenance of '*self*' being based on facets of self-image, enjoyment, control of stress and maintaining dignity. Table Pollard 1987:180. In the study he analyses the important influences of relationships with parents, siblings, peers and teachers on the development of each child's identity as learners and over time the formation of their learning trajectories (1996: 83).

Pollard and Filer study which focused on 'the influences of interpersonal processes in the home, classroom and playground' demonstrated how social factors have an influence on children's fulfilment of their learning potential. From their analysis which was based on the consideration of social factors alone, leaving children's

innate ability out of the equation for simplification, the findings indicated that children who

.....manage their classroom identities so that they derive support from their teachers and other pupils [are likely to be] the most effective learners .Such pupils – ‘jokers’, ‘knife-edgers’ or ‘re-definers’-will not reject or cut themselves off from teacher support, nor will they offer a relatively blind obedience. Rather ,they will seek to manage a positive identity with both their peers and their teachers....(Pollard 1996: 310).

They identified two major social influences on pupils’ classroom learning.

Through negotiating and being fortunate enough to experience good relationships with a teacher, some children are in a position to enhance their opportunities to learn.

Pupils become effective when they have sufficient self-confidence and capacity for self-reflection and trust of their teacher to manage higher levels of risk and high ambiguity in classrooms. They are then dependent on teachers providing them with appropriate intellectual challenge and support. (Pollard 2000:3).

The capacity to be able to interact effectively in social settings is social competence.

Trawick-Smith explains that :

There are two inter related aspects to social competence, being liked by others and having skills to interact effectively in social settings (2000:295).

Hutchby and Moran Ellis explain that empirical research shows

....that children’s social competence is a constantly negotiated dynamic, a phenomenon which is stabilized, to greater or lesser degrees, in and through the interactions between human actors and the material and cultural resources which are available, and which can be recruited to play a part in the constitution of specific, situated activities (1998: 15).

The organisation and framing of the curriculum by the classroom teacher for children’s involvement in learning processes necessitates a knowledge of subject content and an understanding of how affective and social processes impact on cognitive learning. Through day to day interaction in which they all have different levels of influence.

An examination of some of the factors that contribute to the creation of this context will follow and the question of whether a culture of learning is established where children's learning dispositions are strengthened discussed. The dynamic context created will be a blend of teacher personal, professional beliefs, organisational demands and practical teaching craft knowledge and strategies acquired through practice. A constantly evolving context influenced both by extrinsic and intrinsic factors which enable or constrain the teacher's work and children's learning.

Classroom context that produces a learning culture to strengthen children's learning dispositions?

To explore the goals of a curriculum that creates a learning culture in a classroom we will first examine the requirements of the child's needs. The strands of the curriculum for early childhood developed by Carr and May, (2000) for the Ministry of Education in New Zealand emphasise '*well-being, belonging, contribution, communication and exploration*'. The question that naturally follows is how these feelings and opportunities can be created. One pre-requisite of such a curriculum is that it should be an inclusive one with the creation of a sense of '*belonging*' and acceptance and a focus on emotional, social and cognitive development to create a sense of *well-being*, and (Carr 2001:29) through sensitive interactions. To provide equity, differentiation of tasks and contingent strategies need to be adopted so that all children are supported to succeed. The learning should be meaningful, valued and relevant to the child.

Curriculum planners deny autonomy by creating more progressively refined stages of development when they should acknowledge that development takes place through social interaction. The curriculum planners now have evidence that individualization leads to dependence on the teacher. They should be aware that peers are vital to development and that social experience should be planned into the curriculum (Kutnick 1988:222).

A teaching or pedagogic paradigm where the learner has a strong sense of identity, is *involved, active, takes responsibility* and is afforded *autonomy* is necessary. In such a curriculum social relationships are foregrounded and *reciprocity* is promoted through classroom discourse. Contingent teaching strategies are devised to ensure meaningful learning and individual success with explicit meta-cognitive experiences and guidance provided and emphasis on being '*resourceful, reflective and resilient*' (Claxton 2002).

What are the constraints to teaching in the classroom context?

There is strong research based evidence that both teachers and pupils are constrained in the classroom environment and develop coping strategies (Scarth, 1987). Scarth review of a decade of research on teacher classroom '*strategies*' identifies that the concept of teacher '*strategies*' has been expanded over the years at micro and macro levels. Although there is some ambiguity in its application i.e. whether it should include teaching strategies or restricted to strategies that deal with constraint. It is useful as a concept that views the teacher as capable of conscious decisions and actions as opposed to deterministic social forces in dealing with classroom constraints. In the analysis of the concept of '*constraint*' it is noted that there is also variation in usage. Constraints can be limited to the influences a teacher is aware of such as a set curriculum or in some situations to constraints that teachers are unaware of

...teachers may not be aware of the constraints acting upon them. Indeed, the fact that some constraints are not experienced as such, makes those constraints particularly effective, they are an element of the hegemony of the ruling group. (Scarth, 1987:257).

Sharp and Green identify two main types of constraint:

.. intra-classroom (e.g. physical constraints, the teacher-pupil ratio) and extra-classroom (staff-relations and parents) (cited in Scarth 1987:255).

Hargreaves's analysis includes macro-factors in addition to micro-level constraints.

He identifies:

- (a) educational goals which are fundamentally contradictory in the capitalist system;
- (b) material constraints derived from distinctive educational planning and policy decisions;
- (c) differing educational ideologies such as progressive Plowden ideology or Great Debate traditionalism, which contain definitions of 'correct' practice and provide routes for career advancement.

Hargreaves (1977) has developed the concept of '*coping strategy*' which refers to teacher coping strategies under conditions of constraint.

Section summary.

This section has looked at how a socio- cultural context is created in the classroom by each cohort of children and the class-teacher. The nature of the context created is a product of the curriculum developed and the characteristics of the (a) teacher-child / children interactions and discourse. Whether an emphasis is placed on relationships, reciprocity and the participation of learners can influence children's learning and their learning dispositions. The next section will look at children's perspectives on their learning.

2.3. Children's perspectives on learning

In the first part of this section we will discuss the process of consultation with children to gain their perspectives and the concept of participation. Children's participation forms a basis to their inclusion and involvement. The theme of particular interest to this study is research on primary school children's perspectives on learning. How children's perspectives are influenced and what they say about their learning and their 'self-concept' as learners in the classroom context will be discussed. The final segment will evaluate the importance of listening to children in helping them develop a language about learning to aid self-reflection about themselves as learners; to develop their responsibility and capacity as learners; possibly improving their attitudes towards learning and strengthening their dispositions as life-long learners.

Consultation with children and the concept of participation.

The encouragement of increased participation of citizens and consumers is a feature of late modernity's social policies and the notion of consultation with children is no exception to this trend in political inclusion. However, there is some tension and ambiguity in children's positioning within policy at international, national and local level. Wyness *et al* discuss that

Policy oscillates within a child centred paradigm between children's 'interests' and 'needs'. Children are simultaneously addressed as social agents and dependents (2004:83).

Children's participation in research.

In the first instance let us reflect on the level of children's participation within the domain of research. Research with children has tended to focus '*on them*' rather than in involving them. The methodologies selected were often quantitative e.g. survey and structured interview allowing adults to be firmly in control, with limited opportunity

for children to give their own version of events (Hart 1992:1). More recently research studies have adopted empowering approaches for consultation with children through the use of innovative qualitative methodologies. The advantages of such methods are that they have allowed children freedom to identify their own agenda, to focus on the issues that they regard as important and to express their views in their own language.

Children's views on services.

Concurrently, there have been similar trends for children's participation, in children's services across health, social and educational sectors in a quest to promote their rights and to reduce social exclusion. However children's involvement is a relatively new phenomenon as Hill *et al* state:

Children may be central to the social exclusion policy agenda but their views have not always been. Most social exclusion initiatives were and are still designed, delivered and evaluated by adults (2004:77).

One of the frequent difficulties with policies aimed at improving children lives and /or their protection is that often they do not alter the adult-child or generational relations. However, a central concept of '*inclusion*' is the notion of participation. '*Social exclusion*' is an every day term in relation to U.K. and European policy however its meaning is two-fold. In relation to children both meanings apply and may overlap:

- *Relative poverty* which makes it very difficult for children or families to participate in *social activities that are generally expected in the societies in which they live*.
- *Marginalised, omitted* –in the case of children–on a physical basis of age. (Hill *et al* 2004:77).

Background to Children's participation.

For schools, children's participation is a way of ensuring *inclusion* creating positive learning cultures and improving their effectiveness as communities of learning

Research on children's perspectives at primary level.

In the U.K. there has been a long tradition of research on pupils' perspective (Rudduck, 1995). Research on children's perspectives at primary level has been conducted by Woods (1990) and Wragg (1993) on pupils views of the teacher. Blatchford (1996) conducted a longitudinal study with the same children aged 7, 11 and 16 yrs. on their views on school and school based work. Gipps and Tunstall (1996; 1998) asked the opinions of children aged 6-7 about how the teacher helped them to improve their work and researched their ideas about what helped them to do well. Rudduck and Flutter identify that listening to children's perspectives is a '*valuable tool*' for gathering direct evidence of how children's identities are developed (2004: 130).

In recent years, there has been an explosive growth in the number of studies to elicit children's perspectives in relation to learning. Some of these are linked to political movements such as The Children's Rights Movements in response to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989) with article 12 stating that

... parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child (UN, 1989 Article 12).

and Article 13 stating that Children have a right to participation in decisions affecting their lives and the right to freedom of expression (Handley, 2005:5). From a sociological perspective, particularly the sociology of children there has been a specific focus on the view of the child as a competent social actor with a focus on childhood as part of society and culture rather than as a pre-cursor to it. Mayall (2002:22) explains

Here the focus is on the child as agent, as participatory in constructing knowledge and daily experience, an important issue is children's own views on their daily experience, and these may be sought in order to construct an account of childhood.

On the other hand the structural sociology of childhood has examined childhood as a '*permanent social category*', the first in one's lifespan and as separate from that of '*adulthood*' Mayall (2002:23). The varying experiences of childhood have been extensively researched in the ESRC Children 5–16 research programme that has produced findings on the structural context of childhood in contemporary British society (2002:68). Many of its research projects have drawn directly on children's representations of their experiences and the patterns of their daily lives rather than on adult interpretation. Prout (2002:75) emphasises that:

Studies within the [ESRC 5-16] programme have demonstrated that children have valuable insights and perspectives to offer on many aspects of their lives e.g. Mayall (1999) *Negotiating Childhoods*, Sparks *et al* (1999) *Children's Moral Thinking*.

Educational philosophy has also identified the democratic significance of constructivist models of learning with the corresponding shift from the traditional model of the learner as passive, to the acknowledgement of an active learner role, with an interest in learner perspectives being part of this new order (McCallum, *et al.*, 2000). One of the most effective initiatives in involving pupils has been 'The school improvement movement' as it has allowed the opportunity for teachers, researchers and policy makers to work together to address this issue. Rudduck and Flutter (2000) in their analysis of school improvement have identified the need for consultation with children as consumers. Rudduck (1999) has argued that pupils are the '*expert witnesses*' in school improvement.

Pupils are observant and have a rich but often untapped understanding of processes and events; ironically they often use their insights to devise strategies for avoiding learning, a practice which over time can be destructive of their progress (Rudduck *et al* 2000:82).

Jonathon (1990:75) states 'School improvement' is not about 'rapid response to changing market forces through a trivialised curriculum' but about the deep structures, values and thoughts they represent. Despite this enormous growth in interest in listening to children's perspectives there has been limited impact on practice and the description of Alderson's research (1999) on children's rights in English schools identified that 52% of the 2,272 children in the sample had a pupil's school council. However, only 20% of these children thought that these were valuable. The majority of pupils felt that they were tokenistic and that teachers identified agendas and that they did not deal with their interests (Wyness, 2004:87).

...yet there is much evidence of limited impact by recent participative measures and of disillusionment by many young people who have been engaged in consultation and decision making (Hill *et al* 2004:77).

Franklyn (1995:96) identifies two beliefs that can perpetuate the views that children views are unimportant:

1. Children are not capable of making reasoned and informed decisions.
2. Children lack the wisdom born of experience and are prone to make mistakes.

A further reason for the limited impact has been the association of children's rights with progressivism. In the next part we move on to consider how children's perspectives may be influenced and how culture, is a key determinant of this process.

What influences children's perspectives on learning?

Childhood is a life stage in the course of every one's history, with its many common and characteristic features but at the same time conveys a unique experience for each individual.

...childhood is both united by a set of common and shared experiences and yet, at the same time, is fragmented by the diversities of children's everyday lives (James and James 2004:8).

Next we will consider how children's positioning in society influence their perspectives on learning.

Children's positioning and social status in society.

Whenever children's voices are heard these are influenced by their socio-cultural history and particular positioning in society based on their status, ethnicity, gender, class, ability or disability and variables such as time and place. In primary school classrooms each with their unique socio-cultural context as in the wider society, children's positioning is structured by the generational relations that exist, reflecting the adults' typification of the child and perspectives of childhood (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998; Mayall 2002). Moss (2006) highlights how our image of the child is productive and cites (Rinaldi, 2005:91)

The child is defined by our way of looking at and seeing him ... This image will determine our way of relating to children, our way of forming our expectations for them, and the world we are able to build for them.

The position of the child can be one of inclusion, involvement, empowerment and active participation or to the contrary one of constraint, alienation, limited participation and marginalisation, with a view of the child as deficit, deviant, vulnerable or incompetent. It is from these polarities of positioning that children's 'voices' are heard and their perspectives described. However, wherever this may be e.g. the home or school, they are not 'passive', but 'active' agents who assess and respond to their local context, contributing to their construction of 'self' and conception as learners. Their agentic responses reflecting their ability, competence and knowledge of meaningful ways of participating based on their 'habitus' and socio-cultural history. The existing categories of representations they hold conditioning their thoughts and actions in the classroom context where they are placed.

Children's positioning in school.

Devine's study to elicit children perspectives on their participation and political positioning in relation to time, space and interaction in Irish primary schools found that they positioned themselves at the lower end of the organizational structure.

Mr.....[Principal] is the most important 'cos he runs the school, then Mr....[Vice-Principal], the teachers and the children are last....we are important to our mams ...you don't see the children bossing otherschildren don't boss adults. (Boy in fifth class in Devine 2000:313).

One of the reasons for the positioning of children in this way is related to the tendency towards standardization of school environments. Several elements contribute to this standardization, the compulsory nature of school attendance, the high ratio of children to adults, the prescriptive curricula and the evaluative nature of the context. The standardization of school environments is manifested in the routines, rules, rituals, expectations and behaviours associated with learning.

Jackson argued that ...

...children's academic performance in school is closely related to their competence within the social organisation of the school.It is about the development of a level of social competence which allows access to the learning patterns of the classroom (1987:74).

For children there are the additional social pressures of fitting in with peers, getting on with the teachers and making sense of the culture, whilst maintaining a sense of self in an arena where there is the omnipresent sense of evaluation (Pollard 1987). A further important structure in children's lives is that of time and there are many facets to its impact on children.

The impact of time on children's lives.

Children's educational experiences in moving through a school are politically, influenced by the policies of a particular era, and the socio-economic opportunities and constraints (James and James 2004). These include the curriculum of the day, the favoured teaching methods in practice, social pressures from the media as well as socio-cultural factors which influence the kind of relationships and contexts for learning that are created.

Time is the '*crucial element*' in explaining '*continuity and change*', the '*commonality*' and '*diversity*' of children's experiences (James and James 2004:74).

Time inevitably forms a fundamental structure to children's days, weeks and years in school; which is apparent from the time-tabling of the school day, its segmentation into lessons to the organisation within lessons and the structuring of the school year. The control of time mainly adult directed, its structure and patterning, so familiar as to appear almost immutable. Some of the problems children identify in relation to their learning are linked to this structuring of time. The pace of lessons being too slow for some, too fast for others; the need for more time to think of answers to the teacher's questions, to follow through the things that interest them or the flexibility to manage their own time (Flutter and Rudduck 2004: 81). At primary level Flutter and Rudduck identified that many pupils commented on the impact of the management of time in lessons on the presentational quality of their work (2004: 82).

Children's anxieties in relation to learning are clearly related to time, finishing the work in time:

If somebody says, like, you've got ten minutes and you have got to do this, you feel more under pressure and you think 'I've got to get this finished'. And then you worry about that (Y8 girl) (Flutter and Rudduck 2004:82).

A concern for some pupils is ‘making up for lost time’ if classes had been missed through illness or other absence. In the project ‘Improving Schools’–The Pupils’ Agenda’ only a few schools gave information on how they helped children ‘catch up in their learning’. (Flutter and Rudduck 2004: 94-95).

Galton *et al* (1999) explain how the introduction of the National Curriculum and the numeracy and literacy strategies have impacted on the structuring of primary school children’s day with more rigid timetables in place. Pollard and Trigg (2000) have also argued that this has led to increase pressure on teachers that has impacted on the quality of teaching and learning. Rudduck and Flutter also discuss how primary school pupils confirm ‘that there is little time to spare in the school day’ (2004:86).

What children say about their learning?

McCallum *et al* indicate that children as young as seven can conceptualise ‘*learning*’ and are ‘able to articulate learning strategies and processes they use’ (2000:275).

Rudduck and Flutter explain that children have little to say about

How differently learning might be structured and what different values alternative approaches might represent (2000:75).

In their experience, they found that children are able to comment on ‘bits and pieces of the curriculum’ and ‘individual lessons’ but did not have much to contribute about variation in forms of curricula. What they found was that children did discuss and comment on the conditions of learning and it is to this theme that we now turn.

The conditions of learning

The conditions of learning (Rudduck and Flutter 2000:76) are the ‘regimes and relationships’ of school life that contribute to children’s sense of self and status as pupils that can impact on their ‘sense of commitment to learning in school’ A sense of commitment or involvement highly important for children’s ‘*identity*’ as learners.

'Self' as a learner in the classroom.

Rudduck and Flutter, (2000); (Jeffreys describe how children say they want to feel valued, maintain a sense of self-worth and feel secure. They are aware of the power of teachers, their vulnerability and of their assessment. Al-Methen and Wilkinson's research with early adolescent pupils suggests that they ascribe their difficulties at school to both external and internal factors. One important premise for this study is

...that pupils' personal feelings and attitudes have a profound impact on their learning (Al-Methen and Wilkinson 1992:26-41).

There is considerable evidence for the association between low self-esteem and underperformance in school. Rudduck and Flutter considered:

...why some pupils hold negative self-concepts and why they tend to regard something that is not '*for them*' (2004:120).

Rutter and Madge (1976) indicate that there are complex reasons why children develop a 'poor self-image' many of which originate from outside the school. Rudduck and Flutter discussed how the perceptions children hold about themselves develop and 'shape [their] identities as learners' with children. One issue identified by children was [not having] enough opportunity to talk to someone about their learning (Rudduck and Flutter 2004:120). A theme identified by Doddington *et al* as influencing children's learning was 'pupils helping other pupils in their learning' (2000:47). They identified how pupils were positive about support from peers, especially when children who were older worked with younger ones. An effective method identified to overcome this being to introduce mentoring Doddington *et al* found benefits for pupil mentors and mentees. Primary school pupils were involved in such peer support schemes.

You are also helping yourself when you teach someone ... you are kind of teaching yourself at the same time (Year 6 pupil mentoring year 3 pupil) (2000:49).

Rudduck and Flutter (2004:124-5) found the issue of *'praise and rewards'* to be a recurrent theme, however the age of children influenced their responses to *'praise'*. Children also indicated how family interest or the lack of it affected their identities as learners; this particular aspect will not be developed here as it is outside the scope of this study.

What children say about their relationships and learning.

Let us first consider what they say about their relationships with the teacher.

Relationships with the teacher

From consultation with primary school pupils, Doddington *et al* (2000) found that relationships with the teacher and having responsibility for their learning were identified as important influences on their learning. Devine also discusses how children's narrative interprets their positioning as subservient to teachers in the school's organizational structure:

The teachers have the most power 'cos they are able to tell the children what to do and if the children don't, they get into troubleI would like to be a teacher 'cos when you are doing art you would be the first to try it out and you get to boss everybody around and tell them they are not so clever (Girl in 2nd class) (2000:313).

Devine explains how teachers did consider the kind of environment that they created for children but that it tended to operate through a *'needs'* based discourse rather than from a *'rights'* based one. She states

...that from children's perspective, teacher concerns regarding their welfare was interpreted through a paternalistic discourse related to the provision of a 'good' education and the creation of an environment which was both nurturing and protective (2000:315).

I feel good about myself in school knowing that someone cares enough to teach you stuff and give you a good education (girl in fifth Parkway) (Devine 2000:315).

Relationships with peers/ friends

Relationships with their peers and the establishment of friendships are one of the most important dimensions of school life for children. Blatchford found that

Pupils at all ages (7, 11 and 16 years) thought social opportunities for contacting and playing with friends were important (1996:272).

In their study Cooper and McIntyre explain that

Students commonly reported that student models were preferred to teacher models because they facilitated the reaching of shared understandings... students finding their peers' transformations of teacher input facilitative of their own understanding and learning (1996:125).

Whereas Pollard in his study of children aged eight to twelve identified

The primary interest at hand related to self, being, maintenance of self image, enjoyment, control of stress, retention of dignity and the enabling interest at hand being peer group membership and learning (1997:180).

Devine describes the:

...continual striving for connectedness and belonging in children's interaction with one another in school (Devine 2000: 315).

It is through these relationships with their peers that they feel a sense of connectedness to the setting and together they establish a counterbalance to adult power. She identifies how the compensatory culture that ensues, the '*child culture*' has been widely researched and is interpreted as a coping response to a highly evaluative context and a means of achieving some autonomy in an adult controlled environment (Pollard, 1996).

a) The importance of friendships.

Rudduck and Flutter (2004) found extensive evidence for the value of the promotion of friendships as a means of support for pupils, in particular those who found some aspect of their school work difficult. There were two aspect to the nature of this support, one being help with actual learning, the other a more caring, supportive role.

At primary level children commented on how friends helped them with their learning by explaining how to work things out e.g.

I'm sitting next to Jane and she helps me if I'm stuck and I help her. Sometimes she helps me know the answer but she doesn't actually, like, say 'Oh it's 36, she says 'Well, how many tens has it got? Now count the units' (Yr 3 girl).

They found that opportunities to work with friends or collaboratively could be more fun or stimulating for pupils

...because when you have to find things out, like in history or geography, you work with friends in doing it and that makes it quite fun (Yr4 girl).

They identified that there were some negative aspects to friendships such as distraction and disruption and negative effects on confidence and learning due to changes in friendship groups and separation from friends. This was particularly marked for younger pupils e.g. when associated with transitions in grouping structures of classes with the move from the Infants to the Juniors.

I didn't think it was fair because I had [always] been with my best friend in my whole life. I've been in her class all the time and she went to [another class] I was disappointed and sad because I've been with her since I started school. (Yr 3 girl).

Borland *et al*'s study also indicates how friendships are an important factor in influencing the emotional and social development of children contributing to their

....sense of well-being and self-confidence. Hence a source of pain [if they went wrong] (1998: 100).

Other studies indicate that children have the ability to differentiate between who they are able to work well with or who hampers their learning.

I work best with Holly doing maths because she doesn't mess about and if I sit with Tom he always jumps up and takes the book all over the place (Yr 3 girl).

Children interest in school.

Blatchford *et al*'s large scale longitudinal study of the same pupils' (aged 7-16) perspectives on school at the age of 7, 11 and 16 years in an inner- city, working class area and school work of children from 7–16 years, the sample comprising British Black (of Afro-Caribbean origin) and white pupils (1996:263) established how children's interest in school subjects changed with age in particular English and Maths (1996:263). At primary level they found Maths to be the most popular subject and English at Secondary level.

Pupils at 7 years are ambivalent about reading, mainly because they did not know the words and become frustrated on their own (Blatchford 1996:285).

In their study they found the interest of seven year old children in school to be ambivalent , with the best thing about school...

....some aspect of the work-42% and playing with friends–35%.

The worst things about being at school for seven year olds

25% thought it was some aspect of work, 26% said it was difficulties with other children, mostly to do with fighting.

Explanations about their own progress and attainment

In an analysis of pupils' explanations for their own attainments and school work they found pupils attributed their progress at school more often to 'internal' factors rather than 'external'. This was especially the case at 16years and they noted that they did take responsibility for their progress. In an evaluation of this finding from interviews with pupils, they identify possible reasons and emphasise how care is needed in their examination:

- Systematic tendency to overestimate internal factors, and underestimate external factors, in accounting for one's behaviour;
- Effort and working hard–tend to be stressed more with teachers as pupils move through the secondary years;

- An awareness of external factors that affect progress at school is actually a difficult and sophisticated task.

They concluded that children may find it difficult to explain how factors outside their control in the school environment and structure could affect their progress. Another interesting finding from their study related to ethnic and sex differences.

...few direct associations between attitudes and attainment (1996:286)

but do identify the possibility of an indirect effect and quote Harter and Connell

..ability beliefs affected engagement in class, which in turn affected attainments in school (1984).

What can be gained from listening to children's perspectives?

On analysis it can be seen that there are many benefits to listening to children's perspectives. Blatchford (1996) specifies how gaining better understanding of the views of pupils about school and school work yields information on children's progress and academic achievement. It is only from listening to their perspectives that their interpretation and prioritization of messages can be understood. Children's self-conception as learners and their involvement influence their learning.

Involving children improves involvement.

Rudduck and Flutter explain how listening to children's perspectives can help children develop a language about learning and about themselves as learners to enable them to actively discuss their school work with their teacher and peers (2000:76). Mc Fadden & Munns reinforce this point:

It is the students themselves who will be able to tell us that they are engaged and who will say whether education is working for them in a culturally sensitive and relevant way. It is at the messy point of teachers and students responding to each other culturally in relation to classroom discourse and assessment practices where we are truly going to see whether school is for them. (2002:364).

Long term effects.

Pollard *et al.*, emphasise that understanding the curriculum from the children's perspectives is important for raising standards:

Standards of curriculum learning will rise further and faster if teachers are able to understand the curriculum as experienced by pupils as distinct from the curriculum intended by policy makers (1997:4).

Whereas Rudduck and Flutter (2000) argue that :

...incorporating student perspectives into educational programmes can assist new goals such as 'learnacy' (Claxton 1999) for life-long learning.

Summary of the dimensions of impact and benefits to pupils of consultation.

The Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) has summarized the various dimensions of impact and benefits to pupils of consultation. From an 'organisational dimension' a stronger sense of belonging to a community can emerge and feelings of respect and self worth from consultation can influence the 'personal dimension'. The pedagogic dimension can influence pupils 'sense of self as a learner' and the 'political dimension', the sense of agency they feel in contributing to teaching and learning and wider school matters (TLRP, 2003:3).

Section summary.

This section has looked at the fundamental importance of children's participation in respecting their rights and ensuring inclusion. Through consultation and involvement children can gain autonomy, share control over the processes of learning and thus take more responsibility for their learning. It is also valuable as a means of encouraging them to think and talk about their learning to reflect; to develop a language about the processes of learning and to understand what is required of them as learners thereby strengthening their dispositions. It has also discussed some of the reasons for the current interest in seeking children's perspectives and the influences on these. It has

discussed what children at the primary stage of their education say about their learning. Although children have limited conceptions about what alternative curricula could be developed, they have plenty to say about '*the conditions of learning*' (Rudduck and Flutter 2000:76). The strand of particular interest to this study being what they say about the influences on their dispositions towards learning. They note power differentials in their relationships with the teacher but value the fact that someone '*cares*' about their education. Relationships with peers and friends are extremely important to children and they identify positive and negative aspects to working with friends.

In the consideration of children's identity as learners an issue that emerged was they felt there was limited opportunity to talk to someone about their learning. Praise and rewards formed a theme to support self-esteem, however children's responses to these varied with age. Children identified how parental influences and complex factors from outside the classroom impacted on their identity as learners. Gaining understanding of these influences, allows a school to support children in their learning. The final part has evaluated the benefits for children and for educational practice of listening to children's perspectives. The next chapter closely examines classroom social relationships.

1.5 Classroom relationships and children's learning dispositions.

This section will first examine the characteristics that are typical of classroom relationships between: (a) teachers and children; (b) children and their peers. It will then consider findings from research on how relationships contribute to the moral order of the classroom and influence children's identities as learners. The importance of the affective dimensions of teaching and learning will be highlighted and the need for foregrounding of relationships in a curriculum for learning. The relevance of the 'ethic of care' to the teaching and learning interaction is explored and a model for increased autonomy of learners proposed.

The characteristics of classroom relationships in the primary school.

Classroom relationships in the primary school can be classified in two main ways; as generally; (a) asymmetric between the teacher and the child and (b) generally symmetric between children and their peers. First let us consider the various facets of teacher-child relationships.

Assymmetric relationships between the teacher and the children.

Relationships between teachers and children are generally interpreted as asymmetric for various reasons, which will now be discussed.

a) Generational social status.

Mayall explains that relationships between teachers and children are inevitably generational due to the age differences and the fact that adults have a higher status to mediate the structures...

...the ideologies, policies and social practices that control children's lives (2002:39).

This refers to the power that adults have in interpreting and taking action to organize children's lives.

b) Teacher as an authority figure.

In the classroom the teacher is an authority figure, whose role is to maintain order, interpret the set curriculum and organise its presentation or (re)presentation to the children. S/he will also select the pedagogic paradigm, classroom rules, daily routines of classroom practice and the level of autonomy afforded to children.

c) Teacher as mediator.

The teacher is a mediator who leads children into the processes of learning through the use of psychological tools, language, sign and symbols.

d) The teacher as a role model.

As a role model a teacher may influence children at an intellectual and social level: Katz explains how adults are not always the best intellectual role models for children and do not always model the curiosity of learners. This was discussed in the section on learning dispositions. Dispositions to learn are less likely to be acquired through didactic processes than through modelling and action.

As a social role model, the teacher demonstrates socially acceptable behaviours and reciprocity in interactions and relationships with children and colleagues. In these interactions s/he may act as a social referent. In classroom interactions between the teacher and individual children indirect messages are communicated regarding children's social acceptance. Sadker and Wentzel (1991:7-8) discuss how teacher preference affects children's peer relationships. Ladd *et al.*'s (1999) study also found biasing influences of teacher-student interactions on peers' liking for children.

There were similar findings from a large scale study of third and fourth grade students by Hughes *et al* in the U.S. A. that looked at

....the relation between peer perceptions of teacher-student relationship quality and peer perceptions of a child's positive and negative attribute, they found that in elementary classrooms, the teacher serves as a social referent for children (2000:2).

They explain how children in a classroom are able to observe the interactions between a teacher and a particular child possibly more often than they have the opportunity to interact with that particular child.

The quality of the teacher student interaction becomes part of the shared information classmates have about the child, thereby promoting a group consensus about the child's attributes (Hughes *et al* 2000:3).

A further dimension of social reference is of children's gender categorization. Denzin explains how 'the gendered identity is an interactional production' (1977:29). Hughes *et al* endorse this point and discuss how meaning attached to specific categories such as male and female are gained from experience (Hughes *et al* 2000:3). They also identified gender differences in teacher support, with girls being seen as receiving

...higher levels of teacher support than were boys who were perceived as more likely to be involved in conflictual interactions with teachers.
(Hughes *et al* 2000:8).

e)Teacher as assessor.

The most significant power differentials in relationships between children and teachers emerge in the teacher's role as assessor. In this role the teacher makes a judgement on children's *work* and on their ability, attainment, behaviour and progress.

e) Teacher as an attachment figure, carer and protector.

Bowlby's (1983) attachment theory explains how a child needs to form a secure '*attachment*' to a parental figure or primary carer to form a secure base, so that their security needs are met. The complementary contribution of the primary carer to the relationship being described as '*bonding*' (Bowlby, 1983) and involving responsiveness to the child and their needs. Bowlby's theory explains how infants internalise their interactions with primary carers into

...‘mental representations of the self-which result in unique attachment styles comprising stable patterns of cognitions and behaviours in close relationships and social interactions (Al-Yagon & Mikulincer 2006: 2).

When a secure base has been formed the child is then free to explore their surrounding environment to interact with others to form new attachments with siblings, other relatives, peers, non-familial caregivers and teachers (Owens *et al* 1995; Weiss 1998). Al-Yagon and Mikulincer explain how individuals with a secure attachment style will have a history of positive interaction experiences and supportive attachment figures whereas those who have mental representations of negative experiences with unavailable or unresponsive attachment figures will exhibit avoidant, anxious and disorganised styles (2006). They discuss that there is broad agreement that the quality of the relations a child forms with the mother affects the quality of relations with teachers. However, fewer studies have examined the role of teacher-child relationships among school age children. As an adult who takes responsibility for children in the absence of their parents, the teacher has a caring and protective role towards children at the primary level. Woods (1977) gives three interrelated reasons for the emotional feelings that can develop between teachers and children at the primary school stage and in many cases this is reciprocated. Firstly, children are at an early stage in their development and socialization, secondly the smaller size of the primary schools as compared to secondary enables a community feeling to be more readily established. Thirdly, traditional teaching methods have been more child centred dating from the Plowden Report (1967).

As Jackson (1987) argues teachers develop strong feelings about the children in their class such as apprehension, irritation and delight. Pollard (1985) also discusses the pleasure that teachers have from working and being with children. One of the

characteristic features of the teaching workforce at the primary level in the U.K. is that it is predominantly female. The female role is associated with caring.

f) The conflictual nature of the classroom teacher's role.

Woods sees the teacher's role as producing conflict in meeting the affective and care needs of children, the demands of their teaching role while maintaining order and curriculum objectives and of performance to please children, parents, school local and central government.

Symmetrical relationships between children and their peers or friends.

Relationships between children, peers and their friends in the classroom context are generally more symmetrical ones than those they form with adults. Furman and Buhrmester (1985) discuss how children's status in relationships with peers is more equal in 'terms of power' than in those they form with adults (in Siegler *et al* 2006:496). Tharp and Gallimore (1991) discuss how there can be 'symmetry in thought' between children and that synergy may be a feature of a learning group. Peers provide a counterbalance to adult power and evidence of reciprocity can be observed in the pride they show in each other, the praise, criticism and mutual help they afford one another.

Children's abilities to develop positive feelings towards themselves and others are dependent on their emotional states and children who are emotionally healthy find it easier to form positive relationships with peers and adults (Trawick-Smith, 2000: 292). Whereas children who are 'abused, neglected or rejected' have more difficulties in initiating interactions and forming positive relationships. Hartrup also explains how peers form a source of emotional support, advice and companionship for children. He emphasises the importance of such support, and the contribution of peer relationships

to children’s emotional and cognitive development and to the kind of adults we become. He states

...the single best childhood predictor of adult adaptation is not school grades, and not classroom behaviour, but rather, the adequacy with which the child gets on with other children. Children who are generally disliked, who are aggressive and disruptive, who are unable to sustain close relationships with other children, and cannot establish a place for themselves in the peer culture are seriously at risk (1992:1).

Katz and McClellan (1997) have identified how these risks can be related to mental health, difficulties at school, low attainment or future employment prospects.

McClelland and Katz (2001:2) developed the following checklist.

Table 1. 3. 2. Social Attributes Checklist Peer relationship attributes.

The Social Attributes Checklist-3. Peer relationship attributes.	
The child:	
1	Is usually accepted versus neglected or rejected by other children.
2	Is sometimes invited by other children to join them in play, friendship, and work.
3	Is named by other children as someone they are friends with or like to play and work with.

a) The development of peer interactions during the primary years.

Social initiative is necessary for the development of peer interactions during childhood, and for the development of relationships. According to Erikson, adults can foster *initiative* through providing supportive environments that promote ‘industry’ and prevent ‘inferiority’ (Erikson,1980:87). Trawick-Smith describes the development of peer relationships during the primary years;

- Interactions increase and peer groups become larger;
- Children’s peer relationships are changing considerably, as they are developing intellectually, are less ego-centric and able to analyse the needs and form opinions about others.

- Their growing cognitive and social competence means that their ‘peer relationships and interactions become far more complex’ (Trawick-Smith 2000:439).

b) Linkages between friendships, sibling and peer relationships.

Sanders (2004) refers to the work of Dunn and McGuire, (1992) in comparing the difference between peer relationships ‘characterised by peer popularity and status’ and friendships and both types of relationships with those of siblings. He explains that the key difference is in the higher level of ‘*intimacy*’ and ‘*dyadic exchange*’ of siblings and ‘*to some extent friends*’ than of ‘*peer relations*’. From theories of learning it has been identified that sibling relationships are seen as important as a model for future symmetrical relationships with peers and friends outside the family

It is a transposition of a relationship from one context (the family) to another (the community) (Sanders 2004:104).

The theories of social learning, attachment and personality all lead to the same conclusion that there are linkages between the different relationships (Dunn and Mac Guire, 1992 cited in Sanders, 2004). It therefore follows that the kind of relationships developed by siblings in the home will influence the kind of relationships developed by children with their peers and friends in the classroom.

The equality and closeness between peers discussed by theorists [such as Piaget, Vygotsky, Sullivan] is most often found in children’s friendships (Siegler *et al* 2006:497).

Friends are extremely important to children and some of the characteristics associated with friendships are mutuality, co-operation, negotiation, intimacy and reciprocated positive interactions. Friends feel affection for one another and like to spend time with each other. Hartrup (1996) explains how friends in the school years are able to communicate more effectively and work together better than those who are not friends.

c) Group work and peer collaboration during learning.

Group work in a classroom is important to provide opportunities for peer collaboration during learning. This was recognised by Kutnick:

If modern curricula are to be given the chance of becoming effective, teachers must consider their classroom as a social context, create effective pairings and groupings and mandate learning responsibility between children.
(Kutnick,1988:233

Relationships as the basis of the moral order of the classroom.

Findings from research indicate that relationships between teachers and children are the basis of the moral order of the classroom. They establish the climate in which teaching and learning occurs. The ORACLE Programme of research (Observation of Research in Classroom Learning evaluation) observational study of primary classrooms 1970, replicated in 1990's found ...

.. the existence of a set of relationships between the different teaching styles and the various pupil types (Galton *et al.*, 1998).

Such patterns corroborate with Pollard's findings. Pollard's study ' Goodies, Jokers and Gangs' identified the 'working consensus' that developed during teacher-child negotiations in terms of routines, conventions and expectations in the classroom context (1997:177).The classroom strategies of teachers and pupils were often found to mesh together. In the most common form of this, 'routinised teaching' was associated with 'pupil drift', with each party avoiding risk and challenge. From this perspective low expectations were seen as the product of coping strategies which were mutually acceptable to teachers and pupils—a means of achieving classroom life.

These patterns of interaction resulted in social differentiation of responses and achievements for children in the classroom. Pollard and Filer, 1996's longitudinal

studies of '*The Social World of Children's Learning*' emphasised the significance of social factors on children's learning outcomes. The main focus was on

the influence of inter-personal processes in [the] home, classroom and playground (1996:3).

They concluded that children develop a sense of identity as learners through the various learning experiences they encounter in different learning contexts. Their development of a sense of 'self' as learners influenced by the 'formal' and 'informal' outcomes of those contexts. The relationships with parents or carers and siblings are highly important influences on children's sense of 'self' as learners. The parental role was identified as :

mediators—helping their child to interpret new experiences and acting as a significant reference point with regard to engagement with learning and the meaning and valuation of outcomes (1996:3).

Leading on from that study (discussed in Section 1.3) they focused on '*The Social World of Pupil Careers*' (1999) and added on to the findings of their previous studies concentrating on children's identities and learning dispositions. Their major finding relevant to this study is that:

Pupils strategic biographies are dynamic, as they actively negotiate a path through successive teacher and classroom settings, shaping, maintaining and actively evolving their identity and careers (2000:4).

The significant point of interest to the study is the crucial role of the relationship with the teacher in influencing the child's sense of 'self' as a learner through the

Different power relations derived from a change in pupils structural position in a class, different teacher expectations or organisation for learning, different teachers' interpretations of pupil strategies (2000:4).

Joint involvement episodes

Edwards and Mercer's study emphasised the mutuality of the processes of teaching and learning. They explain how teaching can be interpreted as *a long conversation* (1987) with 'not only horizontal linkage but vertical linkage with previous joint

action' (Blumer 1969:20). Edwards and Mercer (1987: 1) discuss and analyse how knowledge is exchanged in the school classroom and their belief that

All education is essentially about the development of some shared understanding, some mutuality of perspective.

Their research examines education as a '*cultural communicative process*' (1987:1).

They state in relation to school

.. their institutional *raison d' être* is always their function of passing on part of the accumulated knowledge of a society, and evaluating children's success in acquiring this knowledge..... The boundaries of educational knowledge are continuously marked out, and reinforced, in classroom discourse. Schools have their own epistemological culture, and it is with the perpetuation of ... that culture (1987:2) [that their study is concerned with] .

Goldstein states that cognitive growth is 'inherently relational' 1999:649). She continues to explain how processes such as 'scaffolding of learning 'and 'co-construction' of mind exemplify the significance of interpersonal relations between individuals, pairs or groups.

The affective dimensions of teaching and learning.

Bowman *et al.*, work has identified the relationship between the teacher / caregiver and the child as the most important quality in children's early learning.

If there is a single critical component to quality, it rests in the relationship between child and the teacher / caregiver and in the ability of the adult to be responsive to the child (2001: 319).

The important aspect of the relationship identified here is the '*responsiveness*' of the adult to the child. In Section 1.3 it was identified that a socio-cultural context for influencing children's learning dispositions needed to ensure children's inclusion, well-being and strong identity as learners. A context that is inclusive will foreground relationships, children's well-being, involvement and social competence.

Relationships to ensure children's inclusion and well-being?

In order to create a strong sense of social identity for learners a caring, protective environment is needed with high levels of reciprocity in relationships between adults and children. The *Te Whariki* Early Childhood Curriculum explains that:

The feeling of belonging ...contributes to inner well-being, security and identity. Children need to know that they are accepted for who they are (New Zealand Ministry of Education 1966).

From a sense of belonging, children develop feelings of connectedness, well being and security. In the identification of adult qualities that are facilitative towards learning Rogers (1983) has described these as an educator who is genuinely interested in children's learning, is accepting of children as learners and values them affording trust. A further quality is the need to demonstrate empathy towards children and show understanding of their innermost feelings. The concept of adult *engagement* discussed earlier was developed by Bertram (1995) to describe these facilitative qualities in adults.

Engagement may be defined as a set of personal qualities which describe the nature of the educative relationship between the adult and the child. These personal qualities will affect an adult's ability to motivate, extend, enhance and involve children in the learning process (Pascal and Bertram 1996:96).

In creating a context where children's well-being, involvement, connectedness and sense of belonging is fostered the affective dimensions of teaching and learning need to be considered.

Vygotsky's argued: .

The separation of the intellectual side of our consciousness from its affective, volitional side is one of the fundamental flaws of all of traditional psychology. Because of it thinking is inevitably transformed into an autonomous flow of thoughts thinking themselves. It is separated from all the fullness of real life, from living motives, interests and attractions of the thinking human. (Vygotsky, cited in Wertsch, 1985: 189)



However, Vygotsky's published research and writings did not explore fully the affective aspects of consciousness. The fact that Vygotsky died at such a young age meant according to his pupil Boshovich that the

Theoretical development of the problem of affect and its relationship to intellectual thought... was never completed and expressed in print (Boshovich, 1977:15).

Goldstein, (1999:648) continues this theme and discusses how the literature on cognitive development has focused on the cognitive aspects of development, the affective dimensions of teaching and learning interactions being unexplored even though interpersonal relationships are seen as highly important. The literature does highlight the significance of interpersonal relationships e.g. emotional bonds and feelings that can exist between teachers and their pupils, especially at the primary stage of education. To explore the affective dimensions of the teaching – learning interactions which are far more rarely considered, than the cognitive dimension I draw on Goldstein's (1999:648) application of the ethic of care. What is new and exciting about Goldstein writing is the explication she brings to the discussion and the links she establishes between the disciplines of psychology and philosophy. She draws on the concept of the ethic of care a premise from feminist moral theory in particular Nel Noddings' notion of a 'caring encounter (Noddings 1984: 657). Held explains how the ethic of care is a notion that is relevant to experiences that are important in women's lives and 'neglected by traditional moral theory' (1987: 114).

In the first instance let us consider how the teacher's interpretation of her role, values, conception of pedagogy all have a strong influence on the kinds of messages that are communicated in the classroom to the children. This will also influence which messages are prioritized. The perceptions of childhood and children held by the teachers as adults in a particular setting, (discussed in Section 2.2) will inevitably

influence their interactions and subsequent relationships with the children in their care. Culture has a major impact on the kind of relationships established. Kutnick argues that culture has an overriding impact on relationships formed. He states:

...that relationships (including moral relationships) are dominated by culture cannot be argued against (1988: 109).

A curriculum that foregrounds relationships to influence children's learning dispositions.

A curriculum that foregrounds relationships and reciprocity is needed to strengthen children's learning dispositions. What exactly do we mean by reciprocity? Reciprocity entails the capacity to interact productively with others. It is not something that always happens naturally, it often needs to be guided and supported. Claxton has examined the kind of mind needed by children for learning in his words 'the learning power mind' (2002: 16). He has identified four aspects of children's learning that are important in developing the mind to learn. He refers to these as the four R's of learning power. The first of these is '*resilience*' which he defines as being ready, willing and able (Carr 2001:10) to lock onto learning. The second is helping children to become more '*resourceful*': able to draw on a wide range of learning methods and strategies as appropriate. The third is building the ability to be '*reflective*'; to think profitably about their learning and themselves as learners. And the fourth task is to foster '*reciprocity*': making use of relationships in the most productive, enjoyable and responsible way. In this study '*reciprocity*' forms an important focus and its components of imitation, interdependence, empathy, listening and collaboration. In order to create environments which empower children as learners high levels of reciprocity are needed with the foregrounding of relationships as part of the curriculum. Kutnick states that:

Effective social relationships do not just happen, but need to be structured to promote inter dependencies. Such a promotion requires planned and structured efforts by the teacher (1988:171).

He explains that

Externally motivated relationships (especially of co-operation) are distinctly different from those naturalistic model of relationships possess, that close relationships start from a sense of trust and dependence (1988:173).

It is through language and classroom discourse that relationships are formed and reciprocity established. To strengthen children's learning dispositions the teacher's discourse with the children needs to be positive, warm, caring and consistent to empower learners. Cobb et al interpret the teacher's role during an activity is to ensure that children make the specific 'social action' required for the particular learning episode e.g. this could be selecting a particular strategy for solving a problem or transferring skills from a previous episode or even moving forward in their 'zones of proximal development'. Activity Theory has been developed to examine these processes .Crawford suggests that *Activity theory*

....describes the process through which knowledge is constructed as a result of personal and (subjective) experience of an activity (1991:5).

'*Social action*' during the processes of learning represents the myriad ways in which children think and learn. Jaworski (1993) explains how 'social interactions' of children in classroom activities 'are a small part of their enculturation into the required '*social action*'.

Children as masterful, involved, autonomous and competent learners.

Children become masterful, autonomous and competent learners when the classroom

Discourse to stimulate 'social action' is empowering.

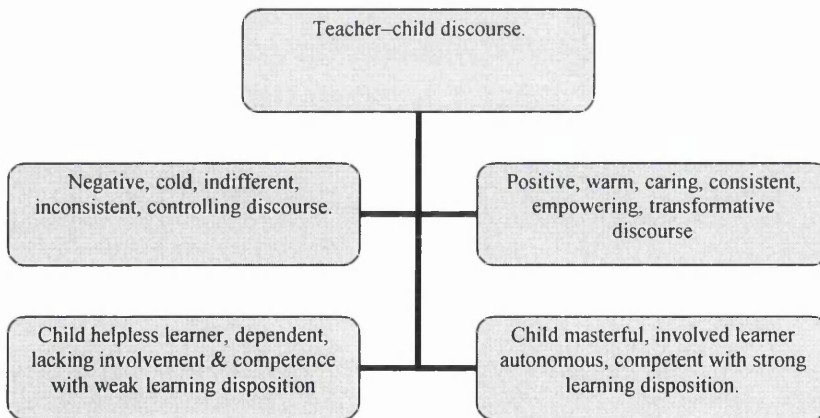
Empowering of learners.

The empowerment of learners is only possible when certain conditions are met.

- a) There is a need for the learners to feel congruence with the environment and confidence with learning practices.
- b) There is a need to extend a degree of autonomy to children.
- c) The teacher needs to relinquish some of the power and transfer this to the learner. Teacher and learner positions in the classroom may be interchangeable, reciprocal in productive learning relationships.
- d) An '*ethic of care*' underlies teacher-learner interactions and relationships.

Classroom discourse that foregrounds relationships and strengthen children's learning dispositions.

Figure 1.3.4. Teacher-child discourse and children's learning dispositions.



(Morris 2006).

Decentering of the teacher's role

Trent (2003) reports on an effective action research project he conducted as a practitioner -researcher in an elementary first grade classroom in America. Although there are limitations to the findings of the study, as it is by a sole-practitioner over a

short duration [second half of the school year.] there are findings which have relevancy to other classroom contexts. Trent's aim was to improve his classroom practice in response to the contemporary theories of learning and the promotion of learner-centered classrooms, curricula, and instructional strategies. His concern was:

..from the first bell to the last, [he] was the center of the school day. Much like the conductor of an orchestra, waving a baton for all to begin, pacing progress with symbolic gestures, and ordering completion at will, with as much or as little fanfare as desired, I had centered myself in the classroom (2003:297).

On reflection he felt that he needed to '*decentre*' his role as a teacher by giving increased responsibility to the children and encouraging '*collaborative participation*'.

This theory being developed from syllogistic reasoning based on the premises...

...classrooms are traditionally teacher centered; moving the teacher from this center opens up 'space'; therefore to '*center*' the learner means necessarily to '*decenter*' the teacher (Trent, 2003: 295).

Transferring some control to children for their learning is necessary to make them autonomous learners.

Autonomous learners.

Children are autonomous learners when they are involved, masterful, competent and exhibit volition in their learning and take some control over their learning. An example of volition and interdependence which are elements of reciprocity are discussed by Newman in relation to their self-regulation of learning. Newman (2000) looked at one particular aspect of self-regulated learning by children i.e. 'help-seeking' by children in dealing with academic difficulty, a process parents begin, and

teachers and classmates continue. He explored help-seeking that was 'instrumental' for children's learning and stated:

It has been demonstrated that when children monitor their academic performances show awareness of difficulty they can not overcome independently, and exhibit the wherewithal and self-determination to remedy the difficulty by requesting assistance from another individual, they are exhibiting mature, strategic behaviour. (Newman 2000:351).

The question that then arises in the discussion is why some children exhibit these attributes whereas others do not [omitting individual difference in ability from the analysis]. Newman discusses the extent to which children feel their needs are being met in various contexts such as the home and school 'is related to the development of inner resources that influence actions' (Newman 2000: 354). To explain children's psychological need in relation to adaptive strategies self-regulated learning and help seeking behaviours he draws on Connell's (1990) concept of 'inner resources' (or self-system processes) from self-systems theory (Newman (2000: 353) He identifies three personal perceptions or feelings that are associated with self-regulation and involvement as opposed to disaffection. These being 'feeling related, autonomous and competent', he expands on the interpretation to include a fourth feature 'affective-motivational resources' in addition to cognitive, social skills and understandings. A further confirmation of the significance of the quality of interactions and relationships between teachers and children. Since self-regulation is one dimension of the concept of meta-learning one could possibly infer that similar psychological needs would be associated with other dimensions of meta-learning such as the strengthening of learning dispositions.

Section summary.

This section has examined the characteristics of relationships between (a) teachers and children; (b) children and peers and discussed findings from research studies to illustrate how relationships form the basis of the moral order of the classroom. The affective dimensions of teaching and learning were considered and the need for a curriculum to foreground relationships to influence children's learning dispositions. Goldstein's (1999) application of the '*ethic of care*' to the understanding of teachers' and children's interactions and relationships during co-construction in learning is proposed. In supporting children as autonomous learners a model for increasing learners' autonomy by 'de-centering' the teacher's positioning in the classroom is advocated.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

This chapter will explore theoretical themes relevant to the study. First let us examine themes relevant to children's development and learning. Wood states that here are various theories on how children learn, each with their own central ideas about what is

...central to psychological change such as genetic endowment, personal experience, relations with peers and equals or social interactions with adults, teachers and experts (1996:4).

First let us examine the areas of child development relevant to learning.

Child development and learning.

Cognitive, social and emotional development of children is relevant to this study.

Cognitive development involves:

..perception, attention, language, problem solving, reasoning, memory, and conceptual understanding.

whereas social development includes areas that are just as diverse:

emotions, personality, relationships with peers and family members, self-understanding, aggression and moral behaviour (Siegler *et al.*, 2006:129).

Changing circumstances in children's lives influence their emotional develop and

Siegler explains that children's:

'self-esteem or self-evaluation changes with cognitive development and experience and the events that make children feel happiness and pride tend to change accordingly (2006: 383).

In a classroom context the emotions that accompany learning are highly important to children's social identity as learners. Siegler highlights the significance of peer relationships and achievements to their lives. Next we move forward to consider some theories of learning that connect affect and learning. These are the motivation theories.

Motivation.

Motivation is defined by Katz in terms of underlying dispositions .Motives are

There are four prominent theories of student motivation in educational psychology: self-efficacy theory, attribution theory, self-worth theory and achievement goal theory (Seifert 2004:137). Although developed in most cases in relation to student learning, it is probable that they can be applied by inductive analogy to children's learning. Seifert discusses how these theories of motivation link and overlap even though each theory is generally presented separately. Through examining their combined effects 'a coherent view of student motivation emerges which has students' emotions and beliefs at its heart (Seifert 2004:137). Understanding student self-perceptions of competence and sense of agency is necessary to understand their motivation (Seifert 1996, 1997). Recent work has shown that students demonstrate ' patterns of beliefs and emotions which serve to direct behaviour' (Seifert 2004 : 145). When presented with a task, students make judgements about the task and respond emotionally based on task and personal characteristics. It is these emotions that dictate subsequent behaviour or motivations (Seifert & O'Keefe, 2001). Thus '*asks and task*' conditions will generate an affective response which is manifested in the students' behaviour. 'Asks' referring to how a task is presented and 'tasks' the cognitive element of the task itself.

Developing a theoretical framework for the study.

In constructing a theoretical framework for the study, the initial approach towards design adopted was sociological ; to explore how the relationships in the socio-cultural context of the classroom influenced children's learning dispositions, through the elicitation of the participants' perspectives on these processes and discover some of the wider school influences. Further reading on the concept of '*learning disposition*' (discussed in Chapter 1.) led to the field of cognitive psychology and

some concern that possibly the focus of the research was shifting radically away from its sociological roots. Let us now examine some of the themes from developmental psychology.

Discourses and themes from developmental psychology that have strongly influenced methods for children's education.

Burman (1995) emphasises the strong impact that developmental psychology has had on people's lives, their ideologies and practices as well as on those of the state. The 'effects' are so great as to be 'almost imperceptible'. The enduring themes from developmental psychology are those of an individual child, normative development and of an universal childhood. These approaches to the study of childhood have been critiqued for their lack of consideration for culture. In the past the role of the child was interpreted as '*passive*' with a period of socialization by adults to prepare children for life as adults (Mayall 2002). Mayall explains how since the industrial revolution the approach to childhood has been one of scholarization

In terms of power relations, parental power was mediated by the desire to encourage children's control and autonomy; teacher power directed towards conformity (Mayall 2002:14).

The behaviourist perspective of psychology and the philosophical approach of epistemology were dominant in educational practice and elements of these approaches still influence practice today. Behaviourism became popular in the post war period but because of its inadequate explanation of mentalist concepts, language acquisition and readiness for learning, it has subsequently fallen out of favour (Wood 1996:10–14). The behaviourist approach towards classroom interaction explored the effects of reward systems or positive reinforcement to influence children's behaviours and actions. Donaldson (1978) has identified some of the dangers of these approaches to

children's learning. This issue is developed in the discussion on ability conceptions (see Chapter 1 , Section3).

Perret Claremont *et al.*, (1993) contest the belief that teaching can be improved by simply understanding the child's individual psychological processes and gaining knowledge of the processes of child development, on the following grounds.

First, the child's psychological functioning reveals itself within social relationships (e.g. with teachers and psychologists) that elicits certain types of behaviours, and these behaviours cannot be understood independently from the context in which they emerge. Second, identifying the cognitive and social processes that permit the transmission and learning of knowledge in culturally defined settings is a fundamental endeavour that raises vital questions concerning the nature of knowledge and culture (1993:41).

Cognitive constructivists.

Cognitive constructivists such as Piaget referred to the child as a 'lone-scientist', with the individual child making sense of his/her own experiences whilst interacting with their environment. The learning processes involving making sense of 'individual' experiences through 'assimilation' of new knowledge and its 'accommodation' with previous knowledge leading to 'equilibration' a state of balance where individuals balance 'assimilation' and its 'accommodation' to reach a state of 'equilibrium' or 'disequilibrium', when the new knowledge does not fit comfortably with what was previously understood (Siegler *et al.*, 2006:131). New modes of thinking were described by Piaget as 'mental operations' (Ford 2004:9). Piaget's theory of cognitive and language development identified four stages of ability children go through in making sense of their world. The sensory-motor, the pre-operational, the concrete operational and the formal operational (Elliott *et al.*, 2000). Piaget's theory thus stressed the importance of nature and nurture, continuities and discontinuities and children's active contribution to their own development. In terms of Piaget's stages of development most of the children (7-9years) participating in this study would be at

the concrete–operational level of cognitive development. Athey’s concept of ‘schemas’ was developed from Piaget’s ideas (2005:87). Schemas are defined as:

.. patterns of repeatable actions that lead to early categories and then logical classifications (Athey 1990:36).

Contrary to popular belief, Piaget did not disregard the social aspects of learning and there are instances in his writing where he refers to both individual and social.

... there is no longer any need to choose between the primacy of the social or that of the intellect : collective intellect is the social equilibrium resulting from the interplay of the operations that enter into all cooperation (Piaget, 1970, p.114 in Cole and Wertsch 2002:1).

The work of Piaget has been challenged by theorists who have criticized him for not giving consideration to the context of learning (Donaldson 1978) and to volitional factors (Alfrey *et al.*, 2005) such as

..‘drive’ what is it that makes children want, or need , to assimilate new ideas , and third , whether cognitive progress is the result of children’s efforts to ‘make sense’ of and resolve cognitive conflict (2005: 7).

Further criticisms of Piaget’s theories are identified by Siegler *et al.*, (2006:143); these are the overstatement of the consistency of children’s thinking, the underestimation of children’s cognitive competence , vagueness regarding cognitive processes that give rise to children’s thinking and the mechanisms that produce cognitive growth and the underestimation of the contribution of other people , as well as culture.

Socio-Constructivism.

Passive, individualistic models of cognitive psychology have been superseded by the more active and social models of constructivist and social–constructivist theory. Perret Claremont *et al.*, emphasise the importance of understanding how ‘the acquisition of socio cognitive knowledge in specific contexts’ impacts on cognitive development. In their first round of experimental studies which they refer to as ‘first generation

studies'. They were mainly concerned with the impact of social factors on cognitive performance and the active use of social resources by individuals to solve given problems in 'institutional settings with cultural aims, such as schools' (Perret Claremont *et al.*, 1993:42). They explored social interaction and its impact on cognition and found that there were two necessary conditional factors. Firstly the subject must have the ability to benefit from the interaction and secondly that the gap between the social interactants is not too large (Perret Claremont *et al.*, 1993:42 cited in Resnick *et al.*, 1993). *These premises are consistent with an interactionist and constructivist perspective of cognitive development whereby social and cognitive factors bring about sequential and cumulative progression in mental organization.* This led to their 'second generation research studies' where the social interaction itself became the unit of analysis rather than the 'cognitive response of the child'. Data from these studies revealed interesting features of the social interaction not as contributory to cognitive transformation in the child but as the mediating process.

What they found was that there were 'recurrent misunderstandings between these two interlocutors'. The significance of social factors as an integral part of the process by which people create meaning during cognitive processing became an important focus.

Perspectives from cultural psychology.

There has been a major shift within developmental psychology from the traditional normative approach to an appreciation of the uniqueness of each child's 'developmental niche' (Super and Harkness 1986). Cole and Wertsch (2002) explain how a child's 'developmental niche' is created by the parents and community members for the newborn, the niche's nature (including the types of relationships that are formed and deemed necessary) based on the adults' cultural past and aspirations for the child's future. They state

The niche is simultaneously a socio-physical location a cultural medium, and an interpretive frame. Children in human developmental niches are both natural and cultural entities at the start of the post-natal development (Cole and Wertsch, 2002:3).

Socio-cultural theories.

Socio-cultural theory has emphasised the cultural dimensions of learning and the fact that there is no universal end point for child development. Siegler *et al.*, explains that:

...socio-cultural theorists emphasize that much development takes place through direct interactions between children and other people-parents, siblings, playmates and so on—who want to help children and children as social beings shaped by and shaping their cultural context (2006 :160- 161).

Vygotsky's theories emphasised the importance of a socio-cultural approach to cognitive development. A socio-cultural perspective is important to value and understand learning across cultural contexts and of the role of culture in influencing how individuals learn and think. A major premise of this study is based on the Vygotsky's general genetic law of cultural development (Vygotsky, 1981:163) which explicates the importance of social relationships and intermental exchanges for higher level thinking and Vygotskian interpretation of culture.

.....the social origins and social nature of higher (uniquely human) mental functioning in the individual can only be understood by examining the social and the cultural processes from which it derives (Vygotsky 1981:163 in Wertsch and Tulviste 1999:13).

From a Vygotskian perspective individual mental functioning can only be understood by examining the social and cultural processes from which it derives. Rather than presupposing that mental functioning first occurs within the individual it gives '*analytic priority*' to intermental function. Intramental functioning is seen as being a derivative of and emerging through a mastery of social processes (Wertsch and Tulviste 1999:14). For the development of higher mental functioning interaction with adults and more experienced peers to acquire the 'psychological tools' to mediate their 'mental processes'.

Human mental processes, just like human labour are mediated by tools. But these are special, psychological tools such as language, signs and symbols. Humans are not born with these tools, just as they are not born with the tools of labour. These tools are invented by human society, and they are acquired by children in the course of interpersonal communication with adults or more experienced peers. Having been acquired and internalized, these psychological tools begin to mediate children's mental processes (Karpov 2003:139).

Vygotsky's interpretation of mental functioning is as '*action*' (Wertsch, 1991) that may be performed by individuals, dyads or larger groups. He argued that teaching should consider and be aimed at a child's zone of proximal development.

The zone of proximal development (Z.P.D).

The concrete application of the social dimension of Vygotsky's 'general genetic law of cultural development' is seen in the notion of a zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Haenen *et al.*, cited in Kozulin *et al.*, 2003: 251). The ZPD refers to the potential for children's learning, the zone representing the difference between what they can do on their own and what they can achieve with the help of others, whether these are teachers or more capable peers. The formative aspects of education are a central feature of the ZPD. It is through language the teacher supports a child to move forward in their learning within the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky's account of human mental development was based on several 'genetic domains', ontogenesis, phylogenesis, socio-cultural history and micro-genesis (Wertsch 1985). Within this account the separation of the processes of 'organic growth' and maturation of the child and 'the cultural growth of behaviour' through 'the mastery of devices and means of cultural behaviour and thinking' that is significant (Vygotsky and Luria, 1930 : 3-4). Vygotsky's explanation of culture emphasises its powerful effect and how it impacts on human mental functioning even when an individual is acting in isolation, the inherently social or socio-cultural aspects are part of human mental

functioning as they are socially evolved and involve the application of socially organised cultural tools (Wertsch and Tulviste 1999).

Culture is the product of social life and human social activity. That is why just by raising the question of the cultural development of behaviour we are directly introducing the social plane of development. In his analysis of culture Vygotsky identifies mediation as a characteristic feature of human action - mediation by tools both cultural and psychological. Examples of psychological tools that he identified were language, various systems for counting; mnemonic techniques; algebraic symbol systems; works of art; writing ,schemas, diagrams, maps and mechanical drawings; all sort of conventional signs.

A critique of Vygotsky's analysis is his evolutionist stance which could be interpreted as ethnocentric , interpreting some cultures as more advanced whilst other are seen as more primitive. Of particular relevance to this study is his discussion of

...how forms of teacher–student intermental functioning encountered in the institutional setting of formal schooling provide a framework for the development of conceptual thinking.

From his perspective individual mental functioning can only be understood by examining the social and cultural processes from which it derives. Rather than pre-supposing that mental functioning first occurs within the individual it gives 'analytic priority' to intermental function, intramental functioning is seen as being a derivative and emerging through a mastery of social processes (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1999:14).

Rogoff's socio-cultural perspective describes the notion of 'guided participation' during the learning process, to include words as well as actions to

Encompass the routine, tacit activities and arrangements of children and their companions. (1990:16).

Her view of the learner is as an ‘apprentice’ and active learner participating in :

Organized, cultural activity with the guidance and challenge of other people (1990:19).

Her belief is in the mutuality of individuals and context. She views

All human activity as embedded in context, there are neither context free situations nor contextualized skills (1990:127).

Rogoff’s (1990) studies have described how children acquire knowledge and skills through participation in ‘communities of practice’ rather than through formal instruction. Rogoff explains that:

Each community’s valued skills constitute the local goals of development the direction and goals of development are inextricably linked to understanding of the process (1990:12).

Culture is a significant concept in the study, it forms a link between the past and the present and it influences values and beliefs. The transmission of culture is non-biological, it has to be learned and the transmission is through language. Althey (2003) explains how adults communicate their cultural interpretation of the world to children and how we need to learn about their history and their culture in order to understand them. Culture is often interpreted as a framing mechanism for people’s meaning making through the different representational schemes.

Through practice and action, and through schemes provided by adults and peers, the child grows into understanding the representations and symbols of the culture ‘*moral*’ and ‘*conventional rules*’ (Bruner and Haste 1987:18).

Rogoff’s interpretation stresses the importance of

...individual effort or tendencies as well as socio- cultural context in which the individual is embedded and has been before conception (1990:28).

She stresses how biology and culture are mutual aspects of the system within which children develop and how culture itself is not static but dynamic and is formed by the social action and efforts of people ‘using and adapting tools’ that are part of the culture of their ancestors (1990 :16).

Rogoff discusses how it is:

..essential to view the cognitive activities of individuals within the cultural context in which their thinking is embedded. The human heritage is notable for the cultural legacy of values and skills, which each new individual inherits from near and distant ancestors and practices with the assistance of caregivers and the companionship of peers (1990:42).

Lave and Wenger theory of 'Situated learning' also emphasises the quintessential social character of learning. Lave and Wenger's (1991: 54) concept of '*situated learning*' emphasises the broader socio-cultural context of human learning and not only the immediate social context. They discuss how learning

It takes as its focus the relationship between learning and the social situations in which it occurs. (Lave and Wenger 1991: 14).

Their research have revealed how there are marked differences in the way people solve problems e.g. mathematical problems in a school setting and in real life experiences. Kaartinen (2003:2) explains

The socio-cultural learning theories situate learning within the interplay of micro and macro level processes by examining social activity in its cultural and historical context .

From this perspective the learner is interpreted as a

Cultural and historical subject embedded within and constituted by, a network of social relations and interactions (Kaartinen , 2003: 2).

In the empirical Case Study 1 of the nature of participation processes in science classes representing three age levels (Kaartinen and Kumpulainen , 2001) identified two themes during data analysis

The first theme being the application of cultural tools in collective activity,

and

.. the second the processes of meaning making of a scientific phenomenon. In the elementary school setting, they identified the following three topics within the framework, the negotiation processes of role and status, cultural tools as mediators and negotiating meaning for a cultural phenomenon (Kaartinen, 2003: 4).

Social learning theory

Bandura's thinking was informed by the ideas of Piaget and Vygotsky and he also placed emphasis on language. Bandura theory explains that the way children feel about themselves is not innate or inherited it is learned. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory interpreted social and personality development as learning processes. The primary mechanisms emphasised were observation and imitation with less emphasis on reinforcement. The later version of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory incorporated cognitive elements of observational learning such as :

...attention to [to the behaviour of others] encoding what was observed, storing the information in the memory, storing the information in the memory, and retrieving it some later time to reproduce the behaviour observed earlier.

Bandura interpreted the process of children's development as 'reciprocal determinism' with the child as an active subject. Reciprocal determinism refers to concept that children's learning is a two-way process with the child experiences of interactions determining what kind of experiences he seeks in the future.

Siegler *et al.*, explain this concept as..

...every child has characteristics that lead him or her to seek particular kinds of interactions with the external world. The child is affected by these interactions in ways that influence the kind of interactions he or she seek in the future (2006:346).

Sociological approaches towards the study of children's learning.

In an early review of sociological research studies of primary schools Pollard (1990) explained that the focus of sociological analysis has been on issues of social differentiation. The emphasis shifting from issues of social class to issues such as race and gender in the accumulation of more refined theory. However, what emerged from earlier sociological studies of the classroom was:

..that learning processes are at best tangential to issues such as typification, group formation and the consequences of differentiation (1990:242).

Pollard identified an absence of a theory of learning for the primary school and argued that in order to understand the complex social processes and phenomena a cross-disciplinary approach was needed (1990: 241).

Theories of the socialisation of the child.

There have been various approaches to the study of the '*child*' and '*childhood*' and the socialisation of children as learners. These have produced divergent discourses, moral and political themes in relation to children's positioning in society and more specifically in school settings. Corsaro discusses two traditional models for the socialisation of the child.

The first is a deterministic model in which the child plays a basically passive role (1997:9).

This view describes the appropriation of the child by society, to gradually train the child to become a 'competent and contributing member of society' (1997:9). Corsaro discusses how these traditional theories of socialisation have marginalized children and viewed them as somewhat apart from society, needing guidance and training by adults to become 'fully functioning adults' (1997:8-9). Within the 'deterministic' model there are two perspectives of society, the functional one which views society as one with balance and order where children need 'training and preparing to fit in to contribute to that order'. The second model is 'reproductive' focusing on the perpetuation of inequalities in society and the disadvantage faced by many children in accessing cultural and other resources. Although the reproductive model proposed by theorists such as Bourdieu (1977) give greater consideration to the 'social actor' compared to functionalists and advance the concept of '*habitus*', a set of pre-dispositions 'to act and see things in a certain way' to influence or reproduce the tendencies of people to maintain their 'sense of self and place in the world' (Corsaro

1997:11). Corsaro emphasises that children do not simply 'internalize society' 'they are born into' (1997:110 and explains that both these models have been

...criticized for their over concentration on the outcomes of socialization, their underestimation of the active and innovative capacities of all members of society, and their neglect of the historical and contingent nature of social action and reproduction (Corsaro 1997: 10).

Jenks also states how the

.. unilateral manipulation of children within socialisation theories condemns them to the permanent conceptual status of absence presence (1996:10).

Jenks and Corsaro emphasise the lack of consideration for the child's active negotiating role in these traditional theories and neglect of their political status in society. The second '*Constructivist Model*' interprets childhood as a period for appropriation of society by the child (Corsaro 1997:11)

..a constructivist model, [views the child] as an active an eager learner ... the child actively constructs her social world and her place in it (1997:9).

From this constructivist model a new paradigm for the study of '*childhood*' has emerged in the 20th Century Western World that denotes major shifts in the views of childhood and children. James, Jenks and Prout explain how this relatively new departure in the interpretation of childhood that involves the suspension of taken for granted meanings and

..assumptions about the existence and causal powers of a structure that makes things, like childhood, as they are (1999: 26-27).

Social constructivism involves new exploration of phenomena to discover how they are constructed. James *et al.*, explain how socio-constructivists

..go back to the phenomenon in consciousness and show how it is built up (1999: 27).

The approach is thus essentially hermeneutic and emphasising plurality and the foregrounding of 'diverse constructions' (1999: 27). As an approach to interpreting

childhoods it relates well to cultural studies and discourse analysis. James *et al.*, explain how social constructivists

...are more likely to be of the view that children are not formed by natural and social forces but rather they inhabit a world of meaning created by themselves and through their interaction with adults (1999:28).

The principles proposed by James, Jenks and Prout for the study of the socialization of the child involves three closely related premises; the first stipulates that it is more valuable to consider 'childhoods' rather than 'childhood' as the experience is unique to each child according to their social and cultural positioning (James, Jenks and Prout, 1999 :140). Despite the global and local differences of children's lives and experiences one of the key dimensions that is associated with childhood is the concept of '*generational order*' which forms a core organizing concept for the social study of childhood (Prout 2002:70).

The term is used to refer to the systematic pattern of social relationships between adults and children within which children are located and constituted as a social group (Prout 2002:70).

The third premise emphasises that children are not passive beings, but '*social actors*' with the capacity to influence their own lives. Although as active subjects they have the ability to influence and negotiate their own lives, this is limited and can only be understood 'within the parameters of childhood's minority status'(Mayall 2002 : 21). It is a model which gives meaning to the child's positioning and political importance.

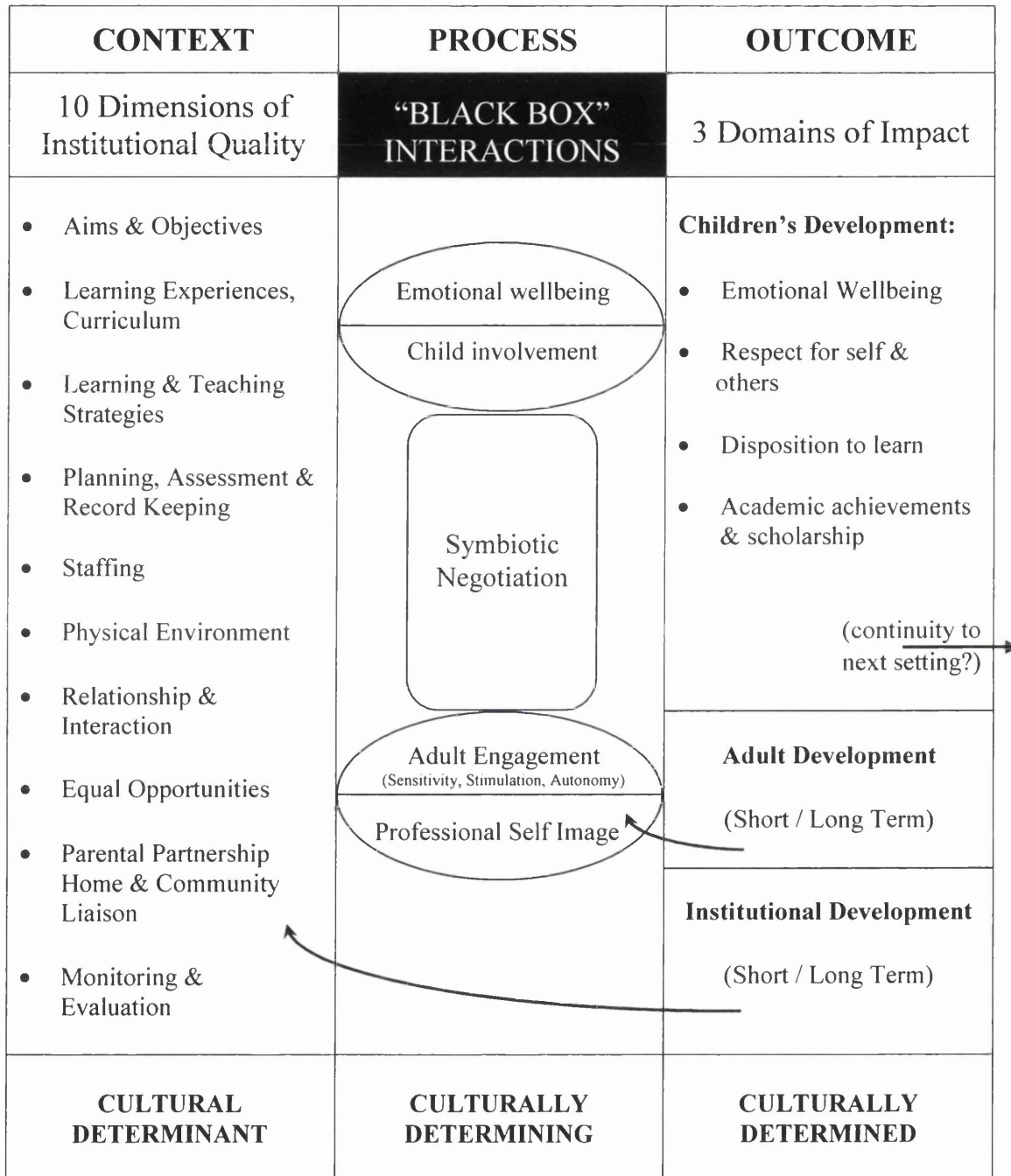
A conceptual framework to focus on classroom interactions.

To reconcile ideas from the different disciplines and maintain the focus on micro-level interactions and the influences of classroom relationships on children's learning dispositions Pascal *et al.*'s (EEL 1996) framework was used. Their conceptual framework '*Developing Effectiveness in Early Learning Settings*' (Fig.2 EEL 1996:19) was developed for Early Years Practitioners for evaluating quality to evaluate the quality of their provision and practice in early years settings. Although devised for Early Years' practitioners, its principles are equally applicable to other stages of education. The framework is a *Context, Process and Outcome* model, and illustrates the centrality to educational processes of interaction and its culturally embedded context. Pascal *et al.*, identify ten dimensions of 'Institutional Quality', the one of significant interest to this study is the dimension of 'Relationship and Interaction'. 'Process' they analyse as the 'Black box' interactions (McNamara, 1980, Black and Williams) which involve measured levels of 'adult engagement', 'child involvement' and their mutuality as a process of 'symbiotic negotiation' which again contributes to culture depicted in the 2nd column of the model. The 3rd column of the model, the 'Outcome' has three domains of impact, these are 'Children's Development', 'Adult Development' and the 'Institutional Development'. For this study the outcome of interest is one of the four identified for 'Children's development' domain namely learning dispositions.

This study forms an exploration of 'one strand' from their framework in an actual classroom context. The first section of the strand in the context column is 'relationships', the process strand is the 'interaction' and the outcome strand of interest is learning dispositions. (1996:19). Leading on from this basic conceptual

framework and its focus on interaction, an interactionist perspective immediately seemed to be the most appropriate for this research.

Figure 5. A Conceptual Framework for Developing Effectiveness in Early Learning Settings



Action perspectives and Interactionism .

The fundamental principle that human group life exists in action means that the empirical methods for its study must tune in to that action with a methodological perspective that can make sense of that action. Best explains how the focus of the 'action perspectives' is 'on understanding how sustained social action is possible' (2003:109). He continues to discuss how social action is 'symbolic' and 'reciprocal' in nature and can be understood through observing 'human behaviours' (2003:109). Best explains how 'social actions' are human behaviours that have an intention behind them' and that these behaviours can be interpreted from observations.

Behaviour has meaning for us because the words we use, the movements of our bodies and the gestures we make are symbolic in nature: they are representations of our intentions (2003:109).

Babbie explains that

[an]... interactionist paradigm sees social life as a process of interactions among individuals (1992:56).

Interactionism as a perspective is not of British origin and has developed from North American and European sociology. Its roots are closely bound to the study and growth of Sociology at the University of Chicago in the period after the Second World War (Atkinson and Housley, 2003). In a British context it has a 'hybrid' form and its development is associated with eclectic methods of qualitative field research. Atkinson and Housley explain how as a perspective it is not 'characterized by a single, consistent line of development' (2003:2). Two main traditions of interactionism are identified by Fisher and Strauss that are based on diverging intellectual traditions (1978). One is associated with the work of W.I Thomas and Robert Park and a collective tradition of ethnographic research in the pursuit of social reform. The second tradition of symbolic interactionism was based on the work of George Herbert

Mead (1934) as the methodological approach of symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969). This study of two classroom groups where the symbols of action are important features fits more closely to the symbolic interactionist perspective of Mead and Blumer than to interactionism's ethnographic strand. For Blumer the core focus of sociology is social action.

[He] insisted that the subject matter of sociology is social action. His positive appeals on behalf of interactionism were ...also a critical dialogue with sociologies based on social system (Atkinson and Housley 2003: 8-9).

Blumer believed that to adopt other perspectives e.g. a structural perspective would only give a partial explanation of events or to examine culture from a static perspective would give an incomplete picture (1969). With other methods social interaction is often taken for granted and treated as having little significance in its own right. Social interaction is the process which forms human conduct and it is an interaction between actors and not between factors imputed to them. The interactionist perspective was selected for this study for several reasons. Firstly, its interest in social interactions and relationships and their influences on children's learning dispositions in classrooms contexts indicated the suitability of such a paradigm. To explore the nature of relationships between teachers and children, children and their peers and to note the bi-directionality of classroom interactions such an approach was essential.

Atkinson explains how

...qualitative research gives a view of social life as a process of interaction over time, it occurs in a social context [and] looks at the meaningful nature of social life and how social actors interpret the world around them, it looks at culture (shared understandings and meanings) and is particularly interested in language as the primary vehicle of everyday life (April 1993, lecture).

The second principle for the selection of an interactionist paradigm emanating from the importance of context for understanding the participants' interpretation of meanings strongly suggested such an approach. Primary school classroom contexts are

the naturalistic settings where the day to day processes of teaching and learning can be observed and experienced. Riehl explains how the focus of interpretative research is always to elicit the meaning

..held by actors regarding their actions, whether latent or explicit (2001:117).

and how the interpretation of social life is highly valued.

Although various interpretative frameworks may differ in their epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises, they share in common the core belief that interpretation of social life is valued highly and valued more than explanation and prediction (2001:117).

People's interpretation is based on their meaning making and is closely related to their socio-history, culture and experiences.

..intuitively sensitive to their meaning making, a '*verstehende*' approach (Meltzer *et al.*,1975:58).

A third reason for the selection of an interpretive paradigm was therefore to meet the challenge of research from a socio-cultural perspective. Riehl discusses how

Understanding and designing optimal learning settings and community contexts for learning is perhaps the greatest challenge facing cognitive psychology and education today (2001:128).

She explains how individual experiences in social settings are structured through interactions of social positioning such as class, privilege, race and gender which are also '*...reflected and refracted by culture*'(O'Connor 2001: 160).Each person's responses reflect their particular niche in the context where they are situated.

Symbolic Interactionism.

The term 'symbolic interactionism' developed by Blumer whose philosophical perspective follows that of Dewey. Dewey rejected the philosophical notion that :

One could speak of a system of reality separate and distinct from the individual members of a society... [and believed that] ...humans, their environment and their thoughts are interrelated aspects of a larger whole (Meltzer 1975:16).

The thoughts of George Herbert Mead were a further influence on Blumer. Mead called his approach 'social behaviourist'. Drawing on Dewey and Charles Cooley, Mead stressed 'the conscious mind and the self-awareness and self-regulation of social actors'. (i.e. the individual who performs an action). Mead saw the Self as emerging from the social interaction of humans in which the individual takes on the role of the 'other' and internalises the attitudes he perceives in both real and imagined others. The interaction of an individual's self-conception ('I') and the generalized, perceived view that others have of the individual ('Me') is central to Mead's sociological viewpoint. Mead asserted that by continually

....reflecting on ourselves as others see us we become competent in the production and display of social symbols. Mead also believed that, while human nature is part of evolution and nature, the importance of language and symbolic communication as an aspect of this evolution is such as to free human action from natural determinism (Harris 2001:1).

Meadian social philosophy and social psychology is associated with the view of social change as a 'general evolutionary movement', however differing from natural evolution because of the unique characteristic of language that humans possess. For Mead

..the crucial difference, lay in the distinctive human characteristic of language and its consequences (Atkinson & Housley 2003:6).

While other organisms may respond through the reception and transmission of stimuli, and through gesture, the 'significant symbols' of human language are unique enabling humans to

..transcend concrete limitations of stimulus-response reactions (Atkinson & Housley 2003:6).

It is through language that culture can be created and transmitted; language forms a channel for the exchange of experiences, development of ideas and sharing of meanings (Atkinson & Housley 2003).

Blumer advocates symbolic interactionism as a method that aims to

Respect the nature of the empirical world and organize a methodological stance to reflect that respect. This is what symbolic interactionism strives to do (1969: 60).

His explanation of the nature of Symbolic Interactionism is based on three premises:

1. Human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings things have for them. Things being everything the human being may note in his world e.g. physical objects books, chairs, other human beings such as [teacher, parents].;institutions, as a school or a government, guiding ideals e.g. individual independence and honesty; activities of others e.g. such as their commands or requests and such situations as an individual encounters in his daily life.

2. That the meaning of such things arises out of the social interaction that one has with one's fellows.

3. These meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters (Blumer 1969:2).

In symbolic interactionism the meanings that things have for human beings are central in their own right, based on the philosophical ideas of realism: meaning being the

.. psychical accretion brought to the thing by the person for whom the thing has meaning., meaning being " an expression of constituent elements of the person's psyche, mind or psychological organisation (Blumer,1969:4).

This contrasts with the perspective of some other methods in the social sciences where the meaning

.. is either taken for granted and pushed aside as unimportant or it is regarded as a mere neutral link between the factors responsible for human behaviour and this behaviour as a product of such factors (Blumer, 1969:2).

The lodging of the meaning in psychological elements limits the processes of the formation of meaning to whatever processes are involved in arousing and bringing together the given psychological elements that produce the meaning. Such processes are psychological in nature, and include perception, cognition, repression, transfer of feelings and association of ideas (Blumer 1969:4).

From the perspective of symbolic-interactionists meaning is produced through the process of social interaction, the actions of the 'other' operating to define the 'thing'

for the person. Meaning is viewed as a social product formed through creation by the definitions of actions of people when they interact. However, meaning is not simply the direct response of a person. The use of meaning by a person in his action involves an interpretive process. This interpretive process can be seen as passing through two stages:

The actor indicates to himself the things towards which he is acting; he has to point out to himself the things that have meaning through an internalised social process i.e. actor is interacting with self in a process of communication with 'self'.

Through the process of communication with self, interpretation involves a process of handling meanings. Interpretation can be explained as a formative process in which

...meanings are used and revised as instruments for the guidance and formation of action. It is necessary to see that meanings play their part in action through a process of self interaction (Blumer 1969:5).

Even though action belongs to the acting individual, it is always carried out by them

...with regard to the situation in which they have to act (Blumer 1969:6)

Symbolic Interactionism as a paradigm for study of classroom processes.

The establishment of classroom contexts and cultures 'for' and 'of' learning are shared process for the interlocutors and within the interactionist paradigm these 'social acts' can be explored and made explicit. The paradigm is most appropriate as it allows the participants to communicate their own interpretations and explanations of their beliefs and values. It also allows them to identify what they interpret as most important and prioritise. The fact that classroom contexts are essentially places of group action required a perspective that could encompass the action of all individuals in this dynamic field and of the interconnectedness of their lines of action. In a classroom context 'actions' belong to the acting individuals but are carried out by

them with regard to the situation they are in and in full view of others i.e. for pupils—their peers and teacher plus support staff; for teachers—pupils, support workers, colleagues etc.

The important role of language.

Language is necessary for children to differentiate between concepts and to make these meaningful by giving *them* 'ontic' status. 'Ontic' refers to the way in which a situation is construed or represented (Bruner and Haste 1987:16-17).

The understanding of language involves 'illocutionary features' such as 'reading' the intentions of the speaker's utterance (Bruner and Haste (1987:15). Feldman discusses how there is epistemic and ontic status in both cognition and language. By 13 months boys and girls behave differently, they are effectively operating in their different representational schemes.

Through practice and action, and through schemes provided by adults and peers, the child grows into understanding the representations and symbols of the culture '*moral*' and '*conventional rules*' (Bruner and Haste 1987:18).

To understand how meaning is shared between individuals or groups through language the discipline of applied linguistics and the social theories of discourse are relevant. Discourse can be understood as 'individual acts of language', 'language in action' according to Foucault

... 'windows, which allow us to make sense of, and 'see' things (cited in Danaher et al., 2003:31).

Hall analyses 'discourse' as language that produces knowledge and explains that since all conduct is based on the meanings held by individuals 'all practices have a discursive aspect' (Hall 1992:291). Fairclough discusses that early application of discourse analysis as a linguistic discipline was based on a 'static view of power relations' with scant attention to the negotiation and power struggles within language (1992:20). However, in the field of social theory and analysis Foucault's work

established that discourse is the link between language and practice. One of the themes of his work relating to the application of knowledge in specific settings and the relationships to power 'in the regulation of social conduct in practice' (Wetherell et al., 2001:75). For Foucault, the power of discourse is manifested in its influence 'on our thoughts and actions' (Danaher et al., 2003:31). Fairclough argues:

Discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or 'constitute' them and position them in different ways as social subjects (1993:3).

Discourses of educational ideology and practice position teachers and children (pupils) with varying amounts of power in the State Educational System. Fairclough's analysis of how discourse can be used to bring about social change are relevant to the study. In the field of education changes in 'language practices' have influenced the discourses of practice. Their 'commodification' is associated with:

'new discourse practices' (such as marketing), and to adopt new discourse practices within existing activities (such as teaching) (Fairclough 1992:6-7).

The effect of such new educational discourses on practice can be hegemonic and constrain teacher freedom.

Chapter summary.

This chapter has identified areas of child development relevant to learning and some prominent theories of motivation. It discussed the development of a theoretical framework for the study and the relevance of a cross-disciplinary approach combining socio-constructivist and socio-cultural approaches. Symbolic interactionism was selected as the paradigm for the research design. For a closer examination of the dynamics of interactions Social theories of discourse were introduced.

CHAPTER 3–METHODOLOGY.

The study is a micro-sociological, exploratory, qualitative research study in the Symbolic Interactionist tradition. This chapter will discuss the research design and give an overview of the methods used. It will outline the various stages of research from access negotiations, ethical considerations, selection and implementation of data collection methods to debriefing sessions prior to exit from the field and strategies for data analysis. The study is essentially a classroom based study to explore how learning processes are interpreted and understood by the various participants. The key players are the teachers and the children of the classrooms studied. However, as discussed in the Introduction some whole school processes are also initially explored.

Research Design.

In the theoretical framework Chapter 2, it was established that:

- A socio-cultural approach would be suitable for the research;
- Pascal *et al.*, (1996) conceptual framework would allow a cross-disciplinary approach and an analysis of bi-directional classroom interactions (teacher↔ child / children) (child / children ↔ peer/s);
- Symbolic interactionism and a socio-constructivist perspective would be appropriate for the study of interactions in a classroom;

A qualitative methodology.

Leading on from the specified theoretical framework, a qualitative methodology was selected as most appropriate for the research-design. This allowed a more open-ended, approach than quantitative methodologies would have permitted. A qualitative approach:

a) Enabled participants' to communicate their own interpretations.

Atkinson gives a brief statement to summarize qualitative research and highlights its ability as a methodology to elicit '*meaning*' as interpreted by the participants and the importance of language, he explains that:

...qualitative research gives a view of social life as a process of interaction over time, it occurs in a social context [and] looks at the meaningful nature of social life and how social actors interpret the world around them, it looks at culture (shared understandings and meanings) and is particularly interested in language as the primary vehicle of everyday life (April 1993, lecture).

b) Ensured equity and democracy for all participants.

A major guiding principle for the study was to ensure equity and democracy for all the participants in the implementation of a naturalistic study. It was particularly important for research with children. Grieshaber explains that:

Research activity needs to recognise the heterogeneity of participants in the research process and the fact that our current social conditions are characterized by plurality, difference, ambivalence and contradictions (cited in Mac Naughton *et al.*, 2001:143).

The above quotation illustrates how in ensuring equity for participants, the recognition of society's diversity is crucial for respecting democracy; this is particularly poignant for research with children as a minority group.

c) Empowered children as research participants to communicate for themselves.

Empowering data collection methods were selected for the research with children which considered their democratic participation, vulnerability as participants and to

communicate for themselves their actual ‘*lived*’ experiences, without intimidation or coercion. Mayall explains how children as a:

...disadvantaged minority group with little say at all in political processes affecting their lives require particular attention as research participants (1999:10).

d) Appropriate to answer the research questions.

A qualitative methodological approach was deemed the most appropriate to answer the main research question and gather information relevant to each of the subsidiary questions. The table below illustrates the methods used to gather data relevant to each of the research questions.

Table 3.3 Research Questions and Methods Selected.

Q.1.How do the head-teachers and class-teachers view children as learners in the classroom contexts?	In-depth interviews with the Head-teachers & class-teachers.
Q.2.What messages are communicated by the class-teachers to socialise children as learners? Are these consistent with the school ethos? What messages are prioritised?	Interviews with the class-teachers & classroom observations
Q.3. How do children interpret, prioritise and respond to these messages?	Writing activity and Focus-group discussions with children from both classes. Classroom Observations.
Q.4.How do the children perceive their own learning and that of their peers?	Writing activity and Focus-group discussions with children.
Q.5 How do social interactions in the classroom with the class teacher and peers influence children’s learning dispositions??	Classroom observations of: a) teacher interactions with whole class, small groups &/or individual children b) peer- group interactions.
Q.6What promotes or limits positive pupil, teacher and peer interactions in the classroom?	In-depth interviews with the Head-teachers & class-teachers. Classroom observations.

Methods.

The research formed a case–study of two primary school classroom settings in Wales; one a composite class of Year 3 and 4 children in a Welsh-medium Primary School and the other a Year 4 class in a Multi-Cultural, but predominantly English-medium Primary School. As discussed in the Introduction (see Parameters of the study page 8) to limit the study’s scale the research was designed to focus mainly on the classrooms.

Data Collection Levels.

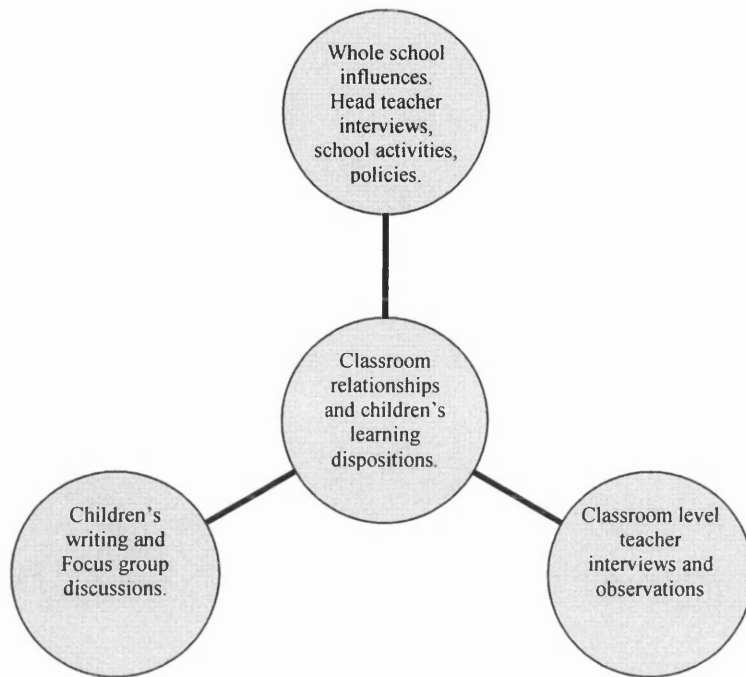
Data was gathered at three levels; (see below for explanation), whole school, classroom and from children’s perspectives. The diagram illustrates how data gathered at these three levels inform the central research question. The Welsh and English research instruments are included in Appendices 1 and 2.

Whole school level.

There were two reasons for gathering data at whole school level:

- The first was to gain an understanding of the whole picture and the impact of school effects on classroom processes. e. g. priorities of the school community in relation to children care, well–being and learning.
- The second reason was to understand how the school’s ethos contributed to the culture of learning communities established and the schools’ priorities in terms of the socialisation of children and their learning dispositions e.g. values and patterns of thought established and developed.

Figure 6. The three levels of Data Collection.



Observations of whole school events.

Observations were conducted of some whole school events in which the children in the two classes participated. These were typical events such as assemblies, celebrations, thematic events linked to particular subject areas subject and visits of guest speakers to the schools.

In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews.

In depth semi structured interviews are a method of gathering rich, detailed data specific to a particular person. In depth-interviews were conducted with the Head-teachers and Class-teachers in both settings. The Welsh and English interview schedules are included in Appendices 2 and 3. All the interviews were tape-recorded so that data could be transcribed and analysed at a later stage, allowing the researcher opportunities for reflection on the issues that emerged. The interviews in the Welsh school were conducted through the medium of Welsh and those in the English school in the English language. The four interviews conducted were informative, positive experiences with information given readily and access to school policies and documentation e.g. prospectuses. This method was selected in preference to other methods as the most effective way of gathering detailed, valid information fairly quickly, without undue interference to their busy schedules and work demands. A semi-structured schedule was developed to maintain the focus of the interviews but sufficiently open for participants to identify items not included in the schedule and to explain the reasoning behind certain school policies, procedures and practices. It also allowed the researcher to probe and develop through further questioning, areas of interest as they emerged. The interview schedules were issued to participants in advance, to enable them to reflect on the questions before answering. This was felt to be important to improve data quality. They did in fact jot down notes in advance of the interviews on the schedule as an '*aide memoire*'

Head-teachers' interviews.

In depth-interviews were negotiated and conducted twice with both head-teachers involved. These were arranged at mutually convenient times, at the beginning and towards the end of the of the field work period. The busy nature of school life made it

necessary to make appointments well in advance for interviews with the head-teachers who often attended meetings away from the premises. The schools belonged to cluster groups who met regularly and there were other meetings e.g. with the Local Authority etc. Interviews with the head-teachers took place in their offices, without interruption with only the Head-teacher and researcher present.

Class- teachers' interviews.

Class-teachers were at the setting on most days, appointments were again needed as teachers had little free time during the school day when they were not in contact with the children and during class time they were in almost constant demand by the children. Appointments were made and interviews conducted after the school day had ended in one case, and during lunchtimes in the other case. This was necessary to ensure that the interviews were not overheard by the children as issues of a sensitive and confidential nature could emerge. It also meant that the teacher could relax and concentrate fully on the interview without interruption from the children.

Strengths of the in- depth semi structured interview method.

The strengths of the method was that it allowed '*face to face*' interaction between the researcher and the interviewees; it also enabled the teachers to explain the reasoning behind their practices so that a grounded understanding was gained by the interviewer. This would not have been possible in an instrument such as a pre-planned questionnaire or through observations alone.

Limitations and critique of the in depth semi structured interview method.

Silverman explains that a question and answer sequence provides 'a defining characteristic of interview talk' (1994:117). He continues by explaining the asymmetry of the interview situation based on the 'interactional rights' of this sequence.

The chaining rule gives a great deal of space to the interviewer to shape the flow of topics, while interviewees depend on being granted a right to ask questions themselves (Silverman: 1973 cited in Silverman, 1994).

The researcher was aware of her influence on the symmetry of the interview situation and also of the possibility of interviewee's giving answers to the questions that they felt were the appropriate ones as opposed to the truth or the reality of practice. Supporting interviews with observational methods in the research design were a way of verifying the data.

Classroom observations.

Most of the morning lessons conducted in both classrooms were formal whole class sessions with a didactic style of teaching. Free description observations were conducted of these lessons and the shared discourse of teacher child interactions tape - recorded. Free description and target child observations of small group activities and interactions and ongoing relational processes between teacher ↔child and children↔ peers in these more informal sessions were also conducted and recorded.

Children's level.

The writing activity and focus group discussions with the children.

In developing methods to elicit children's perspectives participatory methods were needed that helped to focus children's attention on the research questions formulated, whilst allowing them freedom to communicate their perspectives without feeling intimidated. A structured writing activity in worksheet format was devised, an activity format that was familiar to children in a classroom. The focus group discussions were arranged to immediately follow the writing activity. The purpose of these group discussion were to allow further time for the children to explain their answers to the questions on the worksheets and to clarify any ambiguity, develop any issues that emerged and to interpret their handwriting when this was not very legible. The Focus

group allowed children to gain support from their peers and activate synergy of response in relation to the discussion .It was also formed a way of checking the consistency and reliability of the information gathered.

Four worksheets with questions relevant to the research topic on each were developed for children to complete. The worksheets were presented in large lowercase print, that would be clear and age appropriate for young children to read, with the questions formulated in a simple sentence structure and vocabulary (See Appendices 2 & 3). The children were asked to answer the questions and write down their views on the worksheets. Their initial reaction to the activity was to think that it was a test. They were reassured that this task was not to assess their ability in any way and that there were no '*wrong*' answers, so that they would not worry about this. They were also informed that if they did not feel comfortable with any of the questions, they didn't have to answer them or if they did not want to continue they were not obligated to proceed.

The tasks were conducted in two separate sessions with two worksheets completed during each. The children took an interest in the tasks and seemed to enjoy the experience of being out of the classroom and in a small group situation gaining extra adult attention. They were given sufficient time to complete two work sheets comfortably in each session without having to rush. The activity was carried out with a small group of children away from the classroom itself in S1 the only available spare room upstairs and in the other setting in the library area on one occasion and in a small corner near the hall on the other. It was important for the children to be away from the classroom setting so that they could express their opinions freely. After the children had finished the writing, a focus discussion group was held. The focus group sessions were tape-recorded and the material from the tapes transcribed. This allowed

the researcher the opportunity to reflect and interrogate the data at a later stage for analysis. The sessions conducted were as follows:

S1. Worksheet writing activities (2 worksheets per session 4 sessions) followed by two Focus group sessions with Yr3 and another two with Yr4 children.

S2 Worksheet writing activity (2 worksheets per session -2 sessions) followed by two Focus group sessions

Research methods with children.

Robertson (2002:56) questions what '*weight*' can be given to children's answers in relation to learning. She identifies some of the issues that may influence and emerge during research, such as;

... children repeating what they frequently hear their teacher encouraging. They may be conscious that their teachers want them to use these behaviours and a natural response could be to reproduce them when asked by a significant adult (2002:56).

Therefore, the participatory methods developed enabled the children to express themselves freely without creating anxiety or concern, whilst at the same time allowed them space for reflection. The aim was to elicit their perspectives and to understand their prioritisation of learning messages rather than to communicate what they felt the researcher wanted to hear, or the researcher's secondary interpretation of their social world.

Selecting the age group of the children.

In selecting the age group of the children for the study, their expected linguistic competence was an important consideration. Steven's large scale study on '*Children Talking Politics*' produced a clear summary of children's thinking and ability 'at different ages and stages in their thinking' (1982:149). She explains that:

...seven year olds revealed thinking that was intuitive and symbolic, and ideas were discrete and unstructured.

Whereas

...at eight years old, children showed greater competence in using language to describe 'political events' and made more attempts to do this. A longer concentration span was in evidence, as were improved memory functions. Thinking was intuitive.

She also discusses how she found 'in the mixed group' that at seven and eight years ...the boys dominated the discussion and the girls accepted this (1982:149).

However, by the age of nine the children had developed the ability to be more 'balanced' in their discussion. She found that stronger members of groups emerged but there was no dominance by the boys as was the case with the younger mixed age groups and how some children showed evidence of a 'strong commitment to social ideals' (1982:150).

Worksheet writing activity and focus-group discussion with children.

The selection of a writing activity for as a method of data collection with children has many advantages. As Steedman (1987) discussed, there is the pressure of audience on verbal response. She states

...this kind of pressure of audience disappears to some extent when children write (1987:104).

The idea of developing a series of questions for the children to answer in the format of a work-sheet, was selected as a method for several reasons. Firstly, it was a method that was familiar to them in a classroom setting so that it would cause them little concern. Secondly, worksheet completion is an active process that gave value to children's individual contribution and allowed them time to reflect on what they had written.

Thirdly it was an empowering, active process that gave them freedom to express themselves directly and communicate the '*social meaning*' of learning in their classroom context. Steedman explains how

...writing [offers] children a means by which they can consciously reflect on the form of linguistic production and evolve opinions about its contents (1987: 92).

She continues and emphasises the effort involved in writing for children and introduces the powerful concept that writing allows children to consider and re-consider their ideas and develop them as they proceed.

The delay and reflection involved in using an alphabetic writing system, which demands of most eight-year-olds pause for thought about the relationship of sound to symbol in spelling many words, the time and effort involved in putting the marks on the paper, both make the idea of permanence and manipulation available to children [to re-consider their ideas, rub or cross-out and improve and change] (1987: 92).

Steedman also highlights the value of the process of writing for children.

Most theories of literary analysis are in any case, concerned with relationships between the writer and the text, and the text and the audience, whilst in children's writing we need to look for what writing does for the writer, not what the writer does to it, nor what it does for us (1987:98).

Focus group discussion can also be referred to as 'focus group interviewing' (Berg 1995) or as it involves a group, 'group-discussion' (Kruger, 1983). The role of the researcher is as facilitator and arbitrator to initiate and direct discussion among group members rather than between them and the researcher (Sarantakos 2005:195). The facilitator plays a key role in leading and guiding the discussion and ensuring the participation of all group members. Sarantakos identifies the following qualities a facilitator needs:

- adequate theoretical and methodological knowledge and general intellectual capacity;
- experience with group work as well as the ability to guide the discussion effectively;
- the capacity to create an environment that will encourage involvement, control dominating participants and keep the discussion moving in the right direction;
- leadership qualities
- the ability to develop a warm atmosphere among group members (2005:197).

For this study the order of the group discussion followed the structure of the questions developed for the writing activity. This allowed the children further time for reflection

on their writing and the opportunity to explain their perspectives to the researcher, clarifying any ambiguity and possible limitations in their linguistic competence. Sarantakos (2005) discusses the advantage group discussion offers in giving access to the construction of meanings while participants interact with each other within the group, the breadth and variation of those meanings and the way the group negotiates them.

A further advantage of the use of focus group discussion with children was that it was less intimidating than individual interviewing would have been. This type of discussion also allowed individuals to comment on what other members of the group had said or develop the ideas of others.

Selection of children for writing activity and focus group discussion.

School 1.

As the class is composed of year 3 [aged 7-8 years] and 4 children [aged 8-9 years] groups, boys and girls from both years were selected for writing activity, followed by a focus group discussion. The fact that the class had a larger number of boys than girls meant that more boys were included overall in the sample. The year 3 (B3) group was selected to represent a cross-section of ability and consisted of 2 boys and two girls and all the year 4 to include of five boys and 3 girls who sat together in one group.

School 2.

Eight children were selected from the Year 4 class [aged 8-9years], 4 boys and 4 girls, from a cross section of the ability groups in the classroom. The children requested that they wanted to hear the discussion on the tape. This was actually played back to them, and they were truly fascinated to listen to their own voices. This was a valuable experience in itself in that it allowed children to check that they were happy with what they had said. They enjoyed the experience of answering the questions on the

worksheet and were co-operative and discussed their opinions together during the focus group discussion. The whole process was repeated a second time with the second batch of work sheets followed by focus group discussion. All the children seemed comfortable with the questions and appeared to enjoy the extra attention they received during the focus group discussion.

Focus group discussions.

Focus group discussion is a person centered method of data collection which has some advantages over individual interviews related to its group nature and the dynamics generated. One important advantage is that discussion emerges between participants as well as the group facilitator and this may

..activate forgotten details of experience,...[release]...inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information (Merton *et al.*, 1956:)

Ashbury (1995) argues that the detailed rich data that may be gathered through this method is difficult to obtain by other methods. Fern (1984) and Bristol and Fern (1996) do not support Ashbury's view that the method *is* 'superior to other methods in this respect'. Whereas Merton et al.,1956; Albrecht et al., 1993 point out that the group processes that can produce security and revelation can have the converse effect.

Early planning.

Fundamental questions that needed to be considered at the commencement of the research were:

What is the value of the research? Who will benefit from the research? In this case, it was established that the information gained would be relevant to those involved in curriculum development, educational planning and to inform the practices of primary school teachers. The findings would contribute to their understanding of how classroom processes influence children's learning dispositions. Following on from this basic premise that the planned research was of value, access negotiations and ethical considerations for the research design could then proceed.

Access negotiations and consent.

Letters were produced to negotiate access to the schools involved, to request permission to enter the settings and to conduct the research (see appendix 1). These were sent to the head-teachers as gatekeepers of the three schools involved; one initial letter to the pilot study school, followed by letters to the two other schools involved in the main study. This was a term in advance of the study's commencement and in time for scheduled meetings of each School's Boards of Governors. The access letters contained information on the study's purpose and the focus was described as '*Children's learning relationships in the primary school*'. In both cases, the Head-teachers incorporated the researcher's request for access to the schools into the agenda of these meetings with the governing bodies and the responses to these were positive in each case, with permission granted for the research to proceed. Grieg and Taylor explain:

..in relation to children who are involved in research and informed consent, the consent of the child and the adults who have parental responsibility should be sought (1999:150).

Following permission for access, visits were made to the settings to convey further details regarding the research proposal, the range of methods to be used, the proposed duration of the study and to negotiate the practical arrangements for data collection. Throughout these negotiations assurance was given to participants that their anonymity would be protected, the confidentiality of the settings maintained to alleviate any concerns regarding the research. For example, that it could be damaging to them as an individual or to the school or cause any form of embarrassment at any time. Protection of identity was ensured by giving alphabetical or numerical references to the participants and settings e.g. Head-teacher H1 or H2, class-teachers T1 or T2 and children as S1gNy3 [School 1 girl N year 3] or S2 b J y4 [School 2 boy J year 4] as described in the abbreviations and transcription conventions.

Arrangements to attend the classrooms for one whole school term in both cases for the research was negotiated directly with the class-teachers, post consent for entry to the schools by the head-teachers and the governors. Information on class timetables, lesson arrangements and room availability were gathered prior to entry to plan when the lesson observations and writing activity and group work with the children could take place. There were no major difficulties with the access arrangements at any time although class teachers were absent on some days and timetables were occasionally rearranged without notice so that some flexibility was necessary during data collection.

Ethical considerations.

Ethical considerations and dilemmas permeate a research study of this kind at every stage of its development, from conception, data collection, analysis, formulation of conclusions through to the final stage of the dissemination of findings. Christensen and James state how ethics should not be considered as an addition to a study but as

‘part of the context of both the problem and the approach’ (2000: 232). Research by its very nature is inevitably an intrusive process Bronfenbrenner stating that the only way to prevent such intrusion would be ‘to refrain from doing research’ (1952:453).

An important pre-requisite for the study was therefore the anticipation and identification of possible ethical dilemmas that could be raised by the research, encountered during field work or that could emerge from the actual findings of the study.

It can be argued that ethics is the one part of the research process that should be never learned in practice and that the would be researcher should have ensured that all the potential ethical dilemmas have been considered prior to embarking on the research (Greig and Taylor 1999:144).

Ethical code of practice.

The ethical guidelines of the British Sociological Association (BSA, 2004), the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) and Swansea University (2001) were adhered to. There was total respect for the anonymity of the settings and all participants involved. This was achieved by careful checking of descriptive features of the settings and data so that identification of the individual participants or schools is not possible.

The core ethical problem in any social science research is acting in the context of two conflicting values—the pursuit of truth through scientific procedures and the maintenance of respect for the individuals whose lives are being lived, focally or peripherally in the context of one’s research project (Smith 1980:192).

The research was approached with integrity throughout all of its stages; its impact on the settings and participants was carefully considered, to minimize intrusion and to preserve the objectivity of the research. All sources consulted have been duly acknowledged through referencing. The methodologies used have been discussed and the strategies of data analysis explained fully. Data collected from interviews, small

group discussions, lessons and focus group-discussions were tape- recorded and transcribed. All tapes were labelled and categorised by method and date. The researcher's interest was to gain authentic data to further the understanding of classroom interactional processes and relationships for academic and professional purposes.

Considerations of some ethical dilemmas that could possibly be raised by the research.

In developing an ethical code of practice Burgess discusses how identifying codes of ethics and abstract principles is less problematic than adhering to them. Burgess states:

Many researchers have indicated the difficulties of working with codes of ethics when engaged in fieldwork [and that a researcher is likely to encounter] ... situational elements of fieldwork which codes fail to resolve (1989:74).

During this study the consequences of the release of confidential information in the public domain regarding children, their families, individual teachers, head teachers or the schools could cause immediate or long-term harmful consequences to all concerned. For example insensitive handling of the findings, observations, or other data could damage a teacher's reputation, career prospects or have a negative effect on relationships between teaching staff. Lack of understanding of the needs of children could impact on their self-esteem or cause them unnecessary distress which could affect their future learning and learning careers. The state of equilibrium in relationships between families and school staff could also be disturbed, with the school's reputation tarnished through insensitivity by a researcher in interpreting, handling or communicating data.

Rights of participants and informed consent.

In line with ethical consideration is the notion of informed consent, the autonomy and rights of participants to determine what is in their best interests. Prior to entry to the settings it was essential for all participants to be aware of the study's nature, its purpose and their role in the research. From an ethical perspective participants have the right to be given sufficient information about what their participation involves, to be asked for their consent to participate and the freedom to refuse or to withdraw from the study if they feel uncomfortable with any aspect. In keeping with the traditions of symbolic interactionism maintaining a relationship of respect is a basic premise. Coady (2004) discusses how it is mandatory to inform subjects in terms that they can understand, the nature of the research and of any risks involved. Consent was gained from the participants at the three levels of the research. The head-teachers for entry to the setting, use of tape recording facilities and parental consent. The class-teachers to allow the research to proceed in their classrooms, with reassurance given that the tape recorder could be switched off at any time that they felt uncomfortable with tape-recording. This was to respect their rights and to ensure that they did not feel under duress to participate on occasions when there could be difficulties in the classroom.

Their

..right to autonomyto decide what is in their best interest that they should not be pressured by financial or other inducements to take part in research (Coady in MacNoughton *et al.*, and 2004: 65).

A further consideration was to ensure that no harm or distress would be caused to participants at any stage of the research and to respect their right to withdraw at any time should they so wish. However, there were no occasions when any of the participants chose not to be involved or expressed concern with my presence.

Anonymity, privacy and confidentiality.

In order to protect the anonymity of all participants it was necessary to reassure them that their names would not be disclosed and that data would remain unattributable. The very sensitive and personal nature of classroom processes and interactions necessitates demonstration of respect towards participants and ensuring their anonymity is essential to avoid anxiety and distress. Since there are groups of participants in a classroom setting this can make identification easier; complete anonymity was therefore essential. Data was kept in a locked filing cabinet during storage to prevent any possible breaches of confidentiality that could occur. Ensuring the confidentiality of the setting was regarded as crucial as the release of information on any possible negative aspects regarding the setting could be detrimental to all involved.

Special ethical considerations for research with children.

As the research involved children there were special ethical considerations that applied. From a legal perspective the consent for access to the settings was gained through the head-teachers and governors of the schools and parental consent via letters authorized for distribution by the head teachers.

Information for children regarding their participation.

A pre-requisite for research with children is the need to give them information regarding their participation, in a way that they can understand. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the children were asked for their consent to participate in the study (UNCR, 1989). To meet this criterion an illustrated letter was produced, to give them clear information about the study and to ask for their consent (see Appendix 1). The letter described the research as a 'project', a term that would be meaningful and familiar to them for a process of information gathering. A verbal

explanation about the study and their role in it was also given by the researcher on entering the setting at the commencement of the field work and at any time when this seemed necessary or was requested.

The fact that the study was a micro–study in an educational classroom setting where children could be perceived as captive participants required the affordance of respect towards their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time should they so wish. Children were made aware of this option, if they expressed any concern regarding their involvement. One S1y4 girl did comment that the questions on the worksheets were a bit personal. The explanation given to her, was that because her opinion was needed the questions had to refer to her and that is why they appeared personal. She was asked if she wanted to continue or to leave the questions unanswered, she opted to continue. Generally, the children were very enthusiastic during participation relishing the extra attention given and no one chose to withdraw from the study or expressed negativity towards it.

The role of the researcher.

It is inevitable that a researcher has an impact on the field of study. On entering the school and classroom every effort was made to minimise this intrusion so that as natural a study as possible could be conducted.

Impression management.

Impression management is crucial at all stages of a research project. Goffmann (1955) identified how the management of '*personal front*' is important in gaining access to settings. Throughout the project it was also important for gaining and maintaining the trust of research participants and in limiting researcher effects on the research Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:84) explain how researchers need to consider the impression created by their dress code, even in overt research so that the trust of

participants is obtained. They discuss how personal appearance can be a salient consideration and how it is sometimes necessary to dress in a similar way to the people studied (in this case similar to the dress code of teachers). They also explain

Whether or not people have knowledge of social research, and whatever attitude they take towards it, they will often be more concerned with what kind of person the researcher is than with the research itself. They will try to gauge how far the ethnographer can be trusted, what he or she might be able to offer as an acquaintance or friend, and perhaps also how easily he or she could be manipulated or exploited (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 83).

Researcher reflexivity.

A further consideration as a researcher was the vital need to be reflective and objective in the selection of the most suitable methods for the gathering of data and to eliminate sources of bias that could be introduced throughout the research process

Maintaining the objectivity of the researcher is especially important in this research tradition; to prevent bias from the research process (Riehl 2001:116).

The process of research involved personal adjustments for the researcher:

- Suppressing the natural response of a teacher in responding to children;
- Setting aside traditional beliefs about teacher and pupil roles in the classroom;
- Adopting a non-participant observer role that did not interfere with classroom processes;

It is inevitable that data collected will be influenced by the researcher's values however every effort was made to make the processes as transparent and as scientific as possible (Rolfe cited in MacNoughton *et al.*, 2001). The interest and background of the researcher is therefore openly declared so that the impact can be considered by the reader. The researcher is a female, teacher-lecturer whose first language is Welsh. However, the researcher's education has been through the medium of English from the primary stage onwards. During a professional career as a teacher the experiences

have included work in both the primary and secondary school sectors at various locations in England, Wales and overseas.

Researcher's need to foreground their own investments, interests, standpoints and motivations explicitly stating their theoretical positions and assumptions (Griesheaber, cited in MacNaughton, *et al.*, 2001:144).

Thus looking and reflecting on their role in the research process and their possible impact on the findings.

A non-judgemental, non-discriminatory, non-threatening persona was adopted to ensure that the information gathered formed a true reflection of the usual routines and practices (Taylor and Greig 1999; Christensen and James 2000).

A professional stance of neutrality was maintained during field work with non-response to aspects of classroom practice or interactions with which the researcher felt uncomfortable or appeared non-conducive to children's learning and their dispositions.

Selection of Settings.

One early consideration in the selection of settings was the interest in identifying possible cultural differences in educational practices between English and Welsh medium primary schools. Linked to this interest, was the decision to sample from those two different categories of Welsh primary schools. Although the schools selected were geographically fairly close and both situated in anglicized areas of Wales, they were run by separate Local Education Authorities and served culturally different communities.

Pilot study.

A pilot study was planned and carried out in a bilingual setting, before the commencement of the research so that both Welsh and English data gathering instruments could be tested in the two classroom streams (English and Welsh) of the school. As a result of the pilot study, some changes were made to the original

interview schedules for the Head teachers and Class-teachers to clarify some ambiguity in the terms used in the initial schedules e.g. Head-teacher interview schedule Q2. was amended from 'generally' to 'on average' to be more specific, Q.1.2 of 1st.Class-teacher interview schedule regarding the first language of children was changed to refer to the language of the majority of the children in the class and Q.2.6 was completely re-worded for clarity.

The pilot study school served an area of socio-economic deprivation where children's behavioural problems and complex needs created a somewhat chaotic environment which detracted from learning during lessons. It was therefore decided to conduct the main study in schools serving catchment areas where there would be less pronounced impact from such external factors. Two primary schools serving relatively affluent areas where the majority of parents/guardians would be expected to have an interest in their children's education and in the value of learning were therefore chosen for the main study. It was felt that in these schools, the classroom influences on children's learning dispositions and the culture of learning established would be stronger and more visible for the researcher to explore at this initial phase.

Although the researcher would be interested in exploring classes in socio-economically diverse schools at a later stage of research.

Lareau's (1989) study identified how cultural and social capital was related to social class; that middle-class children were advantaged as their parents were more effectively involved with the school and their children's learning.

Sampling.

Hammersley and Atkinson identify three major dimensions along which sampling within cases can occur. These are 'time, people and contexts' (1983:46). Let us now consider each in turn.

Time.

It was possible for the researcher to visit the settings on different days of the week and for the duration of the school day so that the full range of classroom activities were observed:

In organizing the sampling of time, it is important to sample the routine, as it is to sample the extraordinary (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:45).

and how it is important for:

Any attempt to represent the entire range of persons and events in the case under study will have to be based on adequate coverage of the various temporal divisions (1983:45-46).

People.

A further consideration of the design was the need to elicit the perspectives of all the participants in the study; the Head-teachers, Class-teachers and the Children by sensitively.

Place.

In order to increase the representativeness of the findings a larger study could have been planned to explore the influences of schools representing the socio-economic and linguistic regions of Wales on socio-cultural classroom contexts. However, due to the limited resources available to a lone researcher this was not possible.

Contexts.

The study could also have also explored a range of contexts in the school setting e.g. playground, classroom, staffroom etc. Woods (1979) and Hammersley, (1980) have discussed how the behaviour of teachers often differs between classrooms and

staffrooms. However, in this instance, the interest of the study is limited to the classroom context and sampling of whole events to understand their communal influences on the classroom.

Case-Study schools.

The two schools selected were a Welsh medium primary and an English medium primary.

a) (S1). Welsh medium primary school setting

The Welsh medium primary school setting, selected for the research study had been established over 20 years and was based in a traditional school building. During this period, there has been considerable growth in the numbers of children attending, which has resulted in the building presently having limited free indoor space. This was identified as a constraining factor to learning by the head-teacher, the class teacher and other teaching staff working at the school; the only additional space being available was a small room (which is used for small group support sessions or music lessons) a hall and a library. The playground area was small, but there was the additional space of a field for sporting activities. Around 150 children attend the school including those in a newly established Nursery section which is based in a separate unit, set apart from the main school building. The head teacher and the majority of staff in the school were 1st language Welsh speakers, but the actual teacher of the class observed was a second language Welsh speaker, although, her linguistic competency was on a par with native Welsh speakers. The head-teacher described the backgrounds of the children as socio-economically very varied, with some from very rich homes, whereas others were relatively poor. The catchment area is very wide, which is typical of Welsh medium primary schools; some children travel by bus from nearby villages, some from villages North of the school and others are local.

However, the school's population could be regarded as an established ethnically homogenous educational community with its own socio-cultural history. The family interest in the Welsh language and its associated rich cultural musical and literary heritage providing a source of 'social and cultural capital' for the children (Bourdieu 1977). Welsh is the main language for teaching in the school with English introduced as a subject from year 3 onwards. In terms of ethnicity, 95% of the children are Welsh, 3% English and 2% are from other ethnic origins. The home language of the majority of the children is English, but about a ¼ of the children have at least one parent who can speak Welsh, so that they hear the Welsh language outside the school setting. The ethnic background of the children is therefore fairly homogenous with children speaking either English or Welsh in the home and having one or two English speaking parent/s or carer/s. The majority of children are therefore categorized as 2nd language Welsh speakers.

The number of children in a school class ranged from 15 to 29 with an average of around 20 children per class. The school classes are arranged, to have the least number of split age groups of children as possible for the number on the roll, to the corresponding ratio of teachers' employed. During the academic year when the research was conducted, there was one such split year group; this was the class where the classroom observations for this study took place; a composite group of year 3 and half of the year 4 children. The other half of the year 4 cohort are in another composite class with the year 5 children. The school's class groupings have been organised in this way, so that the year 6 children have a year on their own, to give them more attention in their final year at primary school, to prepare them for transfer to the comprehensive school (H1 interview.)

b) (S2).The English medium primary school

In contrast, the English medium primary school, is a much larger, newly established setting, less than five years old and based in an open-plan building, highly resourced with ICT suites, a library, hall and large playground area with modern outdoor facilities. Over 300 + children attend this setting, which means it has twice as many pupils as the Welsh medium setting around 90% of whom are of British origin with English as a first language. The remaining % of the children are from ethnic minority groups with Japanese, Arabic or Bengali as heritage languages. The setting is one of constant growth due to its location on a large high quality, mainly private housing development on the outskirts of a town, where the building of houses is continuing. This meant that the number of children on the school roll and class sizes increased as the academic year proceeded, and as further new houses were occupied. The majority of the children attending the school live locally, in very close proximity to the school. The class selected for the study is a Year 4 (8-9 years).The large number of children in this class also means that space is a constraining factor that impacts on learning in the classroom. The additional space available in the school itself however, does alleviate some of this constraint. The Head-teacher of this English primary school described the parents of the setting as ambitious for their children, working hard to keep up their lifestyles and as they had recently bought new, houses on the estate had limited 'cash and time'. Some of the families living on the estate have local connections, but many have moved into the area and thus have limited support networks or parenting support from their families. The school is establishing its own socio-cultural niche in a community which is itself at a formative stage in its development (H2 Interview).

The children in the class in this second setting are ethnically more heterogeneous with a range of ethnic groups being represented e.g. English, Iraqi, Japanese. The range of

ability of the children in the class is very broad, English is a foreign language for seven of the children and their linguistic competence in English is variable:

In terms of ability very wide with some of the Japanese children with very limited English (Class-teacher 2).

Taking the percentage of children who receive free school meals as a general indicator of the socio-economic background of the children attending, the figures for these two schools are low, both less than 10%, the figure for the Welsh medium primary lower than the English medium primary. [Exact figures are not given to ensure anonymity]. These are amongst the lowest for L.E.A. areas in Wales (NPI, 2007).

Reliability and validity concerns.

One of the key issues in the design of interpretive research studies in the idiographic genre is that of ensuring validity and reliability of the data collected, since their strength is in gathering rich contextualized data, rather than data that can be generalized to other locations.

The ecological validity of the study was ensured as it was carried out in the natural setting of the classroom and was designed to cause minimal intrusion and disruption to the day to day educational processes of the settings (Sarantakos 2005: 87). The validity of the study was also increased through the use of multiple data sources and triangulation of data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Head and class-teachers were interviewed on two occasions; this allowed a check on the findings to eliminate bias and whole school and classroom observations verified the authenticity of data gathered.

The writing activity with the children allowed them to communicate their own thoughts and perspectives without the need to consider peer approval. However, the focus group discussions that followed the writing activity with the children allowed verification and clarification of the intended meanings of their responses and the

opportunity to contribute additional information through peer prompting. Playing back the tape recordings to the children created an opportunity for further discussion and communication validation (Sarantakos, 2005:86). Further considerations for validity were ensured through 'argumentative validation', of the findings, this means the findings are presented clearly, the analysis is made transparent for the reader so that the stages of analysis are clear and the validity of the conclusions drawn can be easily verified.

Two measures of reliability apply to qualitative research, these being external and internal reliability. The external measures of reliability that were addressed in this study were the declaration of the researcher's status, the identification of the role of individuals in the context, in this case the head-teachers, class-teachers and children having different roles and status in the schools. The conceptual framework that formed the starting point of the design was described and the research questions, data collection methods and the strategies for analysis explained fully (Sarantakos 2005:91). Internal reliability was increased through attending the schools over a period of two terms and using a tape recorder for recording interviews, observations and discussions to allow all data to be recorded and transcribed at a later date. The parameters of the study contribute to its reliability as six of the seven research questions relate to the classroom with one question only considering the identifiable cultural differences between the two schools. Sarantakos discusses how clarifying

... [delineating] the context or [setting] boundaries and characteristics carefully so that the reader can make judgements about similar settings or circumstances and
....defining the analytic constructs that guide the study (2005:91).

The parameters of the research can contribute to its external validity; however there is a lack of consensus among researchers regarding the degree of reliability of qualitative research studies. Quantitative researchers in particular critique the degree

of reliability of qualitative methods on the grounds that the findings cannot be generalised. Whereas qualitative researchers emphasise the strengths of their methods and the validity of their findings. Lamnek identifies the following strengths,

....that the data are closer to the research field than in quantitative research, the collection of data is not determined by research screens and directives, the data are closer to reality than in quantitative research, the views of the researched are considered, the methods are more open and more flexible and there is a communicative basis that is not available in quantitative research. The successive expansion of data is also possible (1993:154-9)

Limitations of the design.

The study was a small scale one limited to two schools in Wales, the findings therefore cannot be generalized to other locations. The study was primarily designed to be classroom based with the inclusion of whole school events and activities to give an indication of how community learning culture contributes to and influence classroom processes.

Debriefing sessions before departure from the field.

When the data gathering processes were completed in both settings informal debriefing sessions were held with all participants. The children were thanked for their participation and contribution and encouraged to continue to 'work hard' and take responsibility for their learning. The Head-teachers and Class teachers were thanked for their time and co-operation with the study .It was agreed that a summary of the findings would be presented in a report format to the schools on completion of the dissertation.

Data Analysis.

The aim of data analysis in qualitative research is to ‘transform’ data presented in words and interpret it in a ‘rigorous and scholarly manner’ (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996:3). In the first phase data gathered was sorted into the four sections to correspond with Whole school level-Head-teacher perspectives and observations of whole school events, Teacher Perspectives, Classroom Observations and Children’s writing and Focus group discussion for the presentation of the findings.

Discourse Analysis.

Discourse was analysed to discover the diverse representations of teaching and learning that are constructed in the school and classroom and to understand the social practices that constitute learning. As Fairclough (1992) explains:

Discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or constitute them; different discourses constitute key entities be they. [socio-constructivist learning, childhood or learner]... and position people in different ways as social subjects...as...[teachers or children]..and it is these social effects of discourse that are focused on in discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992: 3-4).

A socio-theoretical perspective of discourse is applied as opposed to the linguistically orientated views of discourse. In the second phase of analysis data from interviews with the Head-teachers, Class teachers, observation of whole school events and school policies were integrated under the section theme of School and Teacher discourses. These were then analysed according to the categories listed below.

School and Teachers’ discourses on:

- Children’s inclusion and involvement;
- Children as learners
- Classroom relationships
- Teaching and learning.

In the second section, *Children’s discourses* were explored from the writing activity data and focus group discussion under the categories below:

- Their sense of belonging, well-being and feeling valued
- Learning in school and their relationships
- Other children and their learning
- ‘Self’ as a learner

(internal feelings, consciousness, attitudes);

The third section of the analysis was identified by the theme of

Shared Discourses :

Class-teachers and children; children and peers/friends.

- Exploring dimensions of classroom interactions according to Sensitivity, Stimulation and Autonomy.
- Teacher and children’s co-participation
- Children’s actions and behaviours to indicate learning dispositions.

The three themes for the analysis of the dimensions of the teacher interactions with the children were:

1. Sensitivity.
2. Stimulation and Meta-cognitive guidance;
3. Autonomy child / children (Pascal and Bertram’s Model, 1996)

The table below lists the categories used for the analysis of interactions based on the three themes or dimensions of the interactions i.e. Sensitivity, Stimulation and Meta-cognitive guidance, Autonomy child / children. The 2nd column of the table identifies the categories of Teacher roles and actions in relation to sensitivity and autonomy.

In relation to Stimulation and meta-cognitive guidance the child /children’s responses are given in the 2nd column.

Table 3.4 Teacher interactions and relationships based on dimensions of sensitivity, stimulation and autonomy in teacher and children's relationships (adapted from Pascal et al., 1996).

Teacher sensitivity towards child / children.	Teacher role and actions that demonstrate sensitivity.
Positive tone and body language	Demonstrates care, warmth and affection
Respects & values the child /children	Encourages the child to trust Shows empathy, Responds to child's needs.
Inclusive, differentiated practices to ensure children's involvement	Gives encouragement and praise.
Creates opportunities for open meaningful communication at the child's /children's level, demonstrates, sharing and conflict resolution strategies.	Listens, negotiates, participates in joint involvement, co-construction.
Stimulation & meta-cognitive guidance for children's learning.	Effect on child / children's volition (will) and involvement.
Planned and methodical in approach , identifies mastery rather than performance goals	Mastery approach to learning.
Provides activities matched to stage/s of development, interest and disposition/s	Increase receptiveness of children towards learning.
Guides participation, provides ' <i>participation repertoires</i> ', cues	Increased involvement, active learning
Extends ' <i>participation repertoires</i> ', directs reasoning-gives clues or explanations	Makes activity meaningful to the children so that they show progress
Encourages reflection	Models ways of thinking, values processes rather than product
Resilience - persistence with difficulty, managing distractions, absorption, noticing.	Children show endeavour and resilience.
Autonomy for the child / children	Adults' role and actions to empower child / children
Allows child to choose	Adult supports choice
Opportunity for child initiated ideas, interpretation, judgement and responsibility	Empowers child to be independent, confident or interdependent
Encourages self-reliance and resourcefulness	Demonstrating problem solving strategies, working things out in different ways according to children's learning styles.
Child involvement in learning, dispositions strengthened	Adult demonstrates high levels of engagement, shows enthusiasm and energy.
Provides opportunities for exploration, investigation and experimentation.	Guidance and mediation.
Reciprocity fostered.	Modelling, interdependence, empathy, listening, collaboration encouraging mutuality rather than dependence.

Analysis of children's actions and behaviours to indicate learning dispositions.

For the analysis of children's actions and behaviours to indicate learning dispositions the following criteria were developed adapted from Carr, May and Pomore 2000).

Learning dispositions.

- Learners are included, active and taking an interest , receptive, involved;
- Learners feel they belong, demonstrate trust, their language and culture is valued
- Strong identity as learners – masterful approaches.
- Learners are using their mind- reflecting on their learning, using cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies;
- Demonstrate resilience – able to cope with change, showing endeavour persistence;
- Demonstrating reciprocity – sharing, helping, communicating, interdependence, collaborating;
- Taking responsibility for their own learning, appreciating the perspectives of others.

This chapter had discussed the research design and methodology of the study and explained the criteria used for the analysis of the data. The next chapter will communicate the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS.

The findings will be presented in four main sections from data gathered in both Schools by the following methods:-

Section 4.1 Head-teacher interviews and observations of whole school events.

Section 4.2 Class teacher interviews

Section 4.3 Class room observations.

Section 4.4 Children's writing and Focus group discussion.

Presentation conventions adopted for the findings.

[Font style of translation of direct quotations from participants in the Welsh language are produced in Italic font. Direct English quotations are presented as plain font.]

Section 4. 1 Head-teachers' interviews and observations of school events.

In the first section let us examine from the head-teachers' perspectives, the characteristics of the two schools, their ethos and the nature of the communities established for children's learning and ascertain their interpretation of teaching and learning policies. Some selected samples of data from school events and activities will then be presented to give an indication of the typical educational experiences that are provided for the children.

1st Interview. School characteristics, head teacher beliefs and values.

The head-teachers interviewed were both experienced practitioners, one male (S1) and one female (S2) with considerable experience of school management. They were very knowledgeable about children, education, community influences and the impact of school and classroom processes on children's learning. In both settings the value of forging and maintaining very close links between the parents and the settings was emphasised. In the Welsh medium setting (S1) the methods of contact are of a traditional nature.

H1: There are weekly letters, opportunities for parents to make contact with teachers on alternative Tuesdays and communication with the class teachers through a contact book in which parents and teachers write e.g. messages, any relevant details, homework etc. This being more fully utilised in the infants than the juniors. Once a year there is an official parent's evening.

He explained how the majority of parents take an interest in the children's learning but there are some parents who have little interest; possibly because their lives are too busy. However, some parents who have very busy lives still manage to come to the school and take an interest in their children's work; others help other children with their reading, but he explained that this aspect of support is declining.

H1: There are parents who are supportive at various levels; some listen to other children reading, others help with trips, as governors or with the PTA. However, it tends to be the same group of people who are supportive.

As a new school and developing community the English medium setting (S2) is adopting new, innovative ways of working with parents. Their parental organisation is called a Parents' Friends Association and the Head teacher (H2) sees this as a means of supporting parents who have limited local social support, to extend their network, thus aiding the community's development. With respect to the level of parental support towards their own children, this appears to be more variable in this setting due to the impact of various pressures of modern life.

H2: A lot of our children are just pushed out; we had one crying this morning he didn't have breakfast. You wouldn't expect that here in this school!

Aims of the schools for children's education.

It was interesting to note that both head-teachers interpreted education broadly, emphasising the importance of close links between the schools and their communities and the significance of educational experiences being pleasurable ones for the children. They were both also in favour of children being encouraged to take responsibility for their learning.

In S1 prominence is given to the introduction of the Welsh language as the medium of instruction and assessment, and to various aspects of Welsh culture.

H1: First to introduce education through the medium of Welsh, the language and aspects of Welsh culture. To give children as wide a range of experiences as possible and to encourage their involvement in a range of activities not only purely academic ones, but to involve e.g. singing in the choir, dancing, games and participation in sporting activities. The school shares academic things with a cluster of Welsh medium schools and sporting activities with local Welsh medium and non-Welsh medium schools e.g. rugby and cricket. Activities with the Welsh league of Youth could be further a-field e.g. cross-country running events at town A. Generally, it is imperative to give experiences to children, some that they enjoy. We have people coming in e.g. police officers and the children go out termly not necessarily on large scale or important visits but they see something or other.

In School 2, where English is the medium of instruction and assessment, there was emphasis on creating opportunities for children to be confident and active learners.

H2: To create children who are confident in learning, to give them the skills to be life-long learners and for whom education is seen to be exciting and dynamic that they want to participate in.

She explained the importance of a well ordered and resourced environment and the need for discipline underlying it, self-discipline.

H2: I want the children to be confident in using skills as success in one area tends to spill over into other areas.

Influences on Head teacher beliefs and values.

The head-teachers commented on how their personal experiences as learners and teachers impacted on the kind of learning environment they tried to create for the children.

H1: The main influence on me was my personal background. My mother was a teacher / head-teacher, an aunt and another relative. My upbringing in a family where education was valued as something precious! Schools and education had been part of the family.

Whereas H2 remembered the experience and influence of her first teaching post. She disclosed that:

One of the major influences was one of the first head teachers she had ... worked with who had an inclusive philosophy which gave as much emphasis and value to broad school experiences as to academic achievement.

Leadership and management styles of the Head-teachers.

The leadership and management styles of the head teachers were closely related to the types of schools they worked in.

H1: I try to make decisions democratically here with everyone at least having their say. We have weekly staff meetings but when it comes to making difficult decisions, at the end of the day the head teacher has to make the final decision. On the whole the governors are very good, don't interfere unduly. If anything arises we work through any problem.

The fact that School 2 is a new setting that is still establishing itself in the community influenced the Head-teacher's interpretation of her role. As the staff are new, young and inexperienced, she felt that her role as a leader needed to be stronger than in a previous school she had managed, which had staff who were more experienced. Although she felt that she needed to monitor the standards to maintain consistency of quality in the setting, there was delegation of responsibility to team and phase leaders i.e. Early Years phase, Key Stages 1 and 2. These Key Stage leaders providing a strong mentoring system for other new teachers. There was further delegation of responsibility to subject co-ordinators for Core Subjects, English, I.C.T. Tighter control was necessary by the Head teacher at the present formative phase of the school's development to maintain consistency of quality with new staff. However, she held the view that all teachers are managers.

Head-teachers' Involvement with children and learning.

The Head teacher of School 1 is directly involved in teaching children when staff are absent, and with small groups to develop thinking skills, spelling and memory.

H1: I established 'Dyfal donc' a programme for children who needed additional language support and then passed it on to other staff when the opportunity was right. In the early days I was teaching for 50% of the time anyway.

2nd interview Head-teachers' perspectives on children and their learning.

Following the first interviews which were of a general nature, the second interviews focused more on children's autonomy as learners and the influences on their learning in the classroom. In discussing the value of consultation with children both head-teachers appreciated the importance of listening to their perspectives.

H1: felt it was important to consult with children for two reasons:

H1: First to understand their ability to regulate their learning to some extent, and be responsible for some aspects e.g. behaviour, relationships and secondly how from their perspective, it opens their eyes, shows we are willing to listen, [give] due respect.

Whereas H2 commented how this was an:

Interesting area as there was a big thrust now on listening to learners, and how it was an area for their development. It's important to listen to the children. We have a school council! One of the staff has done a project on 'How children learn best and what their styles are' and we are planning a more systematic approach to listen to the children.

In identifying the benefits of consulting with children she explained:

H2: We do talk to the children, if you talk to the children the more you know about them, the more you know about how they learn, so that's got to have an impact on your teaching, but also if the children think that they can tell you it makes them articulate learners.

In relation to control and responsibility over learning she felt that:

H2: Children should perceive that they have a reasonably strong control, certainly responsibility over their learning. We are already involved in getting children to set their own targets, older children obviously and in evaluating their own work. We are currently going to be looking at developing our marking scheme so that we are going to get the children to look at self-evaluation in marking. The children themselves will evaluate what they've learnt and whether they are happy with it. If you have the children controlling it they will put down anything, it's the responsibility element that you need to encourage. Children with the best will in the world - at some point you will have to guide them.

H1: also stated that he did not think it was possible to give control to children over their learning, but felt that they needed guidance.

H1: I don't think it's possible! Children want leadership to show them the way as part of the processes.

In discussing the best ways to encourage children to take responsibility for their learning Head- teacher 2 stated that the best way was to get them involved in target setting.

H2: What do they need to do? In their portfolios every year we ask them what they need to improve on, the older ones and they'll tell you—I need to improve my hand-writing. We do this at the end of the year and the beginning of the New Year [referring to academic year].

In identifying the skills they thought children needed for learning both head-teachers referred to a range of skills and dispositions that children needed for learning.H1 referred to the use of technology for information seeking and of positive relationships with others:

H1: Listening, language, paying attention, all the skills, responding positively to others, co-operation, technology and research [and how] It's important for the child to know how to find the information and how to solve problems.

and

H2: Numeracy, literacy, communication and problem solving as the tools of the trade.

They both identified the wider skill of problem solving as needed for learning.

While in discussing children's role as learners H2 commented of the importance of their volition:

H2: The need for receptivity.

Readiness for learning. If they've got the readiness for learning, they'll take on board everything, but you've got to give them the tools of the trade.

H2 wanted children to be:

..active, questioning and passionate. Children are not just little vessels that you can top up—if they don't want to take that learning, they won't take it and there are a number of factors influencing the wanting, the readiness.

They both commentated on the necessity to use of a range of learning methods as children learn in different ways, have multiple intelligences which support different styles of learning. In S2 the head-teacher explained that they used Accelerated Learning Techniques to support children's learning.

Influences on children's involvement in learning in the classroom.

A range of influences on children's involvement in learning were discussed and the following were identified as very important:

Home background and the emphasis placed on learning.

In addition to identifying the home background as a major influence H2 focuses on children's socio-history and the quality of those experiences and the value placed on learning.

H2: Their background is a major influence, what experiences they've had before coming here, what kind of home it is, how much emphasis is placed on learning !

Teacher versus peer effects in children's wanting to learn.

In response to the question on whether teachers or peers have the greater influence on children wanting to learn in the classroom. The two head-teachers commented on the paramountcy of teacher effects at the primary level. They explained the nature of the relationships needed:

a) Teacher-child relationships that support the child holistically.

The Head teacher of School 2 explained how children learn best when the teacher-child relationship is strong and supports the child holistically, in the affective as well as cognitive domain. She stated:

H2: It makes the difference if the teacher takes the trouble to support the pupil as a whole person and works with the parents e.g. Mrs. Z knows the children, she knows what they're good at, she knows what they're weak at, she's got a hold over them somehow! She's worked on their self-esteem; she's worked so hard with them, that's what makes the difference That's excellence! If a teacher tries to be too directional, that's fine they will learn, but they learn much better when they're self-motivated and that's the trick for the teacher-is motivating the children. If a child is motivated to learn, it won't stop at this school, it will go on and on.

She continued by explaining about how teaching accounts for the difference in children's responses to learning. H1 also stated:

H1: *In relation to learning teachers and parents had most effect at the primary school stage.*

....although he felt that peer effects had a very strong effect from the Nursery class onwards.

H2 also felt that children and teachers had an influence on children's wanting to learn, but that in the primary school the teacher has more influence. However, that this changed as they got older:

H2: But I do know by and large the children here in the classroom want to please. It does change in year 6 and you can see a sort of culture—little pockets of children—you need to tackle that—it's a gut thing, I need to sort that out, teachers know instinctively, I need to get the children on side, ...on task.

b) Teacher-child relationships that stimulate children's interest and involvement in learning.

In response to the influence of teacher child relationships and children's interest and intentions towards learning the response was:

H1: *very important.*

This was endorsed by H2 who exclaimed

Oh! Yes! (emphasis), crucial. ... interpersonal relationships crucial—they're instrumental in supporting children and if children don't feel supported they're unsure, they're uncertain and if a child is unsure and unsupported they won't learn! It's quite simple, if they're unhappy they won't learn.

c) Teacher relationships that promote self-esteem to overcome barriers to children's involvement in learning.

In response to the question on whether any children showed active resistance to learning she identified that in some cases this could be in response to having low self-esteem and having a fear of failure or learning difficulties. She explained that it was the teacher's job to overcome that:

H2: There are some but there are very few in this school, sometimes they come in showing that, but they don't last long: the reason is we build up their self-esteem. There are some that have learning difficulties and they may be afraid of failure. That's the skill of the teacher getting over that!

It was interesting to note that in discussing what was important for children to learn about being learners. The point was made about the confidence to succeed or fail in learning.

H2: That they feel that they can achieve success and also the confidence to fail, that it's safe to fail—we all know it's only by making mistakes that we learn.

She reflected on personal experience on how she had been brought up to please, and how it was devastating to make a mistake.

H2...I spent so long worrying about making mistakes ... and I still do it to a certain extent! I don't get on!

In relation to the qualities that successful learners had she listed

H2: self-motivation, determination, stickability (resilience), hard working, the ability to overcome obstacles (resourcefulness) and the willingness to do well.

School culture that promotes learning.

H2 explained how the school's culture influenced children's motivation towards learning by ensuring that they gained pleasure from learning and they did this:

H2: By celebrating their success through rewards, certificates, rejoicing with them. Their success will be measured against their previous success e. g it might not be the best hand writing in the class, but for them it's the best ever.

In response to the question about factors that restrict learning it was something that hadn't been considered since

H2: I don't allow factors to restrict learning—possibly attitude and the degree of special needs the children have.

Curricular influences.

The head-teachers both agreed that a curriculum structure was necessary but they found the present subject led curriculum was too structured and restrictive

H1: *Hindering, too close! You need a structure but an open ended one!*

H2 felt that a skills ladder would be better.

H2: What I would prefer is a skills ladder. Give us a skills ladder and then we'll structure all our learning on that skills ladder. At the moment the curriculum is too knowledge based and content led. We don't need that amount of content.... The skills that we need are how to access the content Not the skills of remembering all those facts! You've got to have some facts and you've got to internalise those facts e.g. tables and your spellings.

She continued with reference to the information age and the need for mentally filing information and knowing how, when and where to access it and the importance of skills such as problem solving and IT.

Assessment.

In response to the question on whether assessment methods have an impact on the learner and learning.

H1 explained how some children did not like pen and paper, and how there was a need for a range of assessment methods to respond appropriately to children's individual styles of learning.

H1: Not every child likes pen and paper – although it's agreeable to some children.

There was some ambiguity in H2's response in relation to assessment. In discussing the effect of assessment on learning H2 explained how formative assessment methods would have an impact on learning, not on the learner and that summative methods won't. The effect of summative assessment on children's self-esteem and learning is well known (Broadfoot, 1996:5)

Formative assessment would involve the children in the assessment of their own learning.

H2: You are feeding back all the time that will involve the children.

Gender differences

H1 noted that boys were more physical and acted more on the spur of the moment, whereas he found girls far more prudent, less physical but far more talkative.

Whereas H2 exclaimed how there were:

H2: Massive gender differences, boys do better in Science and Maths—but that's not actually true here—we've bucked the trend here. We're doing quite well on that!

Naturally there are far more boys with autistic spectrum disorders that's well documented. There are more boys than girls on my special needs list with dyspraxia and dyslexia. Males more reluctant to read at KS1.

Girls tend to be more conscientious and compliant although that's not a quality I particularly admire, I want the girls to be as questioningthey tend to do better! We don't have a problem here with boys being compliant—some of these boys given a chance!

Children's dispositions towards learning.

In relation to consistent patterns of responses or approaches children showed towards their learning, their dispositions.

H1: *felt that this did not happen naturally but they acquired skills as they developed.*

Whereas

H2: Oh! Yes I think they do, you'll notice for example with homework—they'll regularly bring back homework. You have to encourage those, they're the routines for learning.

Influence on children's dispositions towards learning.

a) adult's valuing what children do and taking an interest in them

In relation to factors which influence children's dispositions towards learning parental background, teaching, the school's ethos and the importance of adults valuing children's contributions and taking an interest in them were highlighted.

H1: It's essential that adults value what they do, show an interest, have a positive way and give challenge.

b) media messages

A further pervasive factor identified by H2 as influencing children's attitudes and behaviours were media messages and how the ethos of the school is showing what our expectations are.

H2: One of the things that we have to be aware that we're combating all the time are the messages they're getting through the media—The Simpsons etc , the flip... the wry humour, which isn't always understood by children, and the messages which can be sophisticated They'll translate that into off-hand , apparently sort of cheeky behaviour its not, ... it's what they see and they don't realise there's anything wrong with it.

c) group working

In consideration of their views on group working both were agreed that this was beneficial to children's learning but that it was something that they had to learn.

H1: *Definitely yes!* [To group learning].

No ...the majority of children couldn't do this but needed guidance.

and

H2: If they're working in a group and it's appropriate, yes I certainly do; and with regard to whether all children are able to do this- not all!.. That again is something that we should be encouraging them to do. Cooperative learning is very much part of our teaching and learning.

d) consultation with children.

H2: The importance of encouragement at all stages, and keeping them informed and involved in the process... in the loop so that they know what they're doing and where they're going.

Finally, H1 felt strongly that children should form their own principles and that we should not force our own values or prejudices on them. He emphasised how it was the school's role to prepare them for life outside and that we should not deprive them of their right to make choices.

H1: As a basic principle every child should have the right to choose their principles for themselves. In order to prepare children for life outside it's very important not to detach the child from the right to make a choice.

Observations of whole school events.

Some typical whole school events were observed to gain an overview of the learning culture and the nature of the communities created. Assembly is a time for communal gathering and worship in both schools, it is a time when key messages are shared regarding their aims and values. It is also a time when information is communicated to children about the forthcoming events to help create a sense of belonging for the children as members of the schools, local and wider communities.

Whole school gatherings for assembly.

a) School 1

This service was conducted by one of the school's teachers who sensitively created a feeling of calm during the communal gathering by asking the children to take time to think.

T3: Time to think, of happy thoughts, sad thoughts, to take time to sort out your thoughts.

Then for them to consider, if they had news to share with others in assembly

T3: Something to share.

This was followed by a discussion about books and a consideration of what the children could gain from reading a book. This introduction linked to the promotion of a Book Club to encourage reading. Some other typical events to create a sense of belonging, a feeling of community through celebration were observed. These were:

- Musical participation for the school concert as member of choir or instrumental group e.g. string or brass ensemble;
- Participation of all children in a Sports Day and other sporting events;
- Sharing information about books;
- Communicating News about their homes and families;
- Celebrations to coincide with special events in Wales, e. g The International Eisteddfod at Llangollen.

Hymns and songs children sang in the classroom and assembly communicated messages regarding their life in school. This particular song, sung in an African rhythmic style.

<i>Cân rheolau'r ysgol.</i>	(Rough translation).	<i>Song of school rules</i>
<i>Codi yn y bore</i>		Get up in the morning.
<i>Cofio gwneud ein gorau.</i>		Remember to do our best
<i>Darganfod a dysgu</i>		Learn and discover
<i>Dysgu yn yr ysgol sut i fyw bob dydd</i>	Learn in school, how to live our lives	

(Johnson, 2001).

b) *School 2.*

This was an assembly gathering during which the Head teacher introduced the local Vicar (V) as guest speaker. He told the children a story from the Bible and discussed

V: What makes us nasty? [communicating messages to the children to encourage caring relationships]

V: Love God and one another.

During the assembly gathering the Head-teacher also reinforced messages regarding positive relations that the school was trying to instil. She discussed the school's theme for the following week about schools and children from a poor country in Asia and how the money they would raise from their Harvest Collection would go towards buying equipment for such a school. She used positive behaviour reinforcement in addressing the children e.g.

H2: What kind of children are we?
Very good children! Intelligent children!

Each class participated in turn in these assemblies with the actual year 4 class (observed for this study) participating in an assembly service with a seasonal and inclusive theme of *Harvest and the World*. The approach had a global dimension with a special focus on Japan to include the Japanese children. Other events and innovative learning approaches were used in the school to stimulate children's interest in learning

e.g. weekly events where several classes came together for a subject led or culturally focused fun learning activity aimed at encouraging their involvement.

One such event during a designated Mathematics week the school's maths co-ordinator organised activities for several junior classes of children to come together in the school hall. One such activity observed was '*Who wants to be a Mathonaire?*'

[A Maths game for children based on the ideas of the TV programme '*Who wants to be a millionaire?*']. It followed the rules and procedures of the game show and the children had three lifelines, they were able to ask the audience, phone a friend or choose '50/50' the winners were given chocolate money as prizes. Children from the 'audience' were selected to participate. The children loved this activity and there were high levels of involvement from both contestants and audience members. Another event linked to the fund raising Harvest theme was an illustrated talk (slides) from a guest teacher on childhood (life, homes and school) in an Asian village that she had visited. The music selected for the event set the scene and children sang 'He's got the whole world in his hands ' to help create a global dimension to the event. The Head-teacher introduced the guest speaker to the children and explained to them that they should listen

H2 : It would be rude to talk.

At the end the children could ask questions and they participated freely. Linked to this Asian theme * was a display of dancing by visiting child dancers in authentic costume. The year 5 and year 6 children were allowed to go and speak to the children.

[* actual country not identified to protect confidentiality of setting].

Section 4.2. Class teacher interviews.

1st Interview.

This interview focused on details regarding teacher background and values and beliefs; the teacher's aims curriculum planning, teaching style and classroom organisation-the socio-cultural classroom context created for learning and assessment.

Table 4.2.5 Demographic details of children in the two classes.

There were some demographic differences between the children in the two classrooms studied.

Class	Age group and Class size. .	No of boys	No. of girls	No. of children with special needs.	Ethnic groups / Cultural backgrounds.	Linguistic backgrounds.
<i>C l. 1- Welsh Age 7-9yrs. School 1.</i>	<i>Yr 3-18 Yr 4- 8 total – 26</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Mainly homogenous ethnic group Welsh or English.</i>	<i>50 % Welsh 50 % English in the home mainly Welsh 2nd language.</i>
<i>C l. 2 – English. Age 8-9yrs. School 2</i>	<i>Yr-4-36 in total</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Diverse mainly British, 6 Japanese, Iraqi and Bangladeshi.</i>	<i>English, 6 children with English as an additional language</i>

In Class 1, Welsh is the language of the school, classroom and assessment, with English taught as a subject from year 3 onwards. In Class 2, English however is the language of teaching and assessment in the classroom; there are six children for whom English is not their heritage language.

Table 4.2.6 Class-teachers' differentiation of children into groups

Characteristics age and gender balance of the children.	Children who are unable to wait for help / wanting constant attention.	Children of average ability for their year group.	Children who are able to work independently / high achievers / very keen, sensible and hardworking /more likely to follow up work at home
<i>C1 Welsh Yr 3 -18, Yr4- 8, 16 boys, 10 girls 26 in total.</i>	<i>L1 Special needs 6 some difficulties with language</i>	<i>L 2 & 3-12 Good language skills.</i>	<i>L 4-8 Very good language skills</i>
C 2 English 20 boys, 16 girls 36 in total.	Support 9, (2 dyslexia).	Able 13	Challenge / Hardworking 14.

C1:- L represents grouping according to language levels 1–4.

C2:-Support –children with particular needs with their learning who need support,

Able – children who are able to work at the level expected for their age group.

Challenge – children who are hard-working and have the ability to work independently on more challenging tasks.

Teacher background, values and beliefs.

The class teachers in both settings were females of Welsh Nationality, with English as their 1st languages. Although Welsh was a 2nd language for the teacher (T1) in the Welsh medium setting, her level of competence in speaking was on a par with 1st language speakers. She had worked in one previous school before starting her current post in the school at the beginning of the academic year. Teacher (T2) in the English medium setting was more experienced and had been employed at the school since its opening with seven years teaching experience in total.

T2 spoke some incidental Welsh to the children during the day and some French, so that the children acquired phrases and vocabulary in these two additional languages.

Teacher professional qualifications and training.

The two teachers had similar professional qualifications, both with first degrees and Postgraduate Certificates in Education (Primary). Their Teacher Training had been at the same Welsh University. T1 stated that she had a first degree in Welsh History and Education followed by the PGCE. Even though the course had included details of how children learnt in different ways 'multiple intelligences' (Gardner 1993), it had not prepared her for all aspects of practice. She felt that she had developed practical ways of working with children through experience in the classroom. T 2 had a degree in Music also followed by a PGCE. She also explained how her training had been based mainly on content e.g. language lectures and stated

T2: They would give us examples of activities. Mostly I found it -learning on the job, rather than college. That's what I found!

Approaches to curriculum planning.

In School 1 (S1) the approach to classroom curriculum planning was based on a combination of National Policy, school policy and teacher interpretation, with classes in the Juniors' section sharing themes and resources.

In School 2 (S2) the approach to curriculum planning was very much based on the school's interpretation of National Curriculum with meetings every Monday morning to determine the calendar of events for the week, meetings for KS 2 teachers (Junior department) whilst children attended assembly and meetings after school to discuss any relevant issues. Individual teachers had responsibility for their specialist subjects. This allowed a whole school approach to creating a community for learning with continuity of learning between different classes in the school.

Curricular aims

A major aim of the Welsh medium setting is to introduce the Welsh language to children so that they could use it across the curriculum areas.

T1: Introduce a high standard of spoken language that can be used by them across subjects Mathematics—to remind them of terms.

Classroom organisation.

C1: All the year 4 children sat together in a group of eight. The year 3 children were grouped according to their ability in language, in 3 groups. Children remained in these groups for lesson presentations and formal information giving. For plenary sessions at the beginning of the literacy and numeracy hour they sat on the floor close to the whiteboard. There were times when year 4 children and the year 3 were mixed to help them with their learning or when children could choose to sit with a friend.

C2: Within the classroom itself, children sat in ability groups and remained in these for most of the time during whole class activities or formal lessons. There was more flexibility during group work for the more practical subjects such as science or for creative activities such as music, drama and writing. In both settings the groups were of mixed gender.

Role in the socialization of children as learners.

In interpreting their role and responsibility in the socialization of children as learners, both teachers interpreted children as active learners with the ability to be independent to work things out for themselves.

Developing children as independent learners.

T1: Training to be independent, without asking all the time, how to try to work things out, give information e.g. mathematics—draw a picture to help solve a problem.

T2: Working independently, developing maths skills, times table, reading is very important, spelling-learning for spelling test, but also applying it. The basics—What used to be called the 3 R's.

To have high expectations in order for children to achieve their potential.

T1: To ensure children achieve their potential.

T2: For the challenge group to have more to do e.g. research.

To maintain children's interest and their involvement.

Teacher 2's aims were very focused on maintaining children's interest.

T2: Once you've got the children in and their interested to learn you've won half the battle there, haven't you?

One of the concerns that she expressed, as it was her second year with the particular group of children was whether she would be able to keep their interest for a second year.

T2: I was a little worried, I'd had them all last year, a bit worried they'd get a bit tired of me. Because it's nice to have a change, but they've responded well considering they've got me for a second year. It's important to make them independent. This is what I've been trying really hard to do this year. Trying to make them work on their own. In one way it's an advantage having them for the second year, you know where they are. You know when to push them on!"

The transmission of information and was seen as important by both teachers.

Transmission of information and the structured National curriculum.

T1: The curriculum regularly constrains my ability to give spontaneous live experiences to the children.

T2: To get information across to the children, to engage the children to ensure they are enthusiastic to come to school to be independent learners.

To differentiate and consider children's preferred learning styles.

A further factor that both teachers identified as important in ensuring children's involvement was to consider their different learning styles and how they needed opportunities to learn in different ways.

T1: In different methods – not one way e.g. discussion, writing, a game, listening.

T 2: Different children like different approaches. Some children like the formal approach, they like their grammar work where they have their patterns and their structure and their written work. Some children—you're better off with a practical activity. Some children work best with the Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) and the computer. It really varies with the child.

Gender differences.

T1: The girls concentrate more, the boys are unable to sit still.

T2: I find children's dispositions towards their work varies more with ability than gender.

The qualities that they felt were important for effective teachers.

The teachers agreed that they needed to be

T1 & T2: organised, patient

With the ability to

T1: *communicate clearly, enjoy teaching.*

T2: committed, so much work to do, your marking to do. She felt her strengths were in her ability to differentiate the work- you've got to be able to come down to the child's level to a certain extent, not whole way down, able to relate to them.

The constraints to classroom learning.

A range of constraints classroom learning were identified by the class-teachers. These related to the characteristics of the different classrooms. In C1 the main constraint was identified as the composite class.

Composite class.

T1 felt the fact that having two year groups, who needed to be given work at different levels from the National Curricula, one for the year 3 group and one for year 4 was the main constraint to learning. A further constraint was related to the broad ability range of children in the class.

Class size.

Whereas the main constraint identified by T2 was class size of 36 children of broad ability.

T2: I'm spending more time with my lower band and I don't feel I'm giving enough time to my challenge group, that's limiting really, the upper group.

Lack of space in the classroom because of class size, can't really move around the classroom, that's limiting as well, quite hard swapping groups around. I do like them in their seats, but if they come out to me, they're banging into things as they're walking past.

The large number of children in the classroom limited the space available for them to move around and the time available for the teacher to interact with each group.

Meeting the particular needs of the lower-band limited the time available to spend with the more able children.

Structured Curriculum.

The structured National Curriculum was identified as a constraint to learning and classroom interactions in both classrooms

T1: *hindering spontaneity*

and creating pressure to cover the various subjects.

T2: I do have enough freedom to plan the curriculum, but I do find it quite a struggle to fit everything in, to be honest. There are so many subjects you've got to cover. Every subject every week. It's all time -tabled for, I feel I'm constantly juggling to fit it in. We've done music today, now we're running over onto play! Things like that happen. You want to get them whilst they've got it in their mind. I probably won't do music Friday now. Maths, English and Science always come first. Then all the foundations—you're juggling!

b) Reducing time to interact with individual or small groups of children. Neither teacher felt they had enough time to interact with individual or small groups of children.

2nd Interview with the class-teachers.

The second interview with the class teachers discussed child autonomy, teacher-child relationships and peer-group relations and learning

Child Autonomy.

Choice, spontaneity and flexibility.

Some of the effects of a structured curriculum identified by both class-teachers were the limits to choice, spontaneity and flexibility that could be offered to children in these classrooms.

T1: The children follow a restricted curriculum structure with the choice of extended activities or games. The children have to follow the relevant plans and this hinders my ability to give the children live spontaneous experiences. Children do have the opportunity to choose who they work with in both settings e.g. on their own or in pairs. This in most instances is determined by the nature of the activity. Children chose their work during periods like registration or before assembly e.g. reading or finishing off any work.

T2: explained how children had 'Guided structured choices'. She also interpreted choice as what children could do when they had finished their work, whether they chose to continue with their work or chose a topic during free time. For the Challenge Group e.g. there was the choice of a challenge activity.

*T1: For this lesson you can sit next to a friend. Go to sit where you like!
(Co-ordinates / map reading lesson).*

Developing children as Independent learners who think about their learning.

T1 commented on how it was important for every occasion to lead to children who are confident to express themselves orally and become independent, aware of the importance of education. She stated how she developed children who were able to work independently by sequential building of tasks that gradually increased in their level of complexity, from word, to sentence; to tasks that created writing confidence, such as creative writing.

T2 Explained how accelerated learning techniques are integrated into the day as are opportunities for children to:

T2: evaluate and assess themselves.

In C2 during self-evaluation children used a traffic light system to assess mathematical activities e.g. to put a red dot on the work when they found something difficult, orange as a value for medium difficulty and green when they found the task easy. During an observation of a mixed gender group completing self-evaluation of such work, one girl put down a green spot to indicate that she found the work easy and had experienced no difficulty. In fact I had observed her asking her friends for help and having some difficulty whilst working out the sums.

In both settings there were set structures to the day, with a timetable run over a period of two weeks in C1 to allow children to complete tasks and gain something out of it, rather than to clear away unfinished tasks and bring out new equipment for the sake of changing tasks or subjects.

T1: The children rely on organisation to have the best education.

For T1 the large class size was the major restriction and the fact that there were two year groups (See Composite class). She felt that all her time was spent between controlling the class, building up their self-esteem and self confidence as well as teaching.

T2 stated that there was a correspondence between the level of concentration and the level of work. That some children try to avoid work and she had to check upon them. That the time spent in controlling the class was minimal, since they were a responsive class, routines of self-reliance were developed and the noise levels were generally low, so that children could work quietly [confirmed in observations]. Time was spent with the support group to develop their self-reliance.

T1 felt that her aims during sustained periods of interaction was to support children to achieve their full -potential.

T2 felt that most episodes of sustained interaction were with the whole class although she planned her work so that she could spend time with a particular group e.g. to concentrate on a new topic or to introduce a new concept. In those instances she would give the other children something to get on with. When she worked with the support group she would give the challenge group a problem solving task [confirmed by observation].

Teacher child relationships and learning.

Inclusive relationships.

T1 stated how she gave children equal opportunity and ensured they reached their potential in learning. In relation to the whole class, she felt the majority of children took an active role in their learning and were enthusiastic but not all.

T1: It's not possible to discover a class full of enthusiastic pupils. Some children need much encouragement.

Sensitive adult support.

T1 explained how she tried to develop the children's motivation by weaving it in to their Personal, Social and Emotional Education and how she felt it was linked to their development as valuable citizens.

T2 explained how

T2: Sensitive adult support was very important to encourage the child, to build their confidence without drawing attention to the fact.

Positive interactions.

T 2 Stressed the importance of positive interaction and praise .

T2: very important to encourage!

She felt that if the interaction became negative and the children received negative feedback, then children didn't want to be in school.

T2: I try to change from negative feedback to positive feedback after about ten minutes. [after saying something negative to a child she would try and make a positive comment about some aspect of their work or behaviour after about ten minutes, so that they would not go away from the class feeling negative].

T2 Felt that most children took an active role in their learning given the right work and provided with encouragement and fun activities. In order to motivate them they needed work at the right level.

Peer relationships and their influences on learning.

T1 felt that enthusiastic children learnt from this; discussing whether something was correct or incorrect with peers could help understanding. C1 children were given the opportunities for group activities, to work as pairs, class, discussion, group reading and evaluating tasks.

T2: Children can sometimes explain things better.

In Class 2 they worked in mixed gender groups and sometimes paired e.g. at the computer.

T1 felt it was important for children to imitate a civilized society although this wasn't true for every child. When children discussed their work this sometimes led to some individuals being unsure of their ability. She stated that:

T1: Group intervention by the older children in the school had an impact on the happiness and development of confidence of younger individuals.

T2 explained how

T2: when working in groups, usually a natural leader emerged. Some groups argue and needed guidance on how to compromise.

T1: Felt that having a class where there was a broad range of abilities could inhibit positive interaction e.g. in a situation where there were very weak students with no middle ability groups. With her current class she felt that:

T1: year 3 and 4 work well together and that the children mixed well on the whole. No obvious socio-grams. Her concern was that the mixed year groups interfered with the time she had available for individual interaction.

T2 Felt that peers had a strong influence on children's attitudes to learning and that in her class most of the peer interaction was positive and related to learning. She identified certain combinations of children as limiting to positive peer interaction.

In relation to the class T2 described:

....the social relations as very good, with children being helpful towards one another e.g. other children were keen to help the Japanese children with limited English or children in the support group [This was corroborated through the observations].

Section 4.3. Classroom level.

Classroom observations of lessons.

The excerpts of lessons and vignettes presented here are a cross sectional sample to represent the range of interactions that occur naturally in the classroom between the teacher and the whole class of children; teacher and small groups and / or individual children. There are also examples of dyadic and peer group interactions in small group situations. Whole class lessons are defined as those in which the style of teaching is formal and didactic with the teacher positioned at the front of the class interacting with all the children with very little movement of children around the classroom. Group activities are defined as those where the teacher might speak initially to the whole class in a plenary session to explain the task; this explanation is then followed by activities during which the children work in class groups, smaller groups or in pairs. During group activities there is far greater opportunity for interdependent peer interactions than during formal whole class teaching sessions.

Table 4.3.7 Lessons and level of class involvement.

Levels of involvement	Learning activity
Whole class	<i>Literacy activity</i>
S1	Mother Teresa story.
Whole class	<i>Numeracy activity</i>
S1	Doubling and halving.
Group work.	
S1	Art activity.
S1	Healthy eating.
Whole class	<i>Literacy activity</i>
S2	Play scripts
S2	Numeracy hour. 'Carroll' diagrams odd and even numbers.
Group activities	<i>Creative activities.</i>
S2	Play-scripts.
S2	Making music
Peer interactions	
S1	Small group
S2	Small group

Whole class level lessons during the literacy hour.

The Literacy hour is a product of the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE 1998) introduced as a result of the Dearing Review of the National Curriculum that recommended 180 hours for English. In a school year of around 36 weeks of five days, this works out to one hour per day. There is a further specified frame work for the structure of the hour.

Class 1.

The class teacher (T1) in conjunction with the other teachers in the Juniors' section had chosen to read the story of Mother Teresa in English to stimulate discussion and develop children's literacy during this hour and also to promote cultural awareness and empathy.

Story of Mother Teresa's work in India, 'Sister on the street.'

In this excerpt, the class-teacher continues from previous readings in English, of the story to the children, who are all sitting on the floor in a large group at the front of the class in close proximity to the teacher. She explains to the class that they will rewrite the chapter in their own words today.

Year 3 children are to rewrite the story in the present tense, with year 4 children re writing the story and inserting pronouns where necessary. These activities present high levels of cognitive challenge to both age groups of the children.

T1: It's only Chapter 5 you have to concentrate today.

[T1 reads story aloud to class of children who are sitting on the floor near the whiteboard].

T1: On Monday morning, I woke with a cold ...(T1 stops to ask a question to the class)

T1: If someone tells you that you have to stay in bed. What's another word for that?

gB y3: must.

bM y3:should [children involved and participate giving their various responses]

gN y4: forced.

bS y4: had to

T1: One word I'm looking for ...insisted....insist. If somebody tells you must do something they insist you do it.

gF y3: What's herbal?

T1: Herbal tea – but it's better for you, because it's got fruit and things in it.

gHy3: When I'm ill my dad makes me a hot drink and put' s honey in it.

[girls feels comfortable to share her experience with the class]

T1[continues to read story].

T1: What does bedridden mean?

bWy3: You have to stay in bed!

[T1 continues to read the story].

T1:You've missed the biggest event of the century?

T1: What' s a century?

bMy3: Is it like..... a year ago? [child is possibly thinking of the new millennium]

T1: (explains) A hundred years is a century.

bR y3:What's a millennium? A thousand years.

T1: Yes.

bLy3: I thought a sentry is a guard!

T1: How do we spell century? [responds to child's confusion]

T1: We'll put it on the board. Spell it together [referring to the word on the whiteboard].

CH.[spell Century together].

T1. Excellent!

Ch: S e n t r y [spell Sentry together].

bNy4: Do you include when the world was alive? It would be like a 100 centuries.

T1: Yes we are in the 21st century at the moment.

T1: How many centuries have we had since Jesus died? ...21.

T1: Anyway, let's get back to the story.

bLy3: Sentry and century sounds the same![boy is still unsure].

T1: Anyway! [teacher continues story].

T1: Calls out name of y3bN.

T1: [continues to read story].

T1 explains what will happen next and what guidance she will give the children regarding the task. The teacher is firmly in control of the knowledge however her interpretation is not always shared with the children as e.g.S1bLy3 communicates. He is still unsure after the explanation:

One of the features of these whole class lessons for children is that their participation is related to their linguistic ability, levels of confidence and volition. In C1 a pattern of negative interactions was developing in these sessions between T1 and one boy.

In these scenarios one boy's behaviour indicates that he is not meeting the teacher's expectations of reciprocity of being able to listen and pay attention during these formal sessions. On these occasions which are whole class lessons, he is not focused on the lessons and a negative pattern of interaction is emerging between him and the class-teacher. The first excerpt is from the reading of the story of Mother Teresa.

T1→S1bNy3 What has she said?

(T1 is referring to Shamila's defence of Mother Teresa).

The boy does not respond and T1 repeats the question in a different way to aid the child's understanding.

T1: What sort of things does she say?

T1:→S1bNy3 If you were paying attention instead of playing with that chair you would know. I don't mind helping children who listen but I do mind helping children who don't listen at all.

(T1 does try to encourage a response from the child).

T1:→S1bNy3 You don't have to be exact! What kind of things does Shamila say in defence of Mother Teresa?

Task to follow story of Mother Teresa's work in India, 'Sister on the street.

The activity is matched to the children's level,

[T1 Discourse sensitively explained follow on tasks to both groups of children. She

broke the task down into manageable portions for the children.]

T1: First we're going to discuss the work. Then year 4 are going to do some handwriting while I go over the work with year 3 and then we'll swap over.

T1: First of all, let's go through story.

I'll put this in black pen, so that you know you can both use this part of the board. [differentiating the work for the children]

T1:Let's write the basic story and the order of how you are going to rewrite your story.

[The approach is methodical the, teacher is establishing contingent strategies for children's writing of the story, it can be regarded as a means of enabling children to succeed].

T1: What's the first thing that happened in Chapter V?

T1: I'm going to put all these [referring to phrases from the story] down the middle in one line. Make sure you can see. Okay.

T1:→by3M What's the first thing?

[Teacher questioned the children and encourages reflection and continued to ask them to recall facts from the story. she encouraged them to make inferences from the statements in the story].

T1: What kind of things does Sunita say in defence of Mother Teresa?

by3M: She's gonna stay (teacher corrects language) going to stay. She's never going to leave the poor to suffer.

T1: Excellent! *[Teacher gives praise and repeats what's been said so that the meaning is clear to the children].*

She basically defends her [referring to Mother Teresa] by saying she won't do that.

T1: What does she say about Mother Teresa?

Mother Teresa is what?

A credit, dedicated to her people.

T1: What sort of attitude does Sumil have?

y4gT: I told you so!

T1: I can't believe my ears.

T1: What else can we use?
Ch: I don't believe it [children participate in chorus].
T1: Fine!
bWy3: I cannot believe what I'm hearing
b Zy3:I can't believe I'm listening to Sumil.
gIy3 can't believe I'm hearing this.
T1: I can't believe they are saying this.

C1. Whole class activity during Numeracy hour.

During this numeracy activity year 3 and 4 children were working together, the teaching style is didactic with strong framing. It is an activity that the children are familiar with and forms the usual routine for the Numeracy hour which is a directive of the National Numeracy Strategy (DfEE, 1999).

Topic: Doubling, halving and multiplying numbers.

Resources: Whiteboard and the teacher uses ruler to point to the numbers.

Language : Welsh.

Teacher points to a numbers on the whiteboard with a ruler.

T1: *double 5?*

T1: *double 10?*

T1: *There's a trick here!*

Children:(eager to answer calling out) Oh! Oh!

[in an attempt to gain the teacher's attention, so that they can answer].

bYy4: *It's not difficult, you just add nought!*

T1: *Yes, you do add nought to the number, but why?*

gHy4: *It's five.*

T1: (explains) *You have to put the nought in the units' column.*

T1: *Look at this* (points to 56).

T1: *You can't put a zero in the unit's column here!*

[Teacher explains place value what goes in the units column, what goes in the tens column, hundreds and thousands].

T1: refers to 56 again

Double fifty is a hundred, double 6 is 12.

112.

gAy3: *Double 5?*

T1: *Double 15?*

T1: *Double 30?*

[Teacher moves on from doubling to halving and continues to question children – breaking down tasks into stages to aid their understanding].

T1: *What's half of 66?*

T1: *Half of six, half of sixty.*

bNy3: *thirty three.*
T1: *Do you know why ?*
T1: *What's half of six →by4M?*
T1: *What's half of six hundred?*
bSy3: *Three hundred.*
T1: *you follow the same old pattern.*

C1 Whole Class Activity

Science. Health Promotion lesson [Gwers Hybu Iechyd].

The aim of this lesson was for the children to write a persuasive report, to promote people to adopt healthier life-styles. It was a continuation of the previous day's lesson when the children had started writing the report. The lesson was delivered first to the year 3 group, and then to the year 4 group who participated in music lessons in another part of the school at the start of the session before returning to the classroom. It is a challenging task for the children and involves thinking of their own reasons for health promotion. The teacher has marked the first draft of the children's work and now they are re-working, reflecting and amending their individual work. First she reminds the children of what they are writing and then gives examples of how they can start their writing.

T1: *What are you writing? Your what? [Opinion].*

A report on healthy eating. What do you think?

Expects the children to listen.

T1→bNy3 *Would you listen instead of bothering by3S in his back.*

She identifies the right time to ask questions.

Now is the time to ask questions.

T1: *First paragraph*

T1: *In the first paragraph you must say what you are giving your opinion on.*

T1 : *First Paragraph. What's the first sentence we can use to start our work?*

y3bM: *In my opinion everyone should eat healthily and have a little bit of everything.*

T1: *What else could the sentence start with?*

bly3: *In my opinion, everyone should eat healthily and have a bit of everything instead of eating chocolates and*

T1: *What else could the sentence start with?*

b2y3: *I think,*
by3U *I believe strongly*
g1y3: *I believe weakly {child has misunderstood the language or context }.*
T1: *Explains how strong is appropriate but weak isn't.*
T1: *You don't want weak because you want to say that you feel strongly about these things. These things are important to you.*

[children continue with the pattern for phrases to start their reasoning.]

b4y3: *It's a responsibility on us*
T1 intervenes and gives an example: *We have to eat healthily instead of what?*
...instead of sitting down and watching the television.
by3U: *instead of eating sweets*
by4M : *instead of eating sweets and playing play-station*
Y3bU: *How many sentences do we need to write for the first paragraph?*
T1: *One or two.*

T: *The first sentence starts with either 'We should' or 'In my opinion'.*
T1: *The first paragraph leads to your reasons.*

T1[explains!] *You can't give reasons without saying what you are talking about.*

T1: *In the second paragraph you will give your reasons in sentences, which you've already got and I've marked them.*

T: *What goes in the third paragraph, the closing one?*

The teacher gives responsibility to the children to redraft their work after marking them

T1: *I've marked them*
T1: *If there's something incorrect what do you need to do?*
bFy3: *Correct them.*
T1: *Don't copy the incorrect bit.*
T1: *If you're not sure what to write, put your hand up and I'll come' round to explain.*

During this whole class lesson one of the boys is not listening to the teacher again

T1:→ *S1bNy3 Would you stop playing and look at the whiteboard and pay attention? It's only ten minutes of your time I'm asking? O.K. it will be the same children who will come to me, saying I don't know what to do?*

T1→*S1bNy3 Perhaps you can explain to us what to do now, being that we've almost finished – being we've gone over this yesterday afternoon – explain to us what to do !*

The lesson is very formally structured and children are expected to listen and demonstrate reciprocity T1 gives clear time limits to the children.

C1. Whole Class Cross-Curricular Creative activity lesson linked to a whole school theme- Creating a 3D Flag.

This was a lesson linked to a school wide celebration to coincide with the International Eisteddfod at Llangollen, the children were dressed in a range of colourful National costumes to mark the occasion. The costumes were diverse and in some cases authentic, representing countries from Morocco, France, and U.S.A. to China. The fact that they had dressed up made them more excited and lively than usual. This cross-curricular art activity was introduced by the teacher by reading an article about an American artist Jasper Johns and showing them a photograph of his original 3D work of Art based on the American Flag. The composition developed by triplication of superimposed images of the flag of gradational size, large, medium and small to give a 3D effect.

T1: *What do you see?*

Ch. *American flag.*

T1: *Star Spangled Banner.*

T1: *What's special about the flag?*

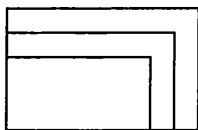
By4T. *It's been raised.*

T1: *It's in 3D relief.*

[T1 then explained how in the lesson they would create a flag produced using similar techniques to the artist Jasper Johns. She then shows them coloured computer printouts of flags from countries which participated in Euro 2004 and asked the children to identify them.]

The boys in the class were excited and couldn't wait to shout out the answers of what flags represented which country. T1 continued by demonstrating how to make a 3D effect flag on rectangle shapes of increasing gradational size.

Fig.4.7 . 3D model American flag.



27 x 18 cms.

C2. *Whole class activity Numeracy hour.*

This lesson was delivered in didactic style during the numeracy hour to the whole class. T2 teacher used the (IWB) interactively as a learning resource for the lesson with children coming forward to write the numbers on the board at the request of the teacher. The teacher controls the pace of the lesson.

Carroll diagrams/ odd and even numbers.

Carroll diagrams are a diagrammatic mode of categorising numbers according to certain properties they possess. In this case the children are categorising numbers according to two properties, the first property is whether they are odd or even and the second is whether they include one ten or two tens.

Figure 4 8. Carroll diagram

	odd	even				
Number with 1 ten	<table border="1"><tr><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>13</td></tr></table>	11	13	<table border="1"><tr><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>24</td></tr></table>	18	24
11						
13						
18						
24						
Number with 2 tens	<table border="1"><tr><td>21</td></tr><tr><td>25</td></tr></table>	21	25	<table border="1"><tr><td>26</td></tr><tr><td>28</td></tr></table>	26	28
21						
25						
26						
28						

The teacher first asked the children to listen carefully and asked questions, the majority of children responded enthusiastically putting up their hands to indicate their readiness to give answers.

T2: Does anyone remember doing this last year?

T2 → bPy4 Do you remember doing this last year P?

bPy4: Yes! But can't remember what it was.

T2: It looks a little bit like this?

[T2 draws diagram as Fig 4.8 on the IWB. She adds four categorical headings to the rectangles of odd and even, numbers with one ten and numbers with two tens].

T2: I'm going to put some numbers on the IWB now and I'm going to choose some children to come up and write them in the right boxes.

You'll have to think carefully whether they're even or odd, one ten or two tens because that will depend on the boxes.

T2: Anyone think they know what box it goes in? gNy4?

T2: See if she's right?

T2: Is she right?

T2: Can you explain to us why you put it there?

gNy4 Because its got one ten and six is even.

T2: Exactly right!

T2: Do you know?

T2: Come on then! (pleasant encouraging tone)

T2: 29 think carefully!

T2: Has it got one ten or two tens? (repeats).

bTy4: Two tens.

T2: And is it odd or even?

T2: And its odd. If its got two tens does it go here or here?

T2: Which is the row for the odd numbers? Is it here or here?

(child writes on IWB).

T2: Write it then. Well done!

T2: Good, Excellent bTy4.

C2 Creative activity- Music.

During this activity children worked in their usual class groups and continued with a music activity they had been working on previously to write a tune and play it on the instruments. They selected from a range of instruments drums, castanets, xylophone, cymbals, glockenspiel etc.

Teacher asked the group to:

1. Think of ways to improve their tune they've written.
2. Think of a name for the piece of music.
3. She suggests a rhythm of 1, 2, 3. repeated.

When they finished composing their music they tape-record it. Each group plays their tune to the rest of the groups in the class. The children enjoyed this activity and were encouraged to experiment and try new ideas.

T2 communicated this message during a music activity in C2.

T2: → class. Did you enjoy that?

Doesn't matter if you make mistakes. Making mistakes is learning. Going over the work to try again.

C2. Script from Play 'Fantastic Mr. Fox'.

This is a lesson excerpt from the literacy hour based on the play '*Fantastic Mr. Fox*'.

During this morning session of the literacy hour the class-teacher explained some of the differences between reading from a play and reading from a story to the children the class teacher explained the format of Scene 1 of the Play's script to the whole class of children who are sitting at their tables. There are six characters in the play, three of whom do not have speaking parts].

T2: We've read '*Fantastic Mr. Fox*'. It's a very, very good book, we enjoyed it!

[T2: communicates a message that books are enjoyable]

Teacher reads from the script of *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. and explains as she proceeds.

T2: 'Bogus, Bunsen and Bean are sitting at three tables laden with food and placed in a line on the stage in front of the drawn curtain [These are three characters in the play]. They are frozen'.

T2: How are they sitting if they're frozen gCy4 ?

[Teacher next explains stage direction].

T2: [*Lights are off at this point. Children enter from the back of the hall*].

We don't usually read that! It's the stage direction!

T2: We've got children, *First child, second child, third child*

[These are the three other characters in the play].

T2: We need some children.

And we need three of them.

T2: Who would like to have a go?

[Children put up their hands and eagerly try to get the teacher's attention

Demonstrating their enthusiasm].

T2: Jy4 you can be child 1.

T2. Child 2.

T2: Ky4 You can be child 2.

T2. Child 3. Who'd like to have a go? You can have a go.

T2: y4 C You can be child 3.

T2: We've got children. Shall we all read the children's part?

Children read together and then each part in turn.

Sensitivity - The tone of discourse is warm and encouraging.

T2 "There's a big circle there and it says 'no speech marks'. Why don't we use them here? Do you know (b I y4)?

b I y4: we usually use them when someone is speaking in a story.

T2. You're absolutely right! We usually put 'and' around the writing.

T2: Why don't we in the play?

T2: Why bOy4?

bOy4 : The names are down anyway.

T2. Good. Excellent! Teacher repeats what the boy has said. And in a play, what do people usually do? It's usually about speaking anyway. So you don't need to tell them you're speaking! Good.

[T2 gives praise and acknowledges children's efforts].

T2: That was beautiful reading but there's one thing I'm going to say!

I'm not criticizing your reading. Your reading was beautiful. This is a play!

[Teacher reads in an inexpressive way].

T2: What could I do to make it more interesting? (referring to play script text).

T2: How would you say it bPy4? [child demonstrates].

T2: Can you see he's putting expression in his voice?

[Teacher clarifies meaning by explaining in a different way].

T2.His voice goes up and down.

[Teacher speaks again in a monotone to demonstrate}. Do we speak like that?

T2: What could I do to make that really good?

gMy4: Expression!

T2: A play is not like reading it's like speaking. You need to put some expression into your play!

Small group activities.

C1 Practical group work session that followed on from whole class lesson on the 3D flag.

During this practical part of the activity the children were able to move around the classroom more freely. They interacted with each other in their groups and discussed what they were doing and gave guidance to their peers on the activity and enter into conversations.

Dialogue between dyad y4bI and y4gT during group work.

The children's conversation which is initiated and led by the girl, indicates that they are friends and is initially unrelated to the task. As the conversation proceeds, there is an offer of help given to the boy.

[gTy4: initiates conversation with bI y4]

gTy4: *bIy4 Would you like to come to my house again?*

bIy4: *Yes!*

gTy4: *What do you mean?*

gTy4: *Would you like to come to my house again?*

bIy4: *O.K.*

gTy4: *You could see my new shoes.*

gTy4: Would you like help?

bly4: Yes..

bly4: Can I please do it for you?

gTy4: I've stuck another one with glue. I've done it wrong here.

I like doing this! [She demonstrates to y4 boy how to fold a mount for supporting 3D effect of flag].

You turn it over.

Wait for it to dry.

Teacher praises children's reciprocity. There is an acknowledgement of good working relationships between children.

T1: There are good children here! Helping other children.

Dyad y3 girls working together to colour the German Flag.

gH y3 Could I borrow the yellow? (Referring to crayon).

gEy3 You can't!

gE y3 Which ones are mine?

gE y3 These are mine?

g H y3 Could I borrow it?

[Despite not sharing the interchanges are still polite, indicating that politeness is a normalised form of behaviour in the classroom.]

S1 Target child observation of girl T year 4 writing a Short exciting horror story.

gTy4 is sitting with a small group of four children consisting of one other girl and 2 boys. Although they are sitting in a group they are working individually. The task is a follow on task from a Welsh story as part of a language activity. The teacher has marked their script and they are redrafting the story. The ideas for the story have been developed from a Welsh adaptation by Ross Davies of an English horror story, "Y Gors Arswydus" Masters (1998).

10.30 a.m.

[gTy4 is very involved in the task and concentrating hard looking down at her script. She turns to talk to gHy4]

gTy4→gHy4 My handwriting's better when I print than when I join up my writing.

gTy4 looks down again at the marked script and continues to write.

bly4 asks gTy4

bly4→What do you do on the right hand side of the new paper?

No response heard from gTy4.

gTy4 sits back in the chair to think for a minute.
She looks at the paragraph on the script and stares at it.

gTy4→gHy4 *I can do an impression!*

She returns her focus to the work and continues with her writing.
The group work quietly on the task.

10.45 a.m.

gTy4 *Just go out to play!*

Break.

11.10. a.m. Children re enter classroom after the break period.

gTy4→gHy4 *Have you seen the film?*

gTy4 looks to the left side of the script, reads and writes the new draft. She concentrates. She lifts up her head up and looks around.

gTy4→T1 *I haven't finished because I was helping others on the computer yesterday.*

T1→gTy4 *You've nearly finished whatever!*

gTy4: *takes a pencil from her pencil case and lends it to one of the boys.*

gTy4: *takes her script to the teacher.*

gTy4→T1 *I've finished! [Leaves script on the teacher's desk at the front of the class.*

gTy4: *continues working on a work sheet– Homophones. [words that are spelt the same but have different meanings.]*

gTy4→gHy4 *Finished your work yet?*

gTy4→T1 *Can I have some paper?*

gTy4: *She continues with part B of the activity.*

C2Y4. Peer group activity- a follow on activity from morning literacy hour.

Play script .Fantastic Mr. Fox. '

T2 has divided the class into six groups of six to organise themselves to put on a production of the above play, it is a follow on activity from the morning's literacy hour. The groups disperse to various locations while two groups remain in the classroom to organise themselves to allocate parts and practice a performance of the play without the teacher' supervision. There are six characters, Bogus, Bounce and Bean and three child parts Child1, Child 2 and Child3. This group is composed of six boys. The interaction is lively and boisterous and at times they disagree about the

allocation of roles, however they manage to complete the task and support and guide one another with N taking most responsibility. The teacher checks on them at the end to ensure that all roles have been allocated.

These are all Y4 boys. The parts are as follows:-Bounce H, Bogus B. Bean N. Child 1 C, Child 2 I and Child 3 T.

Teacher discourse.

The teacher is not present for most of the sequence and enters towards the end.

Children's discourse

H→gchn.Yeah ! We're the weirdos! [child refers to the 3 characters in the play].

N→ gchn. Anybody want to be him? (referring to the characters listed).

H→ gchn .I don't want to be Him! Not me. Cross off, Not me!

C→ gchn .I wanna be him, I wanna be him!!

N→ gchn. Boys we've got to write down the parts! (Reminds the group that they need to have some order and record the allocation of parts so that there's no confusion). Print Bean, Bunsen , Bogus, 1st child, 2nd child, 3rd child.

H→ gchn.Yeah! Yeah!

B→I 2nd child

B→ gchn Who am I again I? [Without the teacher's supervision their behaviour is boisterous however they eventually manage to organise themselves].

I→bBYou're Bogus

bB→I'm Bogus! Bogus.

bH→Who am I C? Who am I again I?

bI→ bI don't know!

bN→ bH You're Bounce. Is he the skinny one?

bN→ The tiniest ones Bounce

bN→Ready! Let's all read our parts.

bH→What do I do with Bounce? [referring what kind of role he should act out]

bN→ H: I don't think you do. All you do is stay in the background and whisper cruel things to each other

Do I highlight anything? Do I write anything down? (One boy is keeping a record of which parts are allocated to whom).

Teacher returns to check on children

T→ gchn You've decided whose who?

bH→T.A 's Bogus, I'm Bounce

bH→T.I'm the midget. No I'm not ready! We need to highlight them!

Not yet! (They are highlighting the script with the parts allocated).

Teacher leaves to check on another group.

bI→ I'm the 2nd child.

bC→ Whose the 2nd child?

bC→ I. You said you were the 1st child.

bC→ No! You're the 1st, I'm the 2nd, he's the third . Swap round J.

bC→ You can't read that can you?

bI→ Yeah

Teacher returns to class and intervenes to check that all parts have been allocated

T→ Whose being child 1 etc?

[teacher checks that all parts have been allocated].

T→ Don't forget to read the stage directions.

It tells you where you should all be sitting at the beginning.

T→ You've got to set yourselves up

Autonomy.

Children are given responsibility by their teacher to organise their parts for the play.

There are six boys in the group. They are asked by the teacher to highlight their parts on the play script She wants to retain the sheet to stick into their books as evidence of their work.

C2 .English activity , Changing verbs to the past tense- observation of two boys.

The boys are sitting in a mixed group of six children. The two observed are working as pairs. Occasionally they speak to other members of the group.

T2 Introduces an activity from the text book.

T2: Where would we look for new words? Thesaurus.

T2: I'm going to go over this quickly because you've used it before.

The children are looking for alternative verbs for the sentences.

e.g. The waves went against the rocks .

11.15 a.m. bIy4 and bCy4

Boys are writing down the date and title. They are using the thesaurus together.

bIy4; Look for 'crashed' in the thesaurus. Find 'crash'.

bCy4 [Continues to write story] What shall we use instead of?

T2; Intervenes.

T2: Stop! The noise levels!

I'm going to give each group five points and I'm going to take them away from any group that's noisy. Let's see if you can all keep the points.

11.25 a.m. 3rd child in group intervenes and asks. Have you found the word?

bCy4→ Shows 3rd child the word on the page in the thesaurus.

bCy4: Me and I have used 'collision'.

T2: We say 'Collided'!

bCy4: Looks in Thesaurus 'savage' – Lily Savage.

bCy4; Look bHy4 – 'Savage'.

[Noise levels are raised again].

T2: Group S are keeping their points!

bCy4→ Girls did you find 'stood'?

bCy4→ What's a different word for froze?

11.40.a.m .bly4 Keeps writing in joined up style and looks up to read paragraph from text book.

T2: I just heard 'can't'! What can you do? gMy4

iii) Class–group relations.

Vignettes.

a)

C1.teacher shares a joke with children during lesson to create a positive context for learning. In explaining a Co-ordinates game before a map- reading exercise she explains a simple way for children to remember map-reading co-ordinates. She explains in Welsh:

T1: *Through the door and up the stairs!*

T1: *You wouldn't go up stairs and then through the door would you?*

Ch: *Laugh out loud!*

b)

C2.a.m. One boy wouldn't enter the classroom in the morning as he'd had his haircut shorter than usual. He wouldn't remove his anorak hood. The teacher prepared the way for him to enter the class.

T2 → C2 bMy4 is a little bit worried today! He had his haircut, shorter than usual. We're going to let him keep his hood on until he's got used to it.

T2 → C2. You're not going to laugh at him are you?

T2 influences the responses of the group and their relationships towards one another.

She leads the class to guide their social relations, so that children follow. Later the same day bMy4 was chosen by bhy4 to help him to give out the text books as text book monitor.

c) In this vignette one boy interrupted another during conversation. The teacher asks him to apologise.

T2 → bHy4 Could you say sorry to gty4 please?

T2 → bHy4 gty4 was in the middle of explaining something to you!

bHy4 → gty4 Sorry!

Section 4.4. Children's writing and focus group discussion.

The findings from the writing activity and focus group discussion with the children are presented here they were centred on four topics identified on the work sheets.

These were:

Learning in school;

What the teacher tells you about how to learn ;

About other children's learning;

About your learning.

Children's discourses on learning in school.

This section gathered general information on children's discourses on learning in school.

School 1, Welsh medium.

All of the girls stated that they liked school, one year four girl strongly declared her feelings towards the school stating

S1gH y4: I like school very much.

However, there were some aspects of school that they were less happy about. In S1gHy4's case, she commented that she didn't like English and preferred her heritage language of Welsh. Whilst another year 4 girl explained how she liked school and art in particular, but did not like learning or want to learn as she found the work difficult.

With the boys there was not such complete agreement, with 5 boys out of the sample of 7, (1/2 year 3 and 2/5) year 4 stating that they did not like school. The reasons given for this were associated with certain subjects or finding the work difficult. One of the S1y3bU boys did not like Welsh. As he was fairly new to the setting he found the language transition from an English medium to a Welsh medium school quite difficult. Another year 4 boy did not like language and writing. It was interesting to

note that the children mainly listed core National Curriculum subjects as what they learnt in school e.g. Science, Maths, English and Welsh Languages with some including Art, Music and History. Across the years 3 and 4 age groups, Maths and Games appeared to be the most popular subjects with several boys and girls stating that they liked games, because it was easy and they didn't have to think; they also appreciated their health benefits. Many of the children also commented on how they enjoyed learning the various musical instruments e.g. piano, keyboard and violin and participating in competitions. One of the boys explained how he

S1bNy4 *Liked taking work home.*

Whilst another S1y4bM explained how he was learning to live properly.

School 2, English Medium.

In School 2, the eight children selected unanimously agreed that they liked school and wanted to learn, 6/8 stated that there was nothing they disliked about school.

S2 b & g y4: I like my class because I like the work.

Again, as in School 1 the subjects they mainly commented on were core National Curriculum ones that they liked such as Mathematics and Science, 2 boys indicated that they did not like 'Comprehension success' a book of comprehension exercises, one noting that he did not like 'inglish' (S2 by4). Certain topics and activities were identified as of particular interest e.g. songs and playing instruments [music], computers [I.T.], King Henry [History], animals and bones [Science]. Two children, one boy and one girl expressed their enthusiasm and strong, rich and broad learning dispositions by stating

S2 y4g & b I want to learn everything!

Explicit Classroom Rules.

Children in the two classrooms identified the explicit classroom rules and these were displayed in both cases on the walls of the settings. There appear to be three main aspects to these rules:

1. Management in the classroom: maintaining order and looking after resources.
2. Caring and reciprocity towards others;
3. Learning.

Table 4. 4.8 Classroom rules.

C1	C2
<i>{Listen while she's explaining</i>	Please listen when someone is speaking they probably have something important to say.
<i>Work quietly and No shouting out or screaming</i>	Please work quietly so that others around you can work.
<i>No running round the tables</i>	Move around the class safely
<i>Don't be nasty to others swear or fight .</i>	Respect other people's ideas
	Make visitors to the classroom welcome
<i>No interactive whiteboard</i>	Please take care when using the interactive whiteboard
<i>try your best</i>	Always try your best.
	Please be gentle with the hamster.
<i>Sit still</i>	
<i>To put the books back in the right place</i>	

In C1 the children in Y4 children were encouraged to work more independently and used reference books for their work when the teacher was busy with the younger Y3 children. The rule regarding reference books referred to putting these books back in right place.

In C2 the classroom was equipped with an (IWB) which often formed a focus for learning during formal lessons and for teaching during the literacy and numeracy hours. Children did participate interactively using the IWB entering words, symbols or numerals as the lesson demanded, coming up to the board and using the specialised

pens for writing their answers or ideas. They regarded this as exciting. It helped the teacher to make the explanatory processes of lessons visual and interactive. The rule applied to this as it is an expensive resource which needed care during use. In School 1 there was no interactive whiteboard, but a standard whiteboard, this was used in a similar way to the IWB but without the facility to download pre-entered data or information from a computer file or the Internet. The fact that space was limited restricted movement in both classrooms and this meant that rules were created in relation to moving around the classrooms. The rule relating to the hamster in C2 was to ensure children cared properly for their pet, learning to take responsibility and develop their caring skills and self-reliance which they thoroughly enjoyed working together in pairs or small groups. There was no class pet in the C1 classroom, the size of the room being too limiting.

Children's relationships and sense of belonging.

Relationships with the class-teacher and their friends and peers are very important to children in these classes.

Relationships with friends and peers and affectionate feelings towards them.

Most of the children felt they belonged in class because of the relationships with their friends and being able to play with them. One boy felt he didn't belong (S1by4) but didn't explain why and one girl felt that sometimes she didn't belong, this was related to the fact that her year group had been split and some of her friends from year 4 were in the classroom above with the Year 5 group.

S1gT y4: The best thing is my friends, but what I don't like is the fact that some of Year 4 are upstairs and we are downstairs.

Other children indicated how their sense of belonging was related to their friends:-

S1g y4: What makes me feel at home is that everyone makes me laugh!

S2 b y4: because your friends make you feel welcome.

S1gy3: Seeing my friends.

S1gy3: *Lots of friends in the classroom*

S2gy4: I play with my friends.

In C2 another girl appreciated that her sense of belonging was related to her involvement.

S2 g y4: because I join in.

[She shows that taking initiative is important for her belonging]

Affectionate feelings towards their class-teacher and other teachers.

Children in both settings indicated their affection feelings towards teacher and other teacher's in the school which contributed to their sense of belonging.

S1g y4: *I like Miss.X.*

Another girl S1g y4: *I like my teacher.*

Whilst another boy explained how all the teachers in the school looked after them

S1b y3: *because they look after us, all the teachers .*

c) Trust that the teacher would help them with their work.

S1gy3: *fine she helps me with my work.*

d) Sensitivity in relation to their work

Children explained that they liked their teacher because she showed sensitivity towards them.

S2 g y4: I like my teacher because she asks if we are stuck.

S2 g y4: She won't shout at you if you are stuck.

S2 g y4: She explains it all over again.

Children's reasons for wanting to learn.

Children from both schools identified a range of reasons for wanting to learn and showed the ability to consider different ways of learning and both long and short-term outcomes and learning. They showed appreciation of the links between learning and their past socio-history, present and future. Learning was identified as being *fun*, *exciting* and a means of gaining knowledge for attainment and achievement.

2bS2: I want to learn because its fun.

Short-term or performance goals and the longer term mastery goals were discussed by children as the outcomes of learning. The short-term outcomes / performance goals identified were:-.

S2 g & by4: Because it's exciting and fun.
S2 g y4: so we can be good at things!
S2 g y4I: want to be bright
S2 b y4 I: do not want to be dumb

They associated learning:

With knowing or not knowing

S1gy3: *to learn more*
S2 b y4: so you 'nofings' [so you know things]
S2by4: I do not want to be dumb.

Or specific subject knowledge

(S2gy4)To get good at maths and 'landwige' [language]
Their future and how learning would help them or others

S1by3: *When I'm old it will help me*
S2by4: I want to learn because I want to be brainy

One girl noted humanitarian reasons for wanting to learn.

S1g y4: *When I grow up I will be able to help other children.*

They discourses revealed their appreciation of the connection between learning and what they would *become* in the future; their career prospects, or *a good job* and its earning potential:

S2gy4: I want to get a job.
S1by4: *To have a good job and more money when I grow up.*

Their special interests:

S1gy3: *Stories. When I'm an adult I'll be famous.*
S2by4: Playing instruments.

Their socio-history:

S1by4: I want to learn Spanish, I was born in Spain.

Factors they identified as affecting their learning.

a) Ability.S1Y4gH: If you're good at something you're able to work harder at it. Several children noted that they liked what they were good at.

b) Effort.

S2gy4: Trying hard in everything you do

c) Working hard at things they liked.

S1gy4: *if you like something you are able to work harder at it.*

S1gy4: *sometimes if you like something we work better at it*

Interpretation of teacher messages about learning

a). Reciprocity

S2gy4: Listening.

S2gy4: I ask things about my work and it makes it easy

S1gy4: *Listening when she's explaining*

S12by3: *sitting down on the floor and discussing.*

S1y4g: *listen to other people and you'll learn more.*

S1y4g: *Miss X says if you can't think of what to do ask a friend.*

S b&gy4: *If you can't think of what to do ask a friend.*

b). Reflection to use their mind.

S1by3: *Looking over the work.*

S2y4b: She makes things easier to understand in class

S2y4g: She helps you to work out hard things in easy ways.

c). Resilience. One year 4 boy explained how he liked taking work home and to practice it.

S1y4b: *Practice it by working in class and at home*

S2y4: Can't isn't a word in work

S2y4b: She explains it all over again.

S2y4b: She talks to me to encourage me.

d). Resourceful

S2y4: Miss Y helps me to learn she explains things well

S1y4b: *to read books to have information.*

Children's responses to the teachers' messages.

Children in both settings stated that they responded positively to what the teachers said and showed:

Reciprocity.

By listening.

S1, 2b & g y4: *Yes, I listen.*

S1:2b&gy3: *Yes, I listen to do well in the work*

S2y4b: *Yes! I always listen to learn.*

Trust

Children showed their complete trust in their teacher's knowledge. .

S1y3: *Yes because the teacher says everything.*

Uncertainty.

Sometimes they showed that they were unsure of what the teacher thought about their learning.

S1gy4: *She thinks I'm not good at my work and moves me*

When they were unsure of what the teacher thought, they depended on affirmation by peers.

S2gy4: My friends say she says I'm good.

Formative assessment.

To practice my handwriting gy4

S2y4gM: To practice my hand writing

S1by3N better writing

Evaluative messages.

S1, 2gy4: I have to work harder.

S2gy4 : *to tidy my work*

S1gy3: *Tidy work.*

S2gy4: Neat only sometimes.

S1 by4: *She says I'm good at maths.*

Children's perspective on who helps them with their learning.

Table 4.4.9 *Children's perspective on who helps them with their learning.*

Who or what helps you with learning?	C1 Yr3 b	C1 Yr 3 g	C1 Yr4 b	C1 Yr4 g	C2 Y4 b	C2 Y4 g
Person in next seat					1	
Friends		1	1	2		1
Other teacher	1	2				
Family		1				1
Class teacher	1	2	1		3	3
Reference books			4	1		

In discussing who helped with their learning, the majority of the children in C2 indicated that the class-teacher helped them the most with their learning, with some children identifying family, friends or the person who sat next to them. This response was similar to that of C1 year 3 children who identified the class-teacher, friends, family and another teacher who had been a supply teacher as helping with their

learning. The response from the Year 4 children in C1 differed as they identified the use of reference books as the main source of their help, followed by friends and the teacher. This confirmed the teacher's statements that she expected the year 4 children to work more independently.

Writing and Discussion Session 2 with Children.

How children perceive the learning of their peers.

Although it could be perceived unethical to ask children about the learning of peers (as discussed by Robertson 2002:56) , the purpose here was to be factual and to gain understanding of how they made sense of learning processes rather than for comparison with others. In describing the 'best learners' in the classroom they identified the following constructs as important.

Having ability or demonstrating ability by having knowledge, answering questions and answering questions correctly .

Having ability

S1yr4b (2) because they are very able

Demonstrating ability by having knowledge

S1by3: because he's a genius.

S1by3: he/they knows everything.

S1by3: because they know everything.

Using their mind.

a)Having ideas

S2gy4 lots of ideas

b) answering questions and answering questions correctly .

S2by4 because he answers lots of questions

S2by4 because he thinks of lots of questions and gets them right

S1yr3b because he has every answer correct

S1yr 3 girls

because she answers well
because her answers are good.

c) Listening.

S2by3because he listens
S1gy4 because they listen to the teacher all the time

d) Being good at maths had a special significance

S1by4: *because he's good at doing mathematics.*
S1gy3: *she's good at everything including maths.*
S1gy3: *because she's good at maths.*
S1gy4 *do maths well*

e)working quickly

S1gy4: *gTy4 does her work quickly*

f) Writing well

S1 gy4 Writing excellent stories.

What the teacher says about the best learners.

In discussing what the teachers says about the best learners, children from both classes identified

General praise.

good ,very good , excellent and fantastic or good work

Specific praise for using their mind

S1y3 *good thinking*

How children perceive the learning of their peers.

S1by4

because he helps me when I'm stuck
because he sits next to me
because she works quietly and she works well.

S1yr 4 g

because he knows a lot

Why they are the best learners. The reasons given were working hard and having knowledge:

S1yr3b

because they work hard / in everything.
because they know everything

What their friends said about their learning.

Children in S1 identified constructs related to ability and to the appearance of their work.

T's a brain box, is a clever clogs,
S1 *very good*, [which could relate to ability or behaviour]
H does tidy work and

Children who don't work.

In discussing children who don't work in class in School 1, five year 3 children named one boy S1bNy3 as a child who didn't work and four another boy.

Whereas in School 2 children showed their awareness of the ambivalence of some children towards their work

S2y4 Sometimes they do, sometimes they don't

They knew that some children needed extra help and received support.

S2y4: Some children go to another teacher for help.

The children in S1y4 didn't take the question so seriously and named each other and themselves as children who didn't work as a joke. Although from observations it could be seen that they were able and hardworking children .One girl y4N did have more difficulty with her work and disclosed on several occasions that she found the work difficult. The reasons given for children not working were;

Thinking of other things and not concentrating.

S1y3b *Because they're thinking of ballerina* (referring to the girls).

S2y4g Thinking about things

S1y3b *because he's on Pluto planet* (referring to y3bN).

Lacking ability.

S1 y3b: *because he doesn't have a brain*

Not-listening.

S1y3g : *because they don't listen*

S1 y3b: *Not listening*

Talking.

S2 y4b: *because they talk, talk too much*

S2 y4: *Talking together*

Other things.

S1y3b *Swinging on the chair*

S2y4g *Play with pencils and rubbers and everything*

S2y4g *Just not working*

S2y4g *Playing around*

S2y4b *Being rude*

Children's discourses about their own learning.

In discussing their own learning and perception of their identity as learners children considered the evaluation of their work by the teacher and peers. The quality of the work and the time it took to complete were important constructs for children in relation to learning. Good work was associated with praise from the teacher.

They were also very aware that peers commented both on the quality of their work, the time they took to complete it and their approach to learning. Quality was described quite harshly by peers as *excellent* or *rubbish* (S1gy3). An important aspect of the quality for the children especially for girls, appeared to be *handwriting* and keeping the work tidy- *neatness*.

S2gy4: *I want to remember to keep my hand-writing neat.*

S1y4: *To tidy my work .*

The time it took and finishing their work .

S1b :*Keep Up.*

Approach to learning.

They revealed that they could distinguish between the extremes of not focusing and concentrating.

S1by4: *Day dreaming.*

S2gy4: Good, because I put my head down

What would make them better learners.

Children were very aware of what would make them better learners. Children in both School 1 and 2 felt that listening and thinking would make them better learners.

Listening

S1y3 b& 2gy3) *To listen more.*

Thinking

S1y3 b: *To think.*

This demonstrates that they are prepared to be active in their learning.

Whereas children in S2 identified '*not talking*', '*using books*' as factors that would make them better learners.

S2y4g not to talk

Using books

S2y4bBooks

Whereas one girl indicated 'nothing'.

S2y4g Nothing

It could be inferred that she is not used to talking about her learning and has limited conceptions about what learning involves.

Unsure but concerned about handwriting.

Another was unsure but was concerned about her handwriting.

S2y4g I don't know but I want to remember to keep my handwriting neat

What stopped them learning or slowed them down.

In the identification of what stopped them learning or slowed them down they discussed a few reasons. There was concern about handwriting and neatness, mainly

amongst the girls. They also identified talking, noise in the classroom, difficult work and peer personalities.

Handwriting and neatness

S2gy4 My handwriting needs to improve that's all
S1by3N *better writing*

Talking

They explained the various ways in which talking affected their learning. One girl explained how it slowed her work

S2gy4: When I talk it slows me down .

The noise from talking was also highlighted as a factor.

S2gy4: When people talk quite loud.
S1by4: *everyone talking.*
S1gy3: *Someone talking.*

Difficult work.

S1gNy4: *The work too difficult.*

Peer personalities.

S2y4: The people in my group.

CHAPTER 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.

This chapter is presented in three main sections. The first section will discuss School and Teachers' discourses (Head-teachers' and Class-teachers'); the second will communicate Children's perspectives and the third will explore episodes of joint-interactions through shared discourses of classroom lessons and small group interactions. Data gathered at whole school, classroom and children's level will be integrated where relevant to contribute to the discussion and to validate the data.

5.1 School and Teachers' discourses on:

- Children's inclusion and involvement;
- Children as learners
- Classroom relationships
- Teaching and learning

5.2 Children's discourses on:

- Learning in school and their relationships;
- Their sense of belonging, well-being and feeling valued;
- Teacher messages and their responses
- Who helps them with their learning
- Other children and their learning;
- '*Self*' as learners (internal feelings, consciousness, attitudes);

5.3 Shared Discourses: (a) class-teachers and children; (b) children and peers.

- Exploring dimensions of classroom interactions—Sensitivity, Stimulation and Autonomy.
- Teacher and children's co-participation; Children and peers.
- Children's actions and behaviours to indicate learning dispositions.

5.1 School and Teachers' discourses:

Children's inclusion and involvement.

In each school their ethos is to develop successful whole school communities to stimulate children's interest in learning to ensure their inclusion. Some common features can be identified in their discourses and social practices:

Cultural and inter-cultural sensitivity.

S1. Sensitivity to all aspects of Welsh National identity and the language forms dominant discourses in the Welsh medium school which permeate all aspects of everyday school life. It creates the school culture together with the contribution of the children and that of the Welsh cultural backgrounds of their homes. Children expressed cultural preferences in their discourses e.g. linguistic preferences towards their heritage language of Welsh e.g. S1gHy4's case. Others imply the value placed on Welsh culture and interest in education by their families through referring to the existence of an interest in their school work and of the close home school relationships.

Traditional musical and literary elements of Welsh culture form core discourses of children's school lives with children music lessons (various instruments including violin, harp, trumpet etc.), choir practice for celebratory concerts forming the routines of school life. Preparation for participation in singing, dancing, recitation and art work as rituals for events such as the URDD (Welsh league of Youth) '*Eisteddfodau*' (musical, art, dance and literary festivals) a key feature of their community life. Through school activities children are guided to appreciate 'books' and discuss 'news' in their home life as aspects of social practice. Sporting activities are considered very important for children's inclusion e.g. 'rugby' and games (see H2 page 175). Several boys and girls expressed their liking for games, because they were easy, healthy

activities and they didn't have to think. It could be inferred that there are times when they just don't want to think, but relax and enjoy themselves; that they feel the pressures of school work or possibly of their evaluation and performance.

Discourses of intercultural sensitivity towards other cultures are established practices in the school focusing on National events in Wales with an International profile such as the '*International Eisteddfod*' at Llangollen. A wide cultural perspective is developed in classroom lessons by activities selected e.g. appreciating the work of International artists, stories on the lives of humanitarians such as Mother Teresa's work in India and events with popular appeal e.g. European Cup Football.

S2. In the English medium school, the English language is the main language for teaching and learning with strong, sensitive inter-cultural discourses entering all aspects of daily life. H2 explained that their policies on learning included appreciation of other cultures to enrich the community life of the school. The implementation of these policies was observed in whole school events such as assemblies that had 'global' dimensions; subject focused events and 'clubs' e.g. theme '*Harvest and the World*' (see H2 page 186). Their cultural focus as a school is global rather than National. Children learn Welsh as a 2nd language and follow the 'Curriculum Cymreig' (Welsh aspects of the National Curriculum). C2 is an ethnically diverse class, Welsh, French and the range of minority languages of the children for whom English is an additional language (EAL) form further discourses through which intercultural sensitivity is promoted. In C2 supportive discourses to include the Japanese children who speak very little English are key features of daily classroom life. T2 encouraged and initiated reciprocity between all children and described the social relations as very good, children were helpful towards one another e.g. the children

were keen to help the Japanese children with very limited English and those in the support group.

T2:→class.Whose going to help bQy4 (Japanese boy) on the computer?

A Japanese girl who had achieved a high level of competence in English, as she had been at the school longer than some of the other EAL children had a key role in their inclusion. She acted as a translator to the Japanese children with less developed language skills and commented on whatever was happening in the classroom. From observation it was apparent that this important role in the class gave her a strong sense of belonging, tremendous pleasure and she expressed her eagerness and her pleasure with this responsibility.

Wide range of educational experiences and activities.

Head-teachers discourses indicated that they appreciated the importance of making learning meaningful to children to gain their involvement, through giving them opportunities to participate in wide ranging educational experiences. As Edwards and Mercer explain that:

..disembedding classroom discourse to the wider environment would increase relevance to pupils and would influence disposition (1995:75).

H1 explained that they encouraged children's '*involvement*' through the provision of:

H1:... *as wide a range of experiences as possible and to encourage their involvement in a range of activities not only purely academic ones, but to involve e.g. singing in the choir, dancing, games and participation in sporting activities.*

Many of the activities are traditional linked to Welsh culture e.g. Welsh folk dancing, singing and playing musical instruments, events with the URDD (Welsh League of Youth) and schools both Welsh and English in their local cluster group.

While H2 commented on how she had been influenced by the first head-teacher she had worked for ...

H2:...who had an inclusive philosophy which gave as much emphasis and value to broad school experiences as to academic achievement .

She described the extra-curricular events in School 2, that are organised to enrich children's lives; musical, sporting, dance and curriculum based subject clubs for those who wish to be involved, at various times of the day e.g. lunchtimes and after school. The wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities on offer to children in both settings represent the cultural symbols of learning that encourage children's involvement, maintain their interests and ensure inclusion.

Variable approaches to meet children's individual learning needs.

The class-teachers both discussed the varied approaches needed for children's inclusion according to their preferred learning styles.

T2: Some like the formal approach.....and their written work. Some children you're better off with a practical activity. Some children work best with the Interactive White Board (IWB) and the computer. It really varies with the child!

Teacher 1 explained how she used a range of approaches, and gave children equal opportunity and that this was necessary to ensure they reached their potential in learning

T1: *..discussion, writing, a game and listening.*

Experiences to gain children's involvement (volition) towards learning.

a) Pleasurable and Fun experiences

The head-teachers stressed the importance of experiences being pleasurable for children's involvement:

H1: *Generally, it is imperative to give experiences to children, some that they enjoy.*

The class-teacher agreed and stated how it was necessary to make learning fun to gain children's interests and their *volition* towards it, so that:

T1: *Children [are] enthusiastic to come to school.*

b) Differentiated work at the right level for the child.

Likewise, T2 stated that most children took an active role in learning when given work at the right level and were provided with encouragement and fun activities to motivate them.

Celebrating children's individual successes.

In the same vein, H2 explained how the school influenced children's motivation towards learning and ensured children gained pleasure by celebrating their individual successes.

Additional support for inclusion.

Strategies were in place to support children who needed additional help to ensure their inclusion. In S1, the focus on language forms a key discourse and some children received additional support with this H2 discussed how he had started a language programme '*Dyfal Donc*' ('Catch up') for this purpose.

S2 children showed their awareness that other children received additional support with learning:

S2y4: Some children go to another teacher for help.

Children as learners

In this section teachers' discourses related to children as '*active*' or '*passive*' learners will be explored.

For children to be *active* and *confident* learners.

H2 stated how she wanted the children to be '*active*' and '*confident*' learners, as success in one area tended to contribute to success in other areas. However, there were some contradictions in her interpretation of children as '*active*'.

To promote Independence.

To be resourceful (problem solving, working it out in different ways).

Teacher's discourses prioritised developing resourcefulness;

H1: It's important for the child to know how to find the information and how to solve problems.

T1: Looking at different ways of working in maths to draw a picture to help solve a problem.

T2: Using a range of strategies to solve a problem, working things out in alternate ways e.g. maths lessons.

Discourses that stimulate reflection and involve the child in the learning process and in formative assessment strategies.

T2 Think about what you are going to need

T1: Encouraging reflection e.g. re drafting work

To be self-motivated

H2. If a teacher tries to be too directional, that's fine they will learn, but they learn much better when they're self-motivated and that's the trick for the teacher - is motivating the children. If a child is motivated to learn, it won't stop at this school, it will go on and on.

To allow increased autonomy e.g. with progression through school.

Teacher 1 explained how increasing autonomy was given with progression through school. In C1, as it was a composite class there was an expectation by the teacher that the year 4 age group children worked more independently and interdependently than the year 3 children in the same class. This was corroborated from the findings from the eight year 4 children who identified reference (4) and friends (3) and the class-teacher (1) as helping them with their learning.

In C2 of the eight children that participated in the focus group discussion six of the children indicated that their teacher helped them the most with some indicating that they received help from their friends or the person sitting next to them or their family.

Choice to develop their own values.

In order to prepare children for life outside the school H1 explained the importance of children's rights to choose their own principles, rather than for adults to impose their beliefs on children. T1 also explained how it was important for every occasion to lead to children to become independent to make their own decisions and to be aware of the importance of education. This was supported by T2 who explained how she gave them 'guided structured choices'. However, in practice this choice was very limited and confined to what the children could do when they had finished their work in C2 and in C1 to certain activities and periods such as registration or before assembly e.g. reading or finishing off any work. This limited choice for children was confirmed through classroom observation as formal teacher led lessons or small group activities dominated the school day.

Guidance to take responsibility.

In relation to their learning, both head-teachers felt that children needed guidance to take responsibility. They did not feel it was possible to give control to children for their learning but felt that they should take some responsibility.

H1: I don't think it's possible! Children want leadership to show them the way as part of the process.

and

H2: Children with the best will in the world, at some point you will have to guide them.

T2 gave responsibility to children to work unsupervised on some occasions in other sections of the school, as the class was overcrowded.

T2: I'm going to send someone else down to the Infant's computer suite. Someone I can trust, because I won't be with you!

Consultation with children.

This was identified as an interesting area that H2 felt needed to be developed and H1 thought was important for two reasons, children's involvement and information.

H2: The importance of encouragement at all stages, and keeping them informed and involved in the process in the loop so that they know what they're doing and where they're going.

H1 explained how it was a means of understanding children's ability to regulate their learning and take responsibility for some aspects of behaviour and relationships.

Whereas H2 felt it created opportunities for self-evaluation. She explained how they were using self- evaluation and assessment.

H2: We are already involved in getting children to set their own targets, older children obviously and in evaluating their own work. We are currently going to be looking at developing our marking scheme so that we are going to get the children to look at self-evaluation in marking. The children themselves will evaluate what they've learnt and whether they are happy with it.

Elements of behaviourist principles.

During an assembly, behaviourist principles were used in speaking to the children.

H2: What kind of children are we?
Very good children! Intelligent children!

Behaviourism is associated with '*passive*' views of children. In discussing the structured constraining elements of the prescriptive National Curriculum content, she referred to learning as '*skills acquisition*' and explained that she would prefer a skills ladder.

H2: What I would prefer is a skills ladder.

The notion of learning as purely '*skill*' based is limiting, it excludes social and meta-cognitive awareness, consideration of higher conceptual outcomes such as dispositions and resonates of a normative discourse. Schraw in Hartman (2002:1) explains that:

'meta-cognitive knowledge is multi-dimensional, domain general in nature, and teachable. These include promoting general awareness, improving self-knowledge and regulatory skills, and promoting learning environments that are conducive to the construction and use of metacognition.

Fairclough (1995) identifies that the concept of '*skill*' allows two interpretations of the learner to co-exist; the learner can be perceived as an individual '*active*' learner who can take control of learning, or as a '*passive object*' that needs training. According to Fairclough the concept of '*skill*' reflects a '*Commodified educational discourse*' and allows the...

...two contradictory constructions of the learner to co-exist without manifest inconsistency(1995:209).

The concept of '*skill*' also allows education to be interpreted as '*democratic*' since it infers that everyone is capable of learning, when they have the right training (Fairclough, 1995:209).Commodification is the application of business strategies to the organisation of sectors such as education, so that the discourses of industry such as production, skill and training are applied (Fairclough, 1995. The impact of such principles from policies seems to have influenced H2's discourse and ideas.

The two class-teachers also recognised and emphasised the need for children to be '*active*' in their discourses and their subjectification of learners was as '*independent*'. This indicated that their '*ideal*' subjective experiences for children were as '*active participants*' and they expected children to work things out for themselves, without asking all the time. They communicated that the constraints of their working environments (i.e. class size and lack of space) and structured curriculum reduced their ability to meet this ideal. They showed appreciation for the importance of working positively with children and the need for children to take an interest.

Teacher-child relationships and children's learning dispositions in the classroom.

The two Head-teachers identified teacher-child relationships as most important in influencing children's learning and their learning dispositions in primary classrooms with children of 7-9 years. Let us consider what aspects of these teacher-child relationships are the most important:

Positive Relationships that show respect and value what children do.

Head-teacher 1 of the Welsh medium setting stressed the importance of adults forming positive relationships that took an interest and showed respect towards children giving them challenges. He explained how

H1: It's essential that adults value what they do, show an interest, have a positive way and give challenge.

T 2 stressed the importance of positive interaction and praise. She explained that if the interaction became negative and the children received negative feedback, they didn't want to be in school.

a) Turning negative interaction around.

T 2: I try to change from negative feedback to positive feedback after about ten minutes.

[T2 explained in the interview that after saying something negative to a child she would try and make a positive comment about some aspect of their work or behaviour after about ten minutes, so that they would not go away from the class feeling negative].

Sensitive, responsive relationships.

a) Take a holistic view of children

In explaining how teachers influenced children's dispositions as learners Head-teacher 2 discussed the need for a holistic approach which involved parents and teachers. She

expressed the significance of the affective as well as the cognitive dimensions of children's learning, referring to the holistic approach adopted by Mrs. Z when working with children. The need for relationships to be supportive and responsive referring to:

H2: Oh! Yes! (emphasis), crucial, ... interpersonal relationships crucial—they're instrumental in supporting children and if children don't feel supported they're unsure, they're uncertain and if a child is unsure and unsupported they won't learn! It's quite simple, if they're unhappy they won't learn.

In the above quotation H2 exemplifies the argument developed by Carr that

...the key guiding norms of effective pedagogical engagement are primarily ethical or moral values or principles—not in the Kantian sense of universally self-justifying prescriptions apt for disinterested application to practice, but in the (more Aristotelian) virtual ethical sense of particular and particularised modes of personal association (2005:270).

Crick and Wilson also discuss the critical importance of the

· quality of relationships in the context of learning (2005:362).

Rogers' themes of empathetic understanding, unconditional positive regard, authenticity and congruence being central qualities in learning relationships (1983).

Unconditional positive regard.... referring to the acceptance of the other and a lack of negative judgement and criticism, such as trust is facilitated over time (Crick and Wilson 2005:362).

Supporting and guiding positive reciprocal relations.

T1 and T2 sensitively guide and support the relationships between themselves and the children in the class.

a) Creating sense of belonging, well-being and a feeling of being valued for children.

T1 & T2. Discourses of belonging, and feeling valued support children's well-being in both classes. They are welcomed to the classrooms. During whole class sessions when all the children are together their shared discourses and experiences create an unique context where they enter new 'worlds' together. Discourses of individual

interactions with children reveal warmth, care and affection to support children's social identity as learners and their confidence and resilience as learners during a music activity.

T2:→ class. Did you enjoy that?
Doesn't matter if you make mistakes. Going over the work to try again.

Whole school events created '*participation repertoires*' for empathy and caring behaviours e.g towards children who are less fortunate.

b)_Emphasis on empathy and cooperation

T2 emphasised good relationships

T2: Treat the group as you'd expect them to treat you! (Settles class down).
Encouraging children to help each other during practical art activity.

T2:We're not going to laugh at you unless were meant to. (Play-scripts activity).

c) Responsiveness to the children

Responding to children when they are unsure of their work:

T1: If you're unsure put your hand up. I'll come over to you to explain!

When the children have difficulty with their work e.g. to help them discreetly with difficult words.

e) Using humour in maintaining order.

T2→b A y4.You can come out of character now. Lovely acting going on.
You can be a nice A now!

f) When giving praise.

Teacher Discourse is inclusive to ensure that children don't feel left out.

T2: Three groups of children. Excellent! Shall we give a big clap to all three groups who've had a go today?
Ch: All clap together.

Opportunities for children to succeed.

H2 explained how children become confident by creating opportunities for children to succeed without being afraid to make mistakes.

H2: That they feel that they can achieve success and also the *confidence* to fail, that it's safe to fail.

Relationships that demonstrate reciprocity.

Claxton in his discussion of '*a supple learning powered mind*' (2002:37) identifies the importance of learners' relationships with others and the social aspects of learning. He explains how learning often involves working with others, in teams or collaboratively and how skills and inclinations are involved. The skills of listening, turn-taking and appreciating the viewpoint of others, with whom one may not necessarily agree. In discussing reciprocity he breaks it down to four parts, these being interdependence, collaboration, empathy and listening, and imitation. Although he did not use the term learning power, in this next quotation the Head-teacher (H1) identified several of these components and added some other skills although he did not use the term learning power.

H1: *Listening, language, paying attention, all the skills, responding positively to others, co-operation, technology and research.*

Discourses related to encouraging supportive peer relations.

Asking children to support each other.

T1: encouraged y4 children to support the younger y3 children. This was most visible in mixed group situations.

Similarly T2 encouraged children who spoke English to support others for whom English is an additional language.

T2 sensitively created a feeling of solidarity in the class-group situation communicating a sense of belonging when children were upset or unsure. e.g. bMy4 who was upset over his haircut.

Teaching and learning.

Discourses from Head-teachers and Class-teachers indicate that they hold some contradictory conceptions of children as learners, from their discourses of teaching and learning in practice in the schools and classrooms. Transmission and behaviourist models of teaching are associated with '*passive*' roles for children whilst the constructionist and social constructionist are associated with '*active*' roles.

Receptivity to learning .

H2 and T2 commented on the need for children to be receptive towards learning:

H2: If they've got the readiness for learning, they'll take on board everything, but you've got to give them the tools of the trade.

T2: Once you've got the children in and their interested to learn you've won half the battle there, haven't you?

To stimulate receptivity the teachers ensured that:

(a) Learning was pleasurable through having fun activities in lessons.

T1 e.g. introduced co-ordinates, as a game before a map reading activity.

b) Activities maintained children's interest.

T2's aims were very focused on maintaining children's interests.

Having themed activity weeks C2

To transmit information to children.

Although both class-teachers described children as '*active*' learners with the ability to work independently, they saw their role in the transmission of information as very important.

T2: to get information across to the children, to engage the children to ensure they are enthusiastic to come to school, to be independent learners.

T2: Fitting things in.

The transmission model of communication is critiqued by Bakhtin (1986:63) on the grounds that it is based on unitary messages and disregards the contribution of the receiver.

Behaviourism

The contradictions in teachers' social constructions of the child impact on classroom practice. T2 applies behaviourist principles to classroom management and allocates points to groups. It is a means of control to encourage children to conform through external rewards and a ritual of everyday practice.

T2: Quietest hardworking group have 10 points at lunchtime!

T2: Those who work hard will have five points.

T2: Do you want to lose points for your group?

As a reward T2 gives responsibility to children to allocate points.

T2→Y4b Have you decided T... whose going to have 5 points?

Donaldson has critiqued this model and the dangers of giving extrinsic rewards to children. This aspect was discussed in the literature (see page 61).

Constructivism

In contrast, '*encouraging*' children is associated with Constructivist theories of learning which interpret children as actively constructing their own knowledge. Teachers considered encouraging approaches to engage children in learning were important as discussed below:

T1 felt the majority of children in the class took an active role in their learning and were enthusiastic. However she explained:

T1: It's not possible to discover a class full of enthusiastic pupils. Some children need much encouragement.

and T2 considered the sensitive qualities of the adult, influential in encouraging and supporting children .

T2: To engage learners so that they are enthusiastic to come to school. Very important to encourage!

T2 : Sensitive adult support is very important to encourage the child, to build their confidence without drawing attention to the fact .

T2 discussed how most children took an active role in their learning when given the 'right work' [at the right level] and were provided with encouragement and fun activities to motivate them.

Socio-Constructivism

Socio-Constructivist theories of learning emphasise the value of Co-Construction during learning. This can be the teacher and the child or children. Constructing their learning together or children as a 'group' working and collaboratively to create their own knowledge.

Group Activities.

H1 explained that it was something children had to learn and needed '*guidance*' with.

H2 explained that 'co-operative learning is very much part of the school's teaching and learning 'but children needed encouragement'. The teachers also agreed about its value and used various strategies to encourage, support and guide positive reciprocal peer group relations.

Collaboration between children and their peers was most visible in the classroom during group activities which created opportunities for socially shared cognition.

Claxton (2002) identifies that sharing information and being able to communicate

effectively with others are essential skills for collaborative learning. He discusses how 'interdependence' is the opposite of 'dependency' (2002:37).

T1 explained how children in the classroom worked in pairs; as a whole class for discussion; and in small groups for reading and evaluating tasks. T2 explained the value of collaborative working and in the class children worked in mixed gender groups and sometimes in pairs e.g. at the computer.

T1: *.enthusiastic children learnt from this, discussing whether something was correct or incorrect could help understanding*

T2: Children can sometimes explain things better.

T1 identified positive and negative aspects to group work. T2 felt that peers had a strong influence on children's attitudes to learning (corroborated during observations of group willingness to support and collaborate).

a) Positive aspects of group work.

T1 found some advantages with mixed age grouping e.g. the older hard-working Year 4 children in the class had an impact on the happiness and development of confidence of younger individuals. She felt her current class of year 3 and 4 worked well together and that on the whole children mixed well; having a composite class did impact on positive interaction. e.g. in a situation where there were very weak students with no middle ability groups and that:

T2 : When working in groups, usually a natural leader usually emerged.

b) Negative aspects of group work

When children discussed their work this sometimes led to some individuals being unsure of their ability. T2 identified certain combinations of children as limiting to positive peer interaction some groups argued and needed guidance on how to compromise.

5.2. Children's discourses.

Children's discourses communicate their constructions of :

- Learning in school
- Sense of belonging, well-being and feeling valued
- Teachers' messages
- Other children as learners.
- 'Self' as a learner

Various themes emerge through children's discourses that reveal their experiences with learning and their views of themselves as learners. In learning, as in their culture 'fun' is of fundamental importance to children and this prioritised in their reasons for wanting to learn. 'Liking school' was associated with 'liking the work or 'being good at it'. They disclosed that they were able to work harder at something they liked. They reveal that friends and relationships in the classroom are highly important to their school lives; their relationship with the class-teacher is highly significant to them.

Learning in school

S1-Welsh medium.

a) Liking school.

Clear gender differences emerge between the feelings of boys and girls towards school. All of the girls stated that they liked school, one year four girl strongly declared her feelings towards the school stating:

S1gH y4: *I like school very much.*

Some aspects of school they were less happy about. A year 4 girl explained how she liked school and Art in particular, but did not like learning or want to learn as she found the work difficult. With the boys there was not such complete agreement, with

5 boys out of the group of 7, (1/2 year 3 and 2/5) year 4 disliked school. The reasons for this were associated with certain subjects or finding the work difficult.

In School 2, the eight children selected unanimously agreed that they liked school and wanted to learn, 6/8 stated that there was nothing they disliked about school.

S2 b & g y4: I like my class because I like the work.

b) Subjects studied.

C1: Children mainly identified core National Curriculum subjects as what they learnt in school e.g. Science, Maths, English and Welsh Languages with some including Art, Music and History.

As in School 1, C2 Children discussed Core National Curriculum subjects such as Mathematics and Science and English.

c) Subjects, topics and preferred languages

- liked:

C1: Maths and Games appeared to be the most popular subjects with several boys and girls stating that they liked games, because it was easy and they didn't have to think; they also appreciated their health benefits. One girl S1Hy4 expressed preference for the Welsh language her heritage language and stated how she disliked English. Her agency is expressed in her choice of language and is in agreement with the adult contextualized world of which she is part.

C2: Certain topics and activities were identified as of particular interest e.g. songs and playing instruments [music], computers [I.T.], King Henry [History], animals and bones [Science].

- disliked

C1: One of the S1y3bT boys explained that he did not like Welsh. He was fairly new to the setting and found the language transition from an English medium to a Welsh medium school quite difficult he expressed a preference for English, his experience of transferring to a Welsh medium school and the increased use of the Welsh language is disclosing conflict to the adult world of which he is part.

C2: A year 4 boy did not like language and writing. Two boys disclosed that they did not like “*Comprehension success*” a book of comprehension exercises, one noting that he did not like ‘inglish’ (S2 b y4).

d) Extra- curricular activities

C2: Across the years 3 and 4 age groups, many of the children also commented on how they enjoyed learning the various musical instruments e.g. piano, keyboard and violin and participating in competitions.

e) School rules.

Children in the two classrooms identified explicit classroom rules (displayed in both cases on the walls of the settings). There appear to be three main aspects to these rules:

1. Management in the classroom: maintaining order and looking after resources.
2. Caring and reciprocity towards others;
3. Learning.

From the analysis of children’s construction of classroom rules in relation to learning the evidence of the co-existence of contradictory discourses in relation to children are apparent.

The classroom management rules that apply to the children interpret them as ‘*passive*’. Whereas developing caring skills and encouraging reciprocity position children in a more ‘*active*’ role. In relation to learning, working quietly can be interpreted in two ways. During concentration, working quietly is important for involvement and for deep, motivated and intense experiences where the ‘*flow*’ (Csikszentmihayli, 1979) of learning is experienced and the child’s role is ‘*active*’ learner. Keeping children quiet in order to control them and exert power over them positions them in a ‘*passive*’ role. The value of talking for children’s learning is discussed with the CASE@KS1 project below.

Table 5.10 Analysis of children’s construction of classroom rules.

S1	S2	Learning.	Management
<i>Listen while she’s explaining</i>	Please listen when someone is speaking they probably have something important to say.	Helpful to encourage reciprocity.	Important for order and control
<i>Work quietly and No shouting out or screaming</i>	Please work quietly so that others around you can work.	Could be unhelpful for children’s understanding	Mainly related to classroom management.
<i>No running round the tables</i>	Move around the class safely		Mainly related to classroom management
<i>Don’t be nasty to others swear or fight</i>			Mainly related to classroom management
	Respect other people’s ideas	Showing respect important for sense of belonging and learning.	
	Make visitors to the classroom welcome	Helpful to encourage reciprocity.	
<i>No interactive whiteboard</i>	Please take care when using the interactive whiteboard		Mainly related to classroom management
<i>try your best</i>	Always try your best.	Helpful towards developing resilience.	
	Please be gentle with the hamster.	Helpful to encourage caring aspect.	
<i>Sit still</i>		Could be unhelpful, with child interpreted as passive	Mainly related to classroom management
<i>To put the books back in the right place</i>			Mainly related to classroom management

In C1 the children in Y4 children were encouraged to work more independently and used reference books for their work when the teacher was busy with the younger Y3 children. The rule regarding reference books referred to putting these books back in right place.

Sense of belonging, well-being and feeling valued.

Discourses related to moral and ethical issues of caring come to the fore in children's feelings about their school and class. Sensitive caring discourses foster children's sense of belonging, well-being and identity whereas less sensitive discourses can make them feel insecure. Children's discourses reveal how their sense of belonging came from their relationships and affection for their friends and teachers.

S1gH y4: I feel I belong in the class because I like to see my friends and I like my class teacher too!

All of the children in the C2 group, communicated a sense of belonging indicating a very positive classroom context for their learning. One girl in C2 demonstrated her social competence in realising that her sense of belonging was related to the fact that she joined in.

S2 g y4: because I join in.

Relationship with the teacher.

Children expressed feelings of warmth, obligation, trust and affection towards both the class teachers.

a) Positive feelings about the teacher were communicated by this girl

S1g y4: I like Miss. X.

While another girl expressed similar feelings.

S1g y4: I like my teacher

b) obligation even when uncertain

Another girl expressed her obligation to her teacher and uncertainty about responding to the questions that formed the writing activity. She expressed concern for the feelings of her class teacher and asked before participating.

S1gH y4: *Is Miss X going to see these?*

After reassurance that the class-teacher wouldn't see their responses, she expressed her uncertainty regarding the teacher's feelings about her as a learner. She felt the teacher didn't think she worked hard enough and moved her.

Others expressed their trust:

c) trust that the teacher would help them with their work and respond sensitively to their needs:

S1gy3: *fine she helps me with my work.*

S2 g y4: I like my teacher because she asks if we are stuck.

S2 g y4: She won't shout at you if you are stuck.

In C2 they showed complete trust in their relationships with Miss Y, they know she will offer help without being asked and that her behaviour is predictable, they won't be shouted at. Although they show awareness that some adults do shout.

Relationships with friends and peers.

Children refer to their peers as friends and describe their relationships with friends as a highly important aspect of their school life. They discuss:

a) having fun and playing with friends

S1gTy4: *What makes me feel at home, is that everyone makes me laugh.*

b) feeling welcomed

A boy in the English school expressed how his friends made him feel welcome.

S2 b y4... because your friends make you feel welcome.

c) liking school when the work was difficult

Friends are a source of social support for children in school. Even though one girl (S1gNy4) communicated her dislike of learning, as she found the work difficult, she still liked school because she saw her friends. In situations where children were unsure they turned to friends for validation.

d) turning to friends when uncertain

S1gy4: *She thinks I'm not good at my work and moves me*

When unsure of the teacher's response S2gy4 turned to her friends for validation

S2gy4: *My friends say she says I'm good.*

Siegler *et al.*, (2006: 500) identify how in situations where children feel uncertain, they turn to their friends for reassurance, companionship and care.

Relationships with other teachers in school

In the community of the school, relationships with other teachers as well as their class- teacher contribute to children's sense of belonging.

Trust and care.

This boy's discourse reveals the complete trust he has in all the school's teachers, a sense of belonging, well being with no uncertainty in his mind that the school creates.

S1bNy3 : *Because they look after us. All of the teachers.*

Confidence in the school.

Another boy expressed his complete confidence in the school's system. He disclosed that:

S1y4bM : *I'm learning to live properly.*

He has no doubt in his mind about the way to behave and live, there is only one way and that is the school's way. It could indicate concordance in the values of his home and school life.

Relationships between the home and school.

Such concordant values between the home and school create continuity in children's lives (Bruner 1996). For S1bNy4 the relationships between these contribute to another boy's positive feelings about being supported, his pleasure and persistence with learning. The long term effects of such patterns would strengthen his learning disposition.

S1bNy4 *I like taking work home*

and on another occasion

S1 bNy4: *Practice it by working in class and at home.*

Children's discourses interpreting teacher messages about how to learn.

Children's interpretation and prioritisation of the teacher's messages influences how they construct learning.

In their interpretation of class-teacher messages related to learning, constructs related to 'listening and talking' or 'not talking' featured prominently. Robertson explains how constructs are developed by children who as scientists organize these systems to make sense of their world .She states

By enabling pupils to explore their constructs, insights can be gained into how they understand their world (2002:52).

Children discourse emphasises the importance of listening to the teacher and others in the class and of making an effort. They identify the need for

Reciprocity.

Listening and making an effort.

S2gTy4: Listening and trying hard in everything you do.

Listen to the teacher or other people.

S1gMy4: *Listen to the teacher when she's explaining*

S1gH & bRy4: *Listen to other people and you'll learn more.*

Listening and learning.

These children from S2y4 have constructed the relationship between listening and learning.

Yes, I always listen to learn.

Yes, because I need to learn lots.

They disclosed the consequences of not listening and their desires to be successful.

Not listening

S2gY4: Yes! Because if you don't you'll have a row and won't be very bright.

S2bPy4: I want to learn because I want to be brainy

C2: All the children stated that they listened to the teacher, except for one boy, who said he didn't always listen. All the children felt positive about learning and said they wanted to learn indicating their volition towards learning at this stage of their primary education. In both classes they identified talking as a factor that stopped them learning or slowed them down.

Not-talking.

S1y4: *Don't talk when you're working.*

S2gy4: Don't talk when she's telling you something

S2by4: No talking in class

To show reciprocity.

These children show they have an awareness of the need for reciprocity when learning. Reciprocity involves respecting others, listening and being sensitive towards their needs. They also reveal their appreciation of teacher sensitivity in responding to their learning needs.

S2y4. Miss Y helps me to learn she explains things well!

Robertson was involved with the CASE@KS1 project an initiative aimed at raising children's attainment at primary school (2002:51-52). The aim of CASE lessons was to raise learner awareness of their cognitive processes in the belief that this would allow them to take more control over their learning. The effect of which would make

learning more meaningful for children and for them to be more effective as learners. From the CASE activities aspects of children's reasoning processes were identified and how children are construing learning. A crucial finding of the CASE projects when interviewing non-CASE children (control group who did not participate in the interventions) was how large numbers of children

...expressed the view that '*not-talking*' was important (Robertson 2002:61).

However from Vygotsky's theories we know that language is important for integrating learning and '*making it explicit*'. (Robertson 2002:61). Constructs that children believe are helpful for learning are in fact behaviours frequently expected of them as part of classroom management are not necessarily helpful in learning.

To reflect on their learning and use their mind.

Children's cognitive development is dependent on adults connecting with their minds at their level. Children indicate that T2 is able to communicate effectively with them in a way that gives them confidence to tackle difficult work.

S2gy4. She helps you work out hard things in easy ways

S2by4: She makes things easier to understand in class.

To model resilience and support its development.

S2 y4b was able to appreciate his teacher's resilience in showing patience towards them and repeating her explanations.

S2 y4b: She explains it all over again.

While another boy was aware of

S2 y4b: She talks to me to encourage me.

In S1

S1y4b: *Practice it by working in class and at home*

S2 y4: Can't isn't a word in work

To be resourceful in their learning .

S2y4: Miss Y helps me to learn she explains things well

S1y4b: to read books to have information

Children appreciated the fact that their teacher helped them with their work and was able to guide their learning and communicate clearly with them at their level in a way that made them feel competent about their learning.

Prioritization of the teacher messages about learning.

Listening and not-talking were identified by children as being of key importance in the classroom. Most of the children indicated that they listened to the teacher because they wanted to learn indicating their motivation and volition towards learning. They also emphasised the need for reciprocity.

Children's responses to the teachers' messages.

Children in both settings stated that they responded positively to what the teachers said and showed their reciprocity by listening.

Trust .

They demonstrated the complete trust in their teacher's knowledge.

S1by3: indicated the confidence he had in his teacher.

Yes! because the teacher says everything.

Uncertainty.

Others were not always so sure about what the teacher thought about their learning.

S1gy4: *She thinks I'm not good at my work and moves me*

When they were unsure of what the teacher thought, they depended on affirmation by peers.

S2gy4: My friends say she says I'm good.

As a context the classroom is a highly evaluative place. There is evaluation by peers and the teacher. There are formative messages related to the improvement of their

work many of which related to handwriting or the appearance of their work. Evaluative messages are related to ‘*working harder*’, praise for ‘*tidy work*’ or ‘*improving its neatness*’ and being ‘*good at maths*’.

Table 5.11 Children’s responses to teacher’s messages to stimulate interest and give metacognitive guidance to promote learning.

School 1–year 3	<i>School 1– year 4</i>	<i>School 2– year 4</i>
<i>Yes, because the teacher says everything.</i>	<i>Miss X says, Listen to others and you’ ll learn more.</i>	Yes! I always listen to learn. (b). I want to learn because it’s fun (2b).
<i>Yes, I want to learn mathematics (b).</i>	<i>Miss X says, if you can’t think of what to do ask a friend (g)</i>	She explains it all over again (b). She talks to me to encourage me(b)
<i>Yes, I listen (2b&g)</i>	<i>Yes, I listen to do well in the work.</i>	Miss Y helps me to learn she explains things well (g)
<i>Tidy work (g)</i>	<i>to tidy my work (g)</i>	She helps you to work out hard things in easy ways (g).
		To practice my hand writing (g).
		She talks to me to encourage me(b)
	<i>I have to work harder.</i>	Can’t isn’t a word in work.

In these two classrooms there were very few negative responses towards learning, the classrooms or the schools indicating the positive contexts created.

Children’s perspective on who helps them with their learning.

There were some differences in the responses of the children in the two classes to this question which related to the nature of their classes. The majority of the children in C2 indicated that the class-teacher helped them the most with their learning, with some children identifying family, friends or the person who sat next to them. Similarly, C1 year 3 children who identified the class-teacher, friends, family and another teacher who had been a supply teacher as helping with their learning. However, the fact that C1 was a composite class of year 3 and 4 children. T1 expected the Year 4 children to work more independently and this was confirmed by them since they identified the use of reference books as the main source of help, followed by

friends and the teacher. The school's ethos promoted increasing independence with progression through school.

How children perceive other children as learners.

Gender interacts with age in children's perceptions of 'other' children as learners. A stronger gender bias appears to impact on the categorization of best learners by children C1y 3 aged 7-8 years, than with the C1y4 children aged 8-9years. C1y3 boys identifying only boys as 'best learners' and C1y3 girls identifying only girls. Whereas C1y4 girls and boys selected both boys and girls as 'best learners'.

In C2, where there is one year group this gender divide is not as clear three out of the four girls C2y4 selected boys and girls with the fourth selecting girls only The C2y4 boys half of them named boys and girls whereas the other half only selected boys. In their identification of the best learners in class children in C2 used four main criteria. The first of these was demonstrating ability by 'answering a lot of questions/ knowing a lot' and 'having good work' or 'getting things right'; the second working hard; the third working quickly and fourth 'good at maths' having special significance.

In explaining why they thought that certain children were the 'best learners' they stated 'they are good at everything, they never lift their heads up' [indicating involvement or concentration], 'because he thinks of lots of questions' [using their mind] and because 'they are smart' [performance].

In discussing 'children who don't work' they were able to highlight reasons such as 'lack of involvement and of concentration from not focusing their mind'; 'thinking of other things; not having ability, not listening or talking too much'. They also explained how children who don't work 'play around or play with pencils and rubbers and everything; talk together, don't listen, swing on their chairs and are rude'.

Children's construction of 'self' as learners.

The evaluative nature of their classroom contexts was revealed in children's discourses about their own learning. They were able to 'self-evaluate' some aspects of their learning and recognise what needed improving. However their evaluations were not very comprehensive and focused mainly on skills e.g. handwriting, time management. Gender differences were apparent in their discussion of the presentation of their work.

Handwriting and neatness

Girls seemed to be very concerned about their handwriting.

S2gy4: I want to remember to keep my hand-writing neat.

S12gy4: *To tidy my work*

S2gy4: My handwriting needs to improve that's all

S1by3N: *Better writing.*

Even when unsure about other things they focused on handwriting.

S2y4g: I don't know but I want to remember to keep my handwriting neat.

The girls expressed more concern about handwriting and neatness than the boys. What

the boys commented on was that they needed to look over their work

S1by4: *look over my work*

The fact that children didn't say much about their learning could be an indication that they are rarely asked to comment on this. Although in C2 they did self-evaluate certain activities e.g. mathematics (discussed in Findings).

What stopped them learning or slowed them down.

In the identification of what stopped them learning or slowed them down they identified the time it took and finishing their work.

S1by3: *Keep Up.*

Getting the work finished was also highly important to them e.g. S1gTy4

Approaches to learning.

They distinguished between negative and positive approaches.

Negative.

S1by4: *Day dreaming.*

and Positive

S2gy4 I put my head down. [Concentration] .

What would make them better learners.

Children had some awareness of what would make them better learners. Children in both C1 and 2 felt that listening, thinking and concentrating would make them better learners. Whereas children in S2 identified not talking using books as factors that would make them better learners.

Less -talking

They explained the various ways in which talking affected their learning. One girl explained how it slowed her work, another indicated the noise from talking. It was more of a problem when people talked loudly (S2gy4) or everyone talking (S1by4).

Difficult work.

On several occasions S1gNy4 indicated that she found the work difficult. She is very unsure of herself as a learner and is developing a weak disposition towards learning.

S1gNy4: *The work too difficult.*

Peer personalities.

Children identified that getting along with other children wasn't always easy and they identified people in their group as disturbing their learning. They have little choice with whom to work and therefore have to try to get on with the members of the group they find themselves in.

S2y4: The people in my group.

5.3 Shared Discourses.

The classroom lessons observed were analysed to explore the following:

- Episodes of shared classroom interactions and relationships between teachers and children according to the dimensions of sensitivity, stimulation and autonomy.
- Peer interactions during group work sessions of lessons.
- Children's actions and behaviours to indicate their learning dispositions.

Learning dispositions.

- Learners included, involved (active) and taking an interest , receptive;
- Learners feel they belong, demonstrate trust, their language and culture is valued
- Strong identity as learners–masterful approaches.
- Learners were using their mind-reflecting on their learning, using cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies;
- Demonstrate resilience–able to cope with change, showing endeavour persistence;
- Demonstrating reciprocity sharing, helping, communicating, interdependence, collaborating;
- Taking responsibility for their own learning, appreciating the perspectives of others.

(adapted from Carr et al, 2000 and Claxton 2002).

Classroom lessons to present discourses of shared interactions between the teacher and children according to the dimensions of stimulation, sensitivity and autonomy and children's responses.

Stimulation meta-cognitive guidance and sensitivity.

A range of stimulating strategies were used by both class-teachers during lessons to gain children's involvement, interest and activities provided were matched their stage of development. The first stage of stimulation involves influencing the receptivity of children to gain their interest and attention. During the lessons prompts and cues to encourage and maintain children's involvement and participation were used. During formal pedagogic approaches there was limited opportunity for peer interactions as part of the lesson. Discourses of formal lessons such as those of the literacy and numeracy hours provide the least autonomy. Teacher discourses lead the sessions, control the time, the pace, content and interpretation of lessons. The asymmetry of relationships is most apparent during these sessions even though the style of teaching recommended for the literacy hour is interactive. The tasks that follow on from these activities can give children more autonomy.

C1. Literacy Hour- Story of Mother Teresa's work in India, 'Sister on the street.

During this lesson the teacher stimulated the children's interest by reading a story. The task that follows aids the development of mastery patterns in the form of 'participation repertoires' for learning. Teacher discourse is dominant throughout the lesson with limited control of content for children as illustrated in this excerpt from the story of Mother Teresa's work. The teacher is firmly in control of the knowledge however her interpretation is not always shared with the children as e.g.S1bLy3 communicates. He is still unsure after the explanation:

Excerpt from reading:

T1[continues to read story form a previous session].

T1: What does bedridden mean?

bWy3: You have to stay in bed!

[T1 continues to read the story].

T1: You've missed the biggest event of the century?

T1: What's a century?

bMy3: Is it like..... a year ago? [child is possibly thinking of the new millennium]

T1: (explains) A hundred years is a century.

bR y3: What's a millennium? A thousand years.

T1: Yes.

bLy3: I thought a sentry is a guard!

T1: How do we spell century? [responds to child's confusion]

T1: We'll put it on the board . Spell it together [referring to the word on the whiteboard].

CH. [spell Century together].

T1. Excellent! [praises children]

Ch: S e n t r y [spell Sentry together].

bNy4: Do you include when the world was alive? It would be like a 100 centuries.

T1: Yes we are in the 21st century at the moment.

T1: How many centuries have we had since Jesus died? ...21.

T1: Anyway, let's get back to the story.

bLy3: Sentry and century sound the same!

T1: Anyway! [teacher continues story].

One of the features of these whole class lessons for children is that their participation is related to their linguistic ability, levels of confidence and volition. In C1 a pattern of negative interactions was developing in these sessions between T1 and one boy.

Expects children to show reciprocity by listening and paying attention.

In these scenarios one boy's behaviour indicates that he is not meeting the teacher's expectations of reciprocity of being able to listen and pay attention during these formal sessions. On these occasions which are whole class lessons, he is not focused on the lessons and a negative pattern of interaction is emerging between him and the class-teacher. The first excerpt is from the reading of the story of Mother Teresa.

T1→S1bNy3 What has she said?

(T1 is referring to Shamila's defence of Mother Teresa).

The boy does not respond and T1 repeats the question in a different way to aid the child's understanding.

T1: What sort of things does she say?

T1:→S1bNy3 If you were paying attention instead of playing with that chair you would know. I don't mind helping children who listen but I do mind helping children who don't listen at all.

(T1 does try to encourage a response from the child).

T1:→S1bNy3 You don't have to be exact! What kind of things does Shamila say in defence of Mother Teresa?

Task to follow story of Mother Teresa's work in India, 'Sister on the street.

The activity is matched to the children's level,
[T1 Discourse sensitively explained follow on tasks to both groups of children. She broke the task down into manageable portions for the children.]

T1: First we're going to discuss the work. Then year 4 are going to do some handwriting while I go over the work with year 3 and then we'll swap over.

T1: First of all, let's go through story.

I'll put this in black pen, so that you know you can both use this part of the board.[differentiating the work for the children]

[Teacher set up contingent learning strategies for children's writing].

T1:Let's write the basic story and the order of how you are going to rewrite your story.

[The approach is methodical the, teacher is establishing contingent strategies for children's writing of the story, it can be regarded as a means of enabling children to succeed].

T1: What's the first thing that happened in Chapter V?

T1: I'm going to put all these [referring to phrases from the story] down the middle in one line. Make sure you can see. Okay.

T1:→by3M What's the first thing?

[Teacher questioned the children and encourages reflection and continued to ask them to recall facts from the story. she encouraged them to make inferences from the statements in the story].

T1: What kind of things does Sunita say in defence of Mother Teresa?
by3M: She's gonna stay (teacher corrects language) going to stay. She's never going to leave the poor to suffer.
T1:Excellent! [Teacher gives praise and repeats what's been said so that the meaning is clear to the children].
She basically defends her [referring to Mother Teresa] by saying she won't do that.
T1:What does she say about Mother Teresa?
Mother Teresa is what?
A credit, dedicated to her people.
T1:What sort of attitude does Sumil have?
y4gT: I told you so!

[T1Discourse reveals integrated messages on personal, emotional and social development into lesson T1 and guided the children's writing and established 'participation repertoires' to help children explore alternative modes of expression making language meaningful, encouraging divergent responses.].

T1: I can't believe my ears.
T1: What else can we use?
Ch: I don't believe it [children participate in chorus].
T1: Fine!
bWy3: I cannot believe what I'm hearing
b Zy3:I can't believe I'm listening to Sumil.
gIy3 can't believe I'm hearing this.
T1: I can't believe they are saying this.

These 'participation repertoires' form models for children's writing developing children's increasing levels of competence. 'Participation repertoires' are ways children can be involved in an activity, through practise they can progress from infrequent participants positioned at the periphery to centre stage as to full participants (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Teacher demonstrates mastery rather than performance.

T1: Let me read that bit to you again [repeats reading so that children can understand models resilience].

The teacher is modelling behaviours that are important for the children to imitate to be masterful learners and to strengthen their learning disposition.

Actions and behaviours that indicate children's learning dispositions

- Most learners were included, involved (active) and taking an interest, receptive, bNy3 was not involved and chose to withdraw from participation.
- Strong identity as learners—masterful approaches.
- Learners were using their mind-reflecting on their learning, using cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies;
- Demonstrating reciprocity, communicating, interdependence. In bNy3 case he did not meet the teacher's expectations.
- Taking responsibility appreciating the perspectives of others.

C1 .Stimulation and Metacognitive guidance.

Whole class activity- Numeracy hour.

Topic: Doubling, halving and multiplying numbers.

Resources:-Whiteboard and the teacher uses ruler to point to the numbers.

Language: Welsh.

Teacher points to a numbers on the whiteboard with a ruler.

T1: double 5?

T1: double 10?

T1: There 's a trick here!

Children: (eager to answer calling out) Oh! Oh!

[In their enthusiasm to gain the teacher's attention, to answer, children called out. It demonstrated how involved they were with their learning. The whole class group were motivated to learn and make a strong contribution to each others learning].

bYy4: It's not difficult, you just add nought!

T1: Yes, you do add nought to the number, but why?

[T1 Stimulates reflection and encourages the children to think about the rules of place value and work things out]

gHy4: It's five.

T1: (explains) You have to put the nought in the units column.

T1: Look at this (points to 56).

T1: You can't put a zero in the units column here!

[Teacher gave cognitive guidance and explained place value what goes in the units column, what goes in the tens column, hundreds and thousands].

T1: refers to 56 again

Double fifty is a hundred, double 6 is 12.

112.

gAy3: Double 5?

T1: Double 15?

T1: Double 30?

[Teacher moved on from doubling to halving and continues to question children—breaking down tasks into stages to aid their understanding. This is important for mastery learning.].

T1: What's half of 66?

T1: Half of six, half of sixty.

bNy3: thirty three.

T1: Do you know why? [T1 is stimulating children's minds through questioning].

T1: What's half of six →by4M?

T1: What's half of six hundred?

bSy3: Three hundred.

T1: you follow the same old pattern.

[Teacher questions during the numeracy hour were mainly closed questions and children's participation was limited to those who could answer reasonably quickly so that some children did not participate].

Actions and behaviours that indicate children's learning dispositions.

Some learners were included, involved (active) and taking an interest , receptive;

- Strong identity as learners—masterful approaches.
- Learners were using their mind-reflecting on their learning, using cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies;
- Demonstrated resilience—showing endeavour persistence;
- Demonstrated reciprocity sharing, helping, communicating, interdependence.

Stimulation and Metacognitive guidance.

C1. Whole Class Activity Science-Health Promotion lesson

Gwers Hybu Iechyd –language Welsh. Healthy eating lesson

[Stimulation the approach is planned and methodical identified mastery rather than performance goals].

The aim of this lesson was for the children to write a persuasive report, to promote people's adoption of healthier life-styles. It was a continuation of the previous day's lesson when the children had started writing the report. This was a challenging task for the children and involved thinking of their own reasons for health promotion. Children were re-working, reflecting and amending the first draft of their individual work after the teacher has marked it. The task was cognitively challenging for the children and involved thinking. The children were required to write a report giving their opinion of why we should eat healthily and do physical exercise-drafting supported children's development as masterful learners; children are reflecting on their work, it promoted their resilience].

First T1 reminds them of what they are writing and then gives examples of how they can start their writing.

T1: What are you writing? Your what? [Opinion].

T1: A report on healthy eating. What do you think?

T1 expects the children to demonstrate reciprocity by listening.

T1→bNy3 would you listen instead of bothering by3S in his back?

[This boy was not involved with his learning and there is a negative pattern of interactions emerging between him and the teacher.]

T1: continues

Now is the time to ask questions. [She identifies the right time to ask questions and takes control of the management of time].

T1: First paragraph

T1: In the first paragraph you must say what you are giving your opinion on.

T1: First Paragraph. What's the first sentence we can use to start our work?

y3bM In my opinion everyone should eat healthily and have a little bit of everything.

T1: What else could the sentence start with?

b1y3: In my opinion, everyone should eat healthily and have a bit of everything instead of eating chocolates and

T1: What else could the sentence start with?

b2y3: I think, [children are involved and actively contribute]

by3U I believe strongly

g1y3: I believe weakly [child has misunderstood the language or context – she doesn't share the meaning with the teacher].

T1: Explains how strong is appropriate but weak isn't.

T1: You don't want weak because you want to say that you feel strongly about these things. These things are important to you.

[Teacher discourse guided children's participation and they continued with the pattern of phrases which formed 'participation repertoires' to start their reasoning, Children were asked to give oral examples of patterns they will use for writing about how they will start their reasoning]

b4y3: It's a responsibility on us

T1 intervenes and gives an example: We have to eat healthily instead of what?

...instead of sitting down and watching the television.

by3U: instead of eating sweets

by4M: instead of eating sweets and playing play-station

Y3bU: How many sentences do we need to write for the first paragraph?

T1: One or two.

T: The first sentence starts with either 'We should' or 'In my opinion'.

T1: The first paragraph leads to your reasons.

T1 [Explains and encourages reflection!] You can't give reasons without saying what you are talking about.

T1: In the second paragraph you will give your reasons in sentences, which you've already got and I've marked them.

[T1 discourse gave guidance and explained to the children that they could structure their work by grouping their ideas together in paragraphs. She suggested that they gave around five reasons. Many of the children put their hands up to ask questions which demonstrated their involvement and motivation towards learning].

Actions that strengthen learning dispositions.

- Thinking about learning
- Encouraging reflection e.g. re drafting work
- Children are involved in the learning process
- Formative assessment strategies.

Sensitivity.

T1 discourse was responsive she anticipated what children's questions would be about and proceeded to deal with their difficulties.

T: What goes in the third paragraph, the closing one?

The teacher gave responsibility to the children to redraft their work after marking them.

T1: I've marked them

T1: If there's something incorrect what do you need to do?

T1: If you're not sure what to write, put your hand up and I'll come round to explain.

[T1 was responsive to the children's needs and offered her assistance to them. It showed that she valued their work and was available to them if they needed help, but retained strong control of time.]

Structured time by dividing the children's work into manageable portions.

T1 sets the boundaries for when the work should start and finish. Children have little choice].

T1: By playtime, so you have ten minutes, nearly a quarter of an hour, I want your first paragraph.

i.e. the two important sentences you've written down.

Sh! Concentrate. If you can go further you can continue.

T1: If you're unsure what to do put your hand up and I'll come around to explain.

T1: I'd rather come around to check your work to make sure you start correctly than for you to get it wrong.

[Teacher showed her sensitivity and acknowledged children's efforts she gave praise, encouragement and offered help].

T1→y3bN Very good! That's a good way to start.

T1: Well done! I can see that you've done three line [of writing] already.

T1: Is any one stuck where I've corrected the work

Actions and behaviours that indicate children's learning dispositions.

Learners were:

- Included, involved (active) and taking an interest , receptive;
- Using their mind-reflecting on their learning, using cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies;
- Showed endeavour 'persistence';
- Communicated,
- Took responsibility for their own learning

Insensitivity.

Negative interaction patterns.

On several occasions when the mode of delivery is didactic S1bNy3 does not meet the teacher expectations. During a whole class lesson in the medium of Welsh on 'Healthy Eating' again the boy is not listening.

T1:→ S1bNy3 Would you stop playing and look at the whiteboard and pay attention? It's only ten minutes of your time I'm asking? O.K. it will be the same children who will come to me, saying I don't know what to do?

T1→S1bNy3Perhaps you can explain to us what to do now, being that we've almost finished – being we've gone over this yesterday afternoon – explain to us what to do !

This negative pattern is likely to continue unless there is some intervention. The boy is finding involvement and participation difficult in these formal sessions. He is withdrawing from them .Benjamin et al., 2003 study found that for the children there can be moments of inclusion or exclusion dependent on their linguistic skill to understand and ability to contribute to the sessions by answering questions.

This negative pattern will not strengthen his learning disposition.

- He is not included, involved (active) and taking an interest , receptive;
- His identity as a learner will not be strengthened.
- He is withdrawing and not using his mind.;
- He is not showing endeavour persistence;
- He is not demonstrating reciprocity
- He is not taking responsibility for his own learning.

Class 2.

Stimulation and Metacognitive guidance

The language in all the lessons observed in C2 was English.

Resources: Interactive Whiteboard (IWB).

Whole class activity Numeracy hour- Carroll diagrams/ odd and even numbers.

T2 [approach planned and methodical].

The pattern for delivery of this lesson in the numeracy hour was similar to that of C1.

The style was didactic, the teacher interacted with the whole class. In this class there was a whiteboard (IWB) that the teacher used interactively with children who wrote the numbers on the board at her request. T2 controlled the pace of the lesson.

Carroll diagrams are a diagrammatic mode of categorising numbers according to certain properties they possess. In this case the children were categorising numbers according to two properties, the first property was whether they were odd or even and the second was whether they include one ten or two tens.

Sensitivity.

The teacher first asked the children to listen carefully and asked questions.

[As in C1 the majority of children responded enthusiastically putting up their hands to indicate their readiness to give answers and their eagerness to learn].

T2: Does anyone remember doing this last year?
T2 →bPy4 Do you remember doing this last year P?
bPy4: Yes! But can't remember what it was.

[Teacher encourages reflection]

[Child acknowledges the teacher's statement and demonstrates reciprocity].

T2: It looks a little bit like this?

[T2 drew Fig.4.8 on the IWB. She added four categorical headings to the rectangles of odd and even, numbers with one ten and numbers with two tens].

T2: I'm going to put some numbers on the IWB now and I'm going to choose some children to come up and write them in the right boxes. You'll have to think carefully whether they're even or odd, one ten or two tens because that will depend on the boxes.

[Provided activities matched to stage of development .This was a challenging task for the children they have to think, the teacher's tone was encouraging].

T2: Anyone think they know what box it goes in? gNy4?

T2: See if she's right?

T2: Is she right?

T2: Can you explain to us why you put it there?

[Teacher asks children for an explanation so that reasoning becomes meaningful to the children questions are a way of stimulating involvement].

gNy4:Because its got one ten and six is even.

T2: Exactly right!

T2: Do you know?

T2: Come on then!

[Teacher discourse was encouraging towards the children and demonstrated warmth towards them in her pleasant encouraging tone which is important for their feelings of inclusion and well-being].

T2: 29 think carefully!

T2: Has it got one ten or two tens? [Repeats question as the children are slow to respond].

bTy4: Two tens.

T2: And is it odd or even?

T2: And its odd. If its got two tens does it go here or here?

T2: Which is the row for the odd numbers? Is it here or here?

[child comes forward to write on IWB].

T2: Write it then. Well done!

T2: Good, Excellent bTy4.

Children's actions and behaviours that indicate learning dispositions.

- Learners were included, involved (active) and taking an interest , receptive;
- The approach is encouraging children to think and to become masterful .
- Learners were using their mind-reflecting on their learning, using cognitive strategies
- Demonstrated reciprocity sharing, helping, communicating, interdependence, collaborating;

C2 .Script from Play ‘Fantastic Mr. Fox’ Literacy hour

This was a lesson excerpt from the literacy hour based on the play ‘Fantastic Mr. Fox’. The class teacher explained demonstrating her enthusiasm, the format of Scene 1 of the Play’s script to the whole class of children, who were sitting at their tables. There were six characters in the play, three of whom do not have speaking parts].

T2: We’ve read Fantastic Mr. Fox. It’s a very, very good book, we enjoyed it!

[Teacher read from the script of fantastic Mr. Fox. and explains who the three main characters in the play and questions the children to confirm their understanding].

T2: How are they sitting if they’re frozen gCy4 ?

[Teacher explained stage direction].

T2: [Lights are off at this point. Children enter from the back of the hall]. We don’t usually read that! It’s the stage direction!

T2: We’ve got children, First child, second child, third child [These are the three other characters in the play].

Offers Autonomy.

T2: We need some children.
And we need three of them.

T2: Who would like to have a go?

[Children put up their hands and eagerly try to get the teacher’s attention].

[However teacher allocates the parts on this occasion.]

T2: Jy4 you can be child 1.

T2. Child 2.

T2: Ky4: You can be child 2.

T2. Child 3. Who’d like to have a go? You can have a go.

T2: y4 C You can be child 3.

T2: We’ve got children. Shall we all read the children’s part?

[Guided participation, offered opportunity for children’s involvement]

Children read together and then each part in turn.

[Sensitivity-the discourse revealed warmth and encouragement.

T2 There's a big circle there and it says "no speech marks". Why don't we use them here? Do you know (b I y4)?

b I y4: we usually use them when someone is speaking in a story.

T2. You're absolutely right! We usually put "and "around the writing.

T2: Why don't we in the play?

T2: Why bOy4?

bOy4 : The names are down anyway.

T2. Good. Excellent! Teacher repeats what the boy has said. And in a play, what do people usually do? It's usually about speaking anyway. So you don't need to tell them you're speaking! Good.

[Teacher gave praise and acknowledged child's response].

T2 discourse revealed care, warmth and affection towards the children.

T2: That was beautiful reading but there's one thing I'm going to say!

I'm not criticizing your reading. Your reading was beautiful. This is a play!

[Teacher reads in an inexpressive way as an example for children to avoid].

T2: What could I do to make it more interesting? (referring to play script text).

T2: How would you say it bPy4? [Teacher child demonstrates].

T2: Can you see he's putting expression in his voice?

[Teacher clarifies meaning by explaining in a different way].

T2.His voice goes up and down.

[Teacher speaks again in a monotone to demonstrate]. Do we speak like that?

T2: What could I do to make that really good?

gMy4: Expression!

T2: A play is not like reading it's like speaking. You need to put some expression into your play!

[This excerpt demonstrated the teacher's sensitivity in creating a positive context to influence children's involvement in learning. Reflection was promoted through linking with previous experiences of the text book and its association with enjoyment. Discourses of high sensitivity encouraged the direct involvement of the children through participation in the play activity and stimulated children's responses to use a more expressive genre of speech suited to the play].

Children's actions and behaviours that indicate learning dispositions.

- Learners were included, involved (active) and taking an interest , receptive;
- Learners demonstrated trust
- Strong identity as learners–masterful approaches.
- Learners were using their mind-reflecting on their learning, using cognitive strategies

- Demonstrated resilience—showed endeavour persistence;
- Demonstrated reciprocity sharing, helping, communicating, interdependence, collaborating;

Episodes of Peer interactions during group work.

The small group activities that follow illustrate how it is necessary for teachers to move from ‘centre stage’ and transfer some of their ‘power’ to learners to give them autonomy during group work. As in Trent’s an action research project in an urban elementary school in the U.S.A. (2003:295).

C1. Cross-curricular creative activity linked to a whole school theme-Creating a 3D Flag.

[T1 stimulated child’s interest by providing activities matched to stage of their development to gain their interest.]

This lesson was introduced as a whole class activity followed by group work for the practical tasks.

- Teacher read an article about an American artist Jasper Johns and showed a photograph of his original 3D work of Art based on the American Flag.
- It linked to a school wide celebration to coincide with the International Eisteddfod at Llangollen
- Children were dressed in a range of colourful National costumes to mark the occasion.

The 3D composition developed by triplication of superimposed images of the flag of gradational size, large, medium and small to give a 3D effect. T1 explained how in the lesson they would create a flag produced using similar techniques to the artist Jasper Johns. She then showed them coloured computer printouts of flags from countries which participated in Euro 2004 and asked the children to identify them. This activity appealed particularly to the boys who couldn’t wait to shout out the answers of what flags represented which country.

[Provided activities that matched the stage of development, interest and dispositions of children .This activity had cross-gender appeal and appeal].

Practical work session that followed on from the introduction lesson on the 3D flag.

This practical part of the activity gave the children more freedom and they were able to move around the classroom. They interacted with each other in their groups and discussed what they were doing and gave guidance and conversed with their peers.

The teacher allowed the children to continue with this activity all day so that children could develop their persistence and concentrate as masterful learners.

Autonomy.

T gives autonomy to children and empowers them to take responsibility. In small group situations children can initiate of social interaction with peers, interdependence and collaboration in their learning. T1 showed high levels of engagement with children and enthusiasm and energy.

Dialogue between dyad y4bI and y4gT.

This dialogue initiated and led by the girl, indicates that they are friends and is initially unrelated to the task. As the conversation proceeds, there is an offer of help given to the boy.

[gTy4: initiates conversation with bI y4]

gTy4:→bIy4 *Would you like to come to my house again?*

bIy4: *Yes!*

gTy4: *What do you mean?*

gTy4: *Would you like to come to my house again?*

bIy4: *O.K.*

gTy4: *You could see my new shoes.*

gTy4: *Would you like help?*

bIy4: *Yes.*

bIy4: *Can I please do it for you?*

gTy4: *I've stuck another one with glue. I've done it wrong here.*

I like doing this! [She demonstrates to y4 boy how to fold a mount for supporting 3D effect of flag].

You turn it over.

Wait for it to dry.

[The discourse reveals gTy4's social competence in initiating the conversation with a boy in her group, who is a friend; she is confident to take an active leading role in the dialogue whereas the boy is more passive and responds to her offers of help. She takes pleasure in the task and in demonstrating the skill to her peer. The dialogue is interspersed with elements of child culture, they create together. It shows the significance of events such as having new shoes in children's lives. The level of politeness in the conversation is high and they demonstrated their reciprocity towards one another].

Sensitivity.

T1 acknowledged the group working well together and their reciprocity. And gives praise

T1: There are good children here! Helping other children.

Children's actions and behaviours that indicate learning dispositions.

gTy4

- Active and taking an interest
- Sense of belonging
- Using mind
- Demonstrates reciprocity
- Taking responsibility.

bIy4

- Receptive
- Demonstrates reciprocity
- Sense of belonging

Dyad y3 girls working together to colour the German Flag.

The discourse revealed that these girls are friends who often work together, the group work creates the opportunity for them to work reciprocally with peers or not as in this case:

gH y3: *Could I borrow the yellow?* (referring to crayon).

gEy3: *You can't!*

gE y3: *Which ones are mine?*

gE y3 : *These are mine?*

g H y3 : *Could I borrow it?*

Children's actions and behaviours that indicate learning dispositions.

gH y3: takes initiative to communicate
g H y3 demonstrates persistence

gEy3: behaviour is not reciprocal
[Possessions are important for children's status in the classroom, despite not sharing the interchanges in the dialogue are still polite demonstrating the behavioural norms of the classroom context]

Stimulating task. Language activity.

C1 Target child observation of girl T year 4 writing a short exciting horror story.

The ideas for the story, "The Horror Swamp" are part of a language activity. The teacher has marked their script and they are redrafting the story. This approach encourages children's mastery. Children sat in their usual groups but worked individually. gTy4 sat with a group of four children consisting of one other girl and 2 boys.

10.30 a.m.

[gTy4 is very involved in the task and concentrating hard looking down at her script. She turns to talk to gHy4]

gTy4→gHy4 My handwriting's better when I print than when I join up my writing.

gTy4 looks down again at the marked script and continues to write.

bly4 asks gTy4

bly4→What do you do on the right hand side of the new paper?

No response heard from gTy4.

gTy4 sits back in the chair to think for a minute.

She looks at the paragraph on the script and stares at it.

gTy4→ gHy4 I can do an impression!

She returns her focus to the work and continues with her writing.

The group work quietly on the task.

10.45 a.m.

gTy4 Just go out to play!

Break.

11.10.a.m. Children re enter classroom after the break period.

gTy4→gHy4 Have you seen the film?

gTy4 looks to the left side of the script, reads and writes the new draft. She concentrates. She lifts up her head up and looks around.

gTy4→T1 I haven't finished because I was helping others on the computer yesterday [Qualifies why she hasn't finished. Finishing their work is an important criterion in children's evaluation].

*T1→gTy4 You've nearly finished whatever!
[Teacher communicates her understanding].*

gTy4: takes a pencil from her pencil case and lends it to one of the boys.

gTy4: takes her script to the teacher.

gTy4→T1 I've finished! [Leaves script on the teacher's desk at the front of the class.

[The observation showed the pattern of the girl's concentration when working; she is able to concentrate for long periods, but this is interspersed with the need for approval and occasional direction from her peers. Concentration levels in the group and class are high so they do not always respond to her. Getting the work finished was important to her possibly for a sense of achievement as a masterful learner].

gTy4: continues working on a work sheet—Homophones.

[words that are spelt the same but have different meanings.]

gTy4→gHy4 Finished your work yet?

gTy4→T1 Can I have some paper?

gTy4: She continues with part B of the activity.

gTy4 Actions and behaviours that indicate learning dispositions.

- Active and taking an interest- involved
- Sense of belonging- she is relaxed and at ease
- Using mind –she concentrates on the tasks
- Demonstrating reciprocity- she is able to relate to the teacher and her peers
- Taking responsibility- to complete the tasks.
- Demonstrating resilience- maintains her involvement with the activity

C2. Peer group activity.

Play-script 'Fantastic Mr. Fox.' Small group activity that followed on from morning literacy hour.

There are six characters, Bogus, Bounce and Bean and three child parts Child1, Child 2 and Child3. The group was composed of six boys. The interaction was lively and boisterous and at times they disagreed about the allocation of roles, however they

managed to complete the task and support and guide one another with N taking most responsibility.

The teacher checked on them at the end to ensure that all roles have been allocated.

T2 has divided the class into six groups of six to organise themselves to put on a production of the above play, it is a follow on activity from the morning's literacy hour. The groups disperse to various locations while two groups remain in the classroom to organise themselves to allocate parts and practice a performance of the play without the teacher's supervision. There are six characters, Bogus, Bounce and Bean and three child parts Child1, Child 2 and Child3. This group is composed of six boys. The interaction is lively and boisterous and at times they disagree about the allocation of roles, however they manage to complete the task and support and guide one another with N taking most responsibility. The teacher checks on them at the end to ensure that all roles have been allocated.

These are all Y4 boys. The parts are as follows:-Bounce H, Bogus B. Bean N. Child 1 C, Child 2 I and Child 3 T.

Teacher discourse.

The teacher is not present for most of the sequence and enters towards the end.

Children's discourse

H→gchn. Yeah ! We're the weirdos! [child refers to the 3 characters in the play].

N→gchn. Anybody want to be him? (referring to the characters listed).

H→gchn. I don't want to be Him! Not me. Cross off, Not me!

C→gchn. I wanna be him, I wanna be him!!

N→gchn. Boys we've got to write down the parts! (Reminds the group that they need to have some order and record the allocation of parts so that there's no confusion). Print Bean, Bunsen , Bogus, 1st child, 2nd child, 3rd child.

H→Yeah! Yeah!

B→2nd child

B→gchn Who am I again I? (Without the teacher's supervision their behaviour is boisterous however they eventually manage to organise themselves).

I→You're Bogus
I→I'm Bogus! Bogus.
H→Who am I C? Who am I again I?
I→ I don't know!
N→ You're Bounce. Is he the skinny one?
N→ The tiniest ones Bounce
N→Ready! Let's all read our parts.
H→What do I do with Bounce? (referring what kind of role he should act out)
N→ H: I don't think you do. All you do is stay in the background and whisper cruel things to each other
Do I highlight anything? Do I write anything down? (One boy is keeping a record of which parts are allocated to whom).

Teacher returns to check on children

T→ gchn You've decided whose who?
H→T.A 's Bogus, I'm Bounce
H→T.I'm the midget. No I'm not ready! We need to highlight them!
Not yet! (They are highlighting the script with the parts allocated).

Teacher leaves to check on another group.

I→ I'm the 2nd child.
C→ Whose the 2nd child?
C→ I.You said you were the 1st child.
C→ No! You're the 1st, I'm the 2nd, he's the third . Swap round J.
C→You can't read that can you?
I→Yeah
Teacher returns to class and intervenes to check that all parts have been allocated
T→Whose being child 1 etc?
[teacher checks that all parts have been allocated].
T→Don't forget to read the stage directions.
It tells you where you should all be sitting at the beginning.
T→You've got to set yourselves up

Autonomy.

Considerable autonomy is offered children during this activity. She leaves the room to check on other groups of children who are in adjacent classrooms. Children are given responsibility by their teacher to organise their parts for the play. There are six boys in the group. They are asked by the teacher to highlight their parts on the play script. *She* wants to retain the sheet to stick into their books as evidence of their work to maintain accountability for the completion of the task.

Children's actions and behaviours that indicate learning dispositions.

- Learners were included, involved (active) and taking an interest, receptive;
- Learners feel they belong, demonstrate trust, their language and culture is valued
- Strong identity as learners—masterful approaches.
- Learners are using their mind—using cognitive
- Demonstrate resilience—showing endeavour persistence;
- Demonstrating reciprocity sharing, helping, communicating, interdependence, collaborating;
- Taking responsibility for their own learning, appreciating the perspectives of others.

C2 Creative activity- Music.

During this activity children worked in their usual class groups and continued with a music activity they had been working on previously. They are continuing with the activity to write a tune and play it on the instruments. This allows the children to gain a deeper level of learning and promotes their resilience. They use a range of instruments drums, castanets, xylophone, cymbals, glockenspiel etc.

Teacher asked the group to:

- Think of ways to improve their tune they've written.
- Think of a name for the piece of music.
- She suggests a rhythm of 1, 2, 3. repeated.

Autonomy.

In this activity the teacher is giving the children freedom to work things out for themselves and to use their minds creatively. They are able to choose what instrument they want to use and the teacher supports their choice. T2 empowers them to be independent, confident and interdependent.

It is an activity that the children are familiar with as their teacher is a music specialist and they have no difficulty with the task and respond enthusiastically. When *they had* finished composing their music they tape-record it. [As evidence of their work in class]. Each group played their tune to the rest of the groups in the class. The children

enjoyed this activity and were encouraged to experiment and try new ideas. It stimulated divergent patterns of thought. The activity gives them pleasure.

T2 communicated this message during a music activity in C2.

T2:→ class. Did you enjoy that?
Doesn't matter if you make mistakes. Making mistakes is learning. Going over the work to try again.

It is important for encouraging their resilience. What was particularly noticeable about this activity was that it gave the children from the lower ability groups to 'shine' as they composed and played the tune that was most popular with the rest of the members of the class.

Children's actions and behaviours to indicate learning dispositions.

- Learners are included, involved (active) and taking an interest , receptive;
- Learners feel they belong, demonstrate trust, their language and culture is valued
- Strong identity as learners–masterful approaches.
- Learners are using their mind-reflecting on their learning, using cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies;
- Demonstrate resilience–able to cope with change, showing endeavour persistence;
- Demonstrating reciprocity sharing, helping, communicating, interdependence, collaborating;
- Taking responsibility for their own learning, appreciating the perspectives of others.

C2 Small group.

English activity , Changing verbs to the past tense- observation of two boys.

The boys are sitting in a mixed group of six children. The two observed are working as pairs. Occasionally they speak to other members of the group.

T2 Introduces an activity from the text book.

T2: Where would we look for new words? Thesaurus.
T2: I'm going to go over this quickly because you've used it before.

The children are looking for alternative verbs for the sentences.

e.g. The waves went against the rocks .

11.15 a.m. bIy4 and bCy4

Boys are writing down the date and title. They are using the thesaurus together.

bIy4: Look for 'crashed' in the thesaurus. Find 'crash'.

bCy4 [Continues to write story] What shall we use instead of?

T2: Intervenes.

T2: Stop! The noise levels!

T2: I'm going to give each group five points and I'm going to take them away from any group that's noisy. Let's see if you can all keep the points.

11.25 a.m. 3rd child in group intervenes and asks. Have you found the word?

bCy4 → Shows 3rd child the word on the page in the thesaurus.

bCy4: Me and bIy4 have used 'collision'.

In this vignette the bCy4 is giving help and guidance to his peer. It demonstrates levels of reciprocity in the group. It is

T2: We say 'Collided'!

bCy4: Looks in Thesaurus 'savage' – Lily Savage.

bCy4; Look bHy4 – 'Savage'.

[Media influences on the child's patterns of thought are apparent here]

[Noise levels are raised again, Teacher responds].

T2: Group S are keeping their points!

bCy4 → Girls did you find 'stood'?

bCy4 → What's a different word for froze?

[Boy C has the social competence to seek help from his peers when he's unsure about finding information. He is taking responsibility for his learning.]

11.40.a.m .bIy4 Keeps writing in joined up style and looks up to read paragraph from text book.

T2: I just heard 'can't'! What can you do? gMy4

[Here the teacher is reminding the children that there's no such word as 'can't'. She

expects children to be resourceful and use problem solving techniques to work things out in the classroom. This is important for children to become masterful learners, to strengthen their learning dispositions and to help their long term learning. She asks gMy4 to explain what to do. Using peers to model for the children is part of her practice.

Children's actions and behaviours to indicate learning dispositions.

Learning dispositions.

- Learners are included, active and taking an interest , receptive, involved;
- Strong identity as learners – masterful approaches.
- Learners are using their mind- reflecting on their learning, using cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies;
- Demonstrating reciprocity – sharing, helping, communicating, interdependence, collaborating;
- Taking responsibility for their own learning, appreciating the perspectives of others.

iii) Vignettes of class–group relations.

These brief vignettes are example of typical events that are characteristic of the type of social interactions and relationships that form the classroom context in these settings.

C1 uses humour as a strategy to maintain a positive environment for children.

C1.teacher shares a joke with children during lesson to create a positive context for learning. In explaining a Co-ordinates game before a map- reading exercise she explains a simple way for children to remember map-reading co-ordinates. She explains in Welsh:

T1: Through the door and up the stairs!

T1: You wouldn't go up stairs and then through the door would you?

Ch : Laugh out loud!

C2. models empathy towards a child who is upset.

C2.a.m. One boy wouldn't enter the classroom in the morning as he'd had his haircut shorter than usual. He wouldn't remove his anorak hood. The teacher prepared the way for him to enter the class.

T2→ C2 bMy4 is a little bit worried today! He had his haircut, shorter than usual. We're going to let him keep his hood on until he's got used to it.

T2→ C2. You're not going to laugh at him are you?

T2 influences the responses of the group and their relationships towards one another.

She leads the class by example, so that children follow. On the same day bhy4 follows her lead.

Later the same day bMy4 was chosen by bhy4 to help him to give out the text books as text book monitor.

c) In this vignette one boy interrupted another during conversation. T2 asks him to apologise. The teacher ensures that the group of children respect one another and are polite to each other in the classroom. She establishes the form of social interaction that is acceptable in the group.

T2 →bHy4 Could you say sorry to gty4 please?

T2 →bHy4 gty4 was in the middle of explaining something to you!

bHy4→ gty4 Sorry!

As a class group within the classroom the norms of behaviour are to be polite towards one another.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION.

The conclusion is presented in three sections. The first section will answer the research questions and discuss the corresponding findings. The second section will conclude the main argument that giving consideration and attention to ‘learning dispositions’ as hierarchically complex conceptual levels of learning and the longer term outcomes is as important as the development of knowledge, skills and understanding (Katz 1987; 1993). The findings in relation to the study’s main research question of ‘How do the relationships in the socio-cultural context of the classroom influence children’s learning dispositions will be concluded?’ The second strand of the argument discusses the significant role of the teacher in influencing the formation of the socio-cultural classroom context. The third strand of the argument is related to children’s political positioning in school and the level of autonomy offered to them in their learning. The third section of the conclusion will consider the strengths and limitations of this exploratory study, evaluate its theoretical framework and methodology and make recommendations for future research and practice related to this topic.

6.1 Conclusions to Research Questions.

Q1. How do the Head-teachers and Class-teachers interpret the roles of the children as learners in the classroom context?

The discourses of the Head-teachers and Class-teachers interpret the role of children as ‘active’ learners, but there are elements of contradictory discourses that inform, influence and underpin their practices in the schools. These are associated with transmission of information models of teaching and behaviourist principles that interpret learners as ‘passive’.

The Head-teachers emphasised the importance for children to be 'involved in learning, to listen, pay attention, respond positively to others and to know how to find information and solve problems'. H2 interpreted children's role as 'active, questioning, passionate', confident, self-motivated, determined, resilient, hard-working, resourceful' learners who are able to work co-operatively with others. H1 emphasised the 'right' of children to make their own choices to prepare them for life outside the school. H2 explained the importance of children's 'receptivity' or readiness for learning and the teacher's crucial role in influencing this receptivity through their relationships with children. They both agreed that it was not possible to give total control to children for their learning and that it was the responsibility element that needed to be encouraged e. g. for aspects of their learning, 'behaviour and relationships'. They believed that children needed leadership, guidance and support from teachers and other adults who 'valued what they do, take an interest, have a positive way, give challenges and empower them to be confident, self-motivated learners'.

The Head teachers' identified:

- The paramountcy of the teacher's influences through their relationships with the children in influencing their receptivity to learning, guiding them to learn and take responsibility for their learning at the primary stage of education.
- The strong influence of peers on children's learning from the nursery stage onwards.
- The importance for children of working in groups with their peers to encourage their participation but this was something they had to learn, as it did not happen naturally.

The Class-teachers discourses also emphasised the importance of children to be 'active' and independent learners who think about their learning and interdependent in group situations. However in practice, T1's interpretation of 'training' to be independent without asking all the time, to try to work thing out' and T2's allocation of points as external rewards suggest some contradictions in the discourses that inform their practice. Commodification discourses that discuss training and behaviourist principles portray children in a 'passive' role. The National Curriculum's strong subject focus influences the mode of transmission of information and the teachers expect in most lessons to be in control of the content of children's learning.

Q.2.What messages are communicated to children by the class teacher to socialise children as learners?

A range of messages are communicated by the teachers to socialise children as learners many of which are interrelated. One of the most important messages is related to their receptivity as learners.

Receptivity.

Receptivity requires children's involvement, effort and a willingness to participate and its importance was expressed in implicit and explicit messages e.g. the classroom rules 'try your best'. Another message that was emphasised was reciprocity in relationships with others.

Reciprocity.

In both classrooms relationships that demonstrate reciprocity towards others were promoted and there were clear messages about its importance when working with the teachers and other children. Children refer to the importance of 'listening', 'listening to others to learn more', 'to the teacher when she's explaining' and in 'discussion' with the whole class during formal sessions or when working with others in small

groups. Supportive, empathetic and co-operative relationships with others were promoted and children received praise for these actions e.g. T1: encouraged the Y4 children to support the younger Y3 children. Similarly, T2 encouraged children who spoke English to support others for whom English is an additional language.

Cognitive and Metacognitive messages.

Other messages were cognitive and meta-cognitive to stimulate children's thinking, reflection, and resourcefulness in their approaches to learning. Teachers stimulated thinking through asking questions 'Do you remember doing this last year?' 'Do you know why?' In using language 'What else can we use?' (encouraging divergent thought patterns and making language meaningful to children). Children were encouraged to be involved as role models to communicate messages at their level

'Can you explain why?' Children were encouraged to use meta-cognitive strategies towards their learning to be resourceful in problem solving and to use books for to research information.

What messages are prioritised?

Class-teachers prioritised messages related to children's volition and receptivity by having fun activities for learning so that children were 'enthusiastic' to come to school. Related to this were messages in the affective domain communicated sensitively and with care. These ensured children's inclusion, their sense of belonging, well-being, the development of their social competence and social identity to encourage their involvement and participation in learning. Messages related to developing their confidence as learners were also prioritised to develop their resilience as learners to strengthen their 'learner identity' and participation without being afraid to make mistakes.

Transmission of information.

The subject content of the National Curriculum was prioritised and this formed the focus of most formal lessons. Discourses during these sessions were teacher led and dominated. The teacher's encouraged individuals to participate but there were few child initiated discourses, direct peer interactions and children could adopt a 'passive roles'. Messages related to 'concentrating , re-calling facts' were associated with this pedagogic approach.

The value of education.

Messages related to the value of education were emphasised in both schools by the teachers for children's current and future learning careers.

Long term learning.

For children's long-term learning teachers communicated 'habits of mind' or 'ways of thinking about learning' and 'participation repertoires' as ways of acting and behaving as a learner.

Are these consistent with the school ethos?

The two class-teachers in both schools appeared to communicate messages to the children that were consistent with the ethos of the schools. During interviews there was no open disclosure of any tensions with the values and beliefs of the schools. They felt that the version of the curriculum they presented to children was a mix of National, school and personal interpretations. They emphasised the importance of children having work at the right level for their 'active' involvement.

They ensured children gained pleasure from learning and were provided with encouragement and fun activities to motivate them. School wide events and activities supported them to do this.

Language.

In the Bi-lingual classroom of the Welsh medium school, the correct usage of spoken Welsh language was prioritised and as the children were 2nd language Welsh speakers any grammatical errors were corrected. Children were grouped according to their language ability. In C2 there seemed to be less focus on the grammar of spoken English as this was a multi-cultural classroom the linguistic competence of the children was more variable. The formality of grammar was contained to English lessons during the literacy hour. Welsh and French were integrated into the routines of the day as fun elements for children's language learning.

Q3. How do children interpret and prioritise these messages and what is their response?

Children's interpret the class teachers messages through the 'various voices' of their subjectivity and prioritise the teachers' messages according to their own interpretation and previous experiences with significant others and the values of their culture. The priority given to the teacher's messages reflect the discourses of their home and family lives and the value given to their 'work' as children in school. These socio-historic also influences contribute to their social competence, application, involvement with learning and levels of participation. Concordant values between the home and school seem to present stronger 'voices' in the discourses of children from the Welsh medium school about school 'work'. The heterogeneity of 'voices' that emerge in discourses from the children in the English medium school in relation to home and school values were more diverse. The children's responses to learning messages interact with their 'habitus' and in these schools there are very few expressions of negativity towards learning or their teachers. The majority of children confirmed that they want to be included, to fit in with the group. In their discourses, they construct an

acceptance of the learning messages and express feelings of warmth and complete trust towards their teachers. Their discourses, actions and behaviours indicate that they want get on with and respect their teacher and in the majority of cases are ready to conform and participate. They are keen and enthusiastic to learn and on most occasions eager to answer the teacher's questions and please their teacher. There were gender differences in their responses with girls particularly concerned with neatness of their work and handwriting.

Key messages that are prioritised by children are those related to 'getting on with others, being nice to them, listening to people, including the teacher, working quietly, not talking and making an effort. They are messages related to conforming to the culture of learning they are offered and the rituals and routines of practice in the schools. They turn to their friends for support and help when uncertain about what the teacher thinks of them or if unsure of their work, for its validation. Their responses are observable in their cognitive, affective and behavioural responses to learning, their dispositions. In these classrooms the responses of most of the children show they are motivated to learn 'I want to learn everything.' They are aware of strategies to support their resilience as learners 'going over the work to try again, making mistakes is learning, looking over the work' and apply these to their work.

Q4. How do the children perceive (a) their learning and identity as learners

(b) their peers as learners?

'Self' as learners.

Children's self-evaluation as learners is strongly linked to the comments they receive from the teacher and peers about their work in the classroom. In the socio-cultural context of the classroom social comparisons are frequent. The evaluative comments children identify in relation to their work are not wide ranging e.g. 'very good' or 'excellent work', 'I need to work harder' or 'better work'. They evaluate themselves as learners from the teacher's responses to their work, actions, behaviours and form 'social identities' based on their interpretation of their positioning in the classroom. Finishing their work quickly, asking questions, having knowledge, ability and being good in Maths had special significance in the culture they create as learners. Their perceptions of learning are gender related with far more boys disliking certain aspects of school e.g. related to language e.g. In C2 the boys identified English and aspects such as 'comprehension' that they disliked. Maths and Games were popular subjects in C1, they liked Games as it was healthy and they didn't have to think indicating that they possibly feel the pressure of a 'performance culture in education'. National Curriculum subjects are identified by the children in both schools as what they study indicating the dominance of the curriculum on their school lives.

Several children noted that they liked what they were 'good at' and could 'work harder' if they liked something. This reinforces the importance of making learning pleasurable for children and the relationship between capability and disposition towards learning. They appreciate the fact that their teachers help them to learn and follow their teachers' guidance in asking friends to help with their work or its validation. Some children realise that learning involves their volition.

‘I ask things about my work and it makes it easy?’

Their ‘peers’ as learners.

In discussing their peers as learners their discourses identify those with ‘high status’ or ‘best learners’ as those who are always answering and asking questions (exhibiting reciprocal involvement) and demonstrating knowledge or ability through performance. They explain that the ‘best learners’ listen (are receptive) and are helpful. They indicated how it was important to listen to other people’s ideas (show reciprocity) and work hard in everything they did (effort). Their discourse reveals they are aware of certain children who don’t work in the class and they associate this with their ‘lack of involvement’ and ‘thinking of other things’. They also identify ‘talking and not listening’ as contributing to their lack of involvement or non- involvement and in some cases children’s lack of ability and their need for differentiated work or additional support. Their comment about their peers can be quite harsh and again their interpretations are related to gender and age. The younger Year 3 children showing a stronger gender bias towards children of the same gender than the year 4 children in evaluating their work.

Question 5. What interactional episodes with the class teacher and peers influence children's progress / achievement in their learning?

Class-teacher.

Sensitive discourses of inclusion that gain children's involvement, interactional episodes which stimulate their receptivity and are meaningful have most impact on their achievement and learning. When children take an 'active role' within the frames of reference classroom discourses have to offer and their minds are receptive to the patterns of thoughts, the 'habits of mind', these mediate and interact with their thoughts to influence their actions and behaviour, their learning dispositions. During formal lessons teachers provide 'participation repertoires' as models for children's learning, and use contingent learning strategies to support their 'mastery' learning. However, children are only able to access these when they have the linguistic and social competencies to do so. If children choose or are not able to conform they may not get involved or withdraw their participation. Teachers may or may not accept children's non-involvement and this can result in negative patterns of interactions and relationships developing with individual children, as in the vignettes with one boy. These negative sequences will not strengthen the child's learning disposition and could adversely affect his future 'learning'. The sequence of negative interactions needs to be broken so that he can re-establish himself as an involved learner.

Peers.

When children interact with peers in small group situations they have greater 'autonomy' to initiate their own ideas to make learning meaningful. In these situations they create their own 'culture' relating to language, tools and symbols that are significant in their lives at a particular time. In peer group situations for working there is the opportunity for those children who are not confident in a whole class situation to

participate. In small group situations more children can be 'active' participants and it is in these situations that they showed they were able to take most responsibility for their learning demonstrated in their 'actions and behaviours that indicate their learning dispositions'. Teachers identified positive and negative aspects to peer interactions in small group situations. T1 commented on the value of the Y4 group in her class working with the younger Y3 group and acting as 'hard working' role models and mediating their learning through scaffolding and co-construction. She felt it was important for them to imitate a 'civilized society' A further advantage of mixed grouping the teacher identified was the influence of the older children on the 'happiness and development of confidence' of the younger children.

A disadvantage of small group interaction was that during discussion it sometimes led to some students feeling unsure of themselves. Another disadvantage was that some students argued and had difficulty getting on.

Question 6. What promotes or limits positive child, teacher and peer interaction and learning in the classroom?

The socio-cultural contexts created through interactional and on-going relational processes in the classrooms have a major impact on learning to influence children's learning dispositions. T1 commented on gender differences in children's dispositions towards learning. The girls concentrated more while the boys could not sit still. T2 interpreted disposition to be related more to ability than gender. Teacher sensitivity and responsiveness towards children in their interactions and relationships is confirmed in children's discourses and in their feeling towards learning and school. In C1, gender interacted with children's feelings about school with all the girls expressing a liking for school but with the boys their discourses revealed a less harmonious situation. The unanimous response of all eight children in C2 who were

research participants about liking school and the majority revealing that there was nothing they disliked about school indicated a very harmonious context. The fact that their class- teacher was with the Y4 children for a second year meant that she knew them very well. This has resulted in the stabilisation of their relationships. Although at the beginning of the she had been concerned about how they would respond to her as their teacher for the second year in succession. However, she had found this an advantage as she knew their 'level' and 'when to push them on'. She had organised the children to sit in friendship groups so that they got on well together. This demonstrates the importance teacher understanding individual children holistically in group situations in order to be 'sensitive' to their needs. In C1 and C2 there were stimulating interactional episodes that encouraged children's volition and metacognitive strategies towards learning. Classroom discourses during interactions provided children with 'habits of mind', ways of thinking about their learning and 'participation repertoires' for 'actions and behaviours' related to their learning to influence their learning dispositions. In the classroom context teachers and children are role models for others to follow. Teachers are significant role models of intellectual and social behaviour as demonstrated in the classroom relations vignettes. Children imitate the actions of their teacher in their interactions and relationships with peers. When the teacher's response to a child is positive e.g. demonstrating empathy children imitate this action towards others. While a negative response towards a child from the teacher can generate a negative appraisal of that child from peers. The teacher is a social referent and negative responses towards one boy who does not concentrate during lessons are picked up by children who comment 'He's on Pluto planet! The negative patterns of interactions and relationships developing with this particular child will not enhance his learning or strengthen his dispositions.

Constraints identified by teachers to interactions and learning.

a) Structured Curriculum.

At classroom level in both schools, the demands of the National Curriculum and the further directives of the numeracy and literacy hours result in a convergence of teaching methods and strategies. The effects of which are to formalise teaching and relationships between teachers and children and limit the time that can be afforded to spontaneous episodes of learning. Episodes that may naturally emerge in classrooms or be initiated by children's interests or knowledge that they bring to the classroom. Teacher's discourses reveal the pressure to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and concern with 'coverage', 'juggling to fit things in' according to the time they have available and meeting the demands of statutory assessment.

b) Class size and children of broad range of ability.

Class size and children of broad range of ability in C2 were identified as constraining to individual interactions. While in C1 teaching two sets of curricula to the two age-groups of a composite class of children were identified as a constraint.

Question 7. Are there identifiable cultural differences between an English medium school and a Welsh medium school in the way they influence children's learning dispositions?

The philosophies of both head-teachers of these schools place value on education and learning and they appreciate that learning transcends the boundaries of the school building. They are aware of children's distinct learning styles and that learning should be pleasurable. The two schools are at different stages of development, one school is in some ways very traditional in its approach with an established 'community of learners', the other is more progressive and working towards establishing itself as a 'new community of learners'. School wide events and activities in both initiate and

develop children's involvement and interest in learning to support classroom processes. The two classrooms create authentic learning cultures but children's 'active' levels of involvement can be related to the lesson format and their linguistic and social competence. The identifiable cultural differences are related to the linguistic and cultural characteristics of schools in Wales.

In the Welsh medium school the strong influence of Welsh language and cultural traditions are dominant and deeply permeate all aspects of school life. Welsh Cultural discourses related to National Identity form stabilizing influences in children's education at a time of change when 'commodification' discourses have entered the classroom arena. The Head-teacher has confidence in selecting 'what works for them as an organisation' and is less influenced by current educational discourses of 'commodification'. The fact that the school has a settled staff of teachers and is well established in serving its wide, fairly homogenous community that has a common interest in Welsh medium education for children means that there are shared values between the school and the parents/carers of the children attending. This is indicated by the Head-teacher (H1) in the discussion of parental involvement and parental support in which he describes how 'the majority of parents do take an interest'; however this element of parental support of coming into the school to help with other children is an aspect that he sees as declining. Concordant values between the culture of the home and school are identified by the children themselves when they refer to the pleasure they have from taking things and practising them at home. These continuities impact on children's learning and learning dispositions and can be observed in classroom interactions by the high levels of motivation and conceptually advanced learning that many of the learners show. This supports the teacher's efforts to influence the receptivity of the learners to learning and in strengthening children's

learning dispositions. The Welsh cultural traditions of respect for education, strong musical and literary emphasis and the established associations with movements such as the Welsh league of Youth (Yr Urdd) for sporting events and festivals (Eisteddfodau) and with other local Welsh and English schools in the cluster group contribute to the richness and breadth of the learning experiences offered to children attending and the school's life as a community.

In contrast, the English medium school's approach is characterised by its novel approaches towards working with parents and children. Although Welsh culture and language is woven into its curriculum, this influence is diluted by the diverse cultural heterogeneity of children who attend and the Head-teacher's aims are to promote a global community. As a fairly new school there is no established tradition and the ethos of the school is strongly influenced by the Head-teacher's leadership which she explains is based on 'establishing what our expectations are. The majority of staff are also very new and many are less experienced than the staff in the Welsh medium school. Educational discourses are more influenced by the current educational policy discourses of 'commodification'. The community is heterogeneous in character and therefore the cultural traditions that children, parents and teachers bring with them to the setting are far more diverse than the Welsh school. The school is working to establish its own 'global' culture by celebrating the success of learners against their previous successes and developing innovative ways of involving parents to be part of this learning culture, giving a lead to the community. The school's approaches to learning are exciting and experiential and this ensures children's involvement,

volition towards learning and participation in the classroom to influence and strengthen children's learning dispositions. Children's responses indicate that the school is successful in its aims.

Section 6.2. Conclusions to the study.

This second section will conclude the main argument that giving consideration and attention to 'learning dispositions' as hierarchically complex conceptual levels of learning and the longer term outcomes is as important as the development of knowledge, skills and understanding (Katz 1987; 1993). The findings in relation to the study's main research question of:

'How do the relationships in the socio-cultural context of the classroom influence children's learning dispositions will be concluded ?

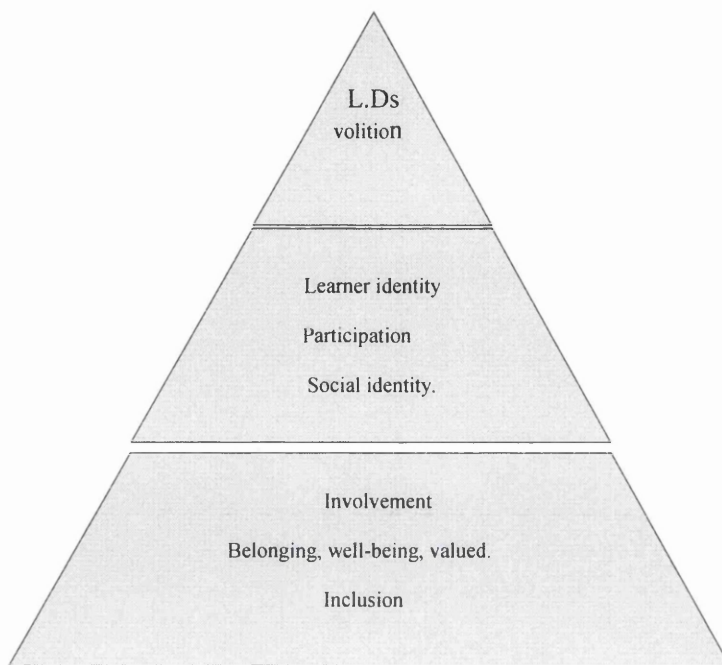
Classroom relationships create the socio-cultural context that influences children's learning dispositions. The first level of influence of relationships is in ensuring children's inclusion in the learning context. Sensitive teacher interactions and relationships with children through discourses that demonstrate warmth, care and empathy towards children are essential for children's inclusion. Teachers select and guide the shared discourses of classroom interactions while peers contribute in their rich and diverse ways. Children's sense of belonging, well-being and feelings of trust and value are influenced by their relationships with teachers and children. When they feel emotionally safe and their 'social identity' is established they can then be involved and participate in the learning offered in the classroom. Stimulating discourses of learning gain children's receptivity as learners to form 'patterns of thought' that are meaningful whether these are whole class sessions or group work. Through 'active' participation, the 'habits of mind' and the 'participation repertoires' of the socio-cultural context strengthen children's 'learner identities' to influence

their learning dispositions. Children's patterns of thought do not always follow the same pathway as the teacher and meanings are not always shared resulting in confusion e.g. in Maria Teresa lesson over the words 'century' and 'sentry'.

(b) children and their peers

Children contribute to the plurality and richness of discourses in the socio-cultural classroom context. Symmetrical relationships with their peers influence children's learning in many ways. Peers are role models for children and their values and attitudes influence children's interest in learning and their 'learning dispositions'. Emotionally peers support one another in school and when they are uncertain of the teacher or aspects of their work they turn to their peers for validation or comfort. Peer collaboration during group work creates more opportunities for the development of discourses related to children's autonomy and responsibility in relation to their learning. Peer interaction during group work provides cognitive conflict enabling children to consider alternative ways of thinking, develop new 'habits of mind', ways of responding and 'participation repertoires' that influence their learning dispositions.

Child.



Peers

Teacher

Fig 6.2.1 Relationships and the levels of influence on L. Ds. (learning dispositions).

The second strand of the argument discusses the significant role of the teacher in influencing the formation of the socio-cultural classroom context.

Significance of the socio-cultural characteristics of the classroom context for children's involvement and participation.

The study has highlighted the significant role of the teacher in the primary school classroom in the framing the curriculum and in selecting and guiding the discourses of interactions and relationships they share with children to create the socio-cultural context created for learning in the classroom. How children are positioned, as 'active'

or 'passive' within these discourses of classroom learning influence their involvement in learning. A carefully planned curriculum that foregrounds relationships is essential for strengthening children's learning dispositions. The importance of using a creative approach to curriculum development and their intuition in gaining children's interests, emphasising mastery learning as opposed to the limitations of a 'performativity focus' that can emerge from pressures of external surveillance. There is considerable scope for the development of new curricula for primary school children. This is discussed in the recommendations for policy and practice. The constraints placed on teachers working in a classroom with very large groups of children are constraints for them and for children's learning. This leads to the third strand of the argument which is related to children's political positioning in school and the level of autonomy offered to them in their learning.

Children' political positioning in schools and the level of autonomy afforded to them in their learning.

Children's political positioning in schools is strongly related to the symmetry of their relationships with teachers and peers. Children are dependent on their teachers empowering them to take a central position as 'active' learners in their learning and school life. These schools do provide a broad range of activities and pleasurable experiences to children and to ensure their inclusion and involvement. Head-teachers are aware that relationship with children should not be 'too directional' and allow autonomy for them to self – regulate aspects of their learning. H1 communicated children's rights to make decisions about their life and the value of their role as participants during consultation about their learning as it 'opens their eyes' and H2 explained that they had a school council and that consultation helped to make children 'articulate learners'. There is an expectation in both schools that children are given

increased independence over their learning with progression through school. In the routines of learning of the school day there is limited autonomy for children as the structured lessons of the time-table give little free time for them to choose activities. The level of autonomy afforded to children is related to pedagogic practice. When the lessons are formal during the literacy and numeracy hour limited autonomy is available to children. Whereas during children's group work more autonomy is possible and children take more responsibility for their learning. The symmetrical relationships of peers in a small group situations can provide more opportunity for children who do not have the confidence or competence to participate in whole class situation and the increased levels of responsibility influence children's learning dispositions. Children's consistent positioning as 'active', 'autonomous' learners within reciprocal relationships in the classroom is crucial towards strengthening their 'learning dispositions'. Dispositions are more significant to children's long term learning as 'masterful' learners than superficial subject knowledge and some skills that they are concerned about.

Section 6.3. Evaluation and Recommendations

Evaluation of the theoretical framework and the methodology.

This was an exploratory micro-study of the relationships in the socio-cultural contexts of two classrooms in two case study schools, one Welsh medium and the other an English medium and their influences on children's learning dispositions.

Strength of Study.

The strength of the study is in its inter-disciplinary theoretical approach and qualitative methodology to explore the socio-cultural processes in the classroom contexts. The theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism combined with post-modernist approaches to discourse analysis, facilitated an exploration of participants

interpretation of school and classroom processes. The combination of interviews, observations and writing activity followed by focus-group discussion with the children allowed triangulation of data gathered and as a check on the validity of the findings. Criticisms that are levelled at research in the genre of symbolic interactionism are that it lacks a macroscopic perspective and according to Metzger et al., (1975) two crucial strands are: (1) limited consideration of human emotions, and (2) unconcern with social structure (1975:120). In this study, to avoid such limitations data was gathered at three levels, whole school, class room and children's level. To reveal participants subjective interpretations discourse and dialogic analysis of the data proved an useful approach to reveal participants views including children's feelings that accompanied their learning.

Limitations of the study.

The study was a small scale exploratory study to explore the views of the various participants around the processes that influence children's learning dispositions. There are several limitations to the study, some of which can only be fully appreciated retrospectively. First, the breadth of the study and the inter-disciplinary approach made the overall management difficult and to some extent has weakened its focus and cohesiveness in some areas, when compared to research from a single disciplinary perspective. However, the fact that classrooms are complex places, relationships and learning processes that influence children's learning dispositions are multi-faceted, the variables to consider are almost infinite. However, to have limited the breadth at an exploratory stage would have been equally restrictive. A simpler approach would have been to limit the study to one level only, head-teacher, class-teacher or children's perspectives rather than to explore all three. To have omitted the Head-teachers' and observations would have omitted the contributions whole school processes contribute

to classroom learning. The bi-directionality of classroom interactions would however have been lost without a focus at the level of teachers and children. The second limitation as a case-study of two schools is its small scale and therefore the findings from these settings cannot be generalised to other primary schools. However, some of the characteristics of learners and influences on their 'learning dispositions' are likely to be similar to those of others in the U.K. The third limitation is that of a fledgling researcher who approached the field work possibly too early before the vast literature was fully digested, so that research questions and data gathering instruments developed were not as sharply in focus as current knowledge would allow.

Recommendations.

Recommendations for policy and practice.

The moral and ethical and social dimensions of the teacher's role in society and children's futures needs to be acknowledged in policy. Focusing on relationships between: (a) teachers and children; and (b) children and their peers in curriculum development and planning would enhance children's lives both in and outside school. Recommendations are proposed for the development of curricula and pedagogic approaches that focus on classroom learning processes and higher conceptual outcomes of learning for children's long term learning in addition to subject based knowledge. Current educational discourses of subject focus and 'performance' have an impact on teachers' practices in the classroom. Teachers need further guidance and support in managing classroom relationships to allow more autonomy for children and to empower them to take responsibility for their learning.

Recommendations for future research.

There are several areas of future research that could follow on from this study.

- Action research projects with researchers working with teachers and children in classrooms could be of value in developing practices that are nurturing for children's learning disposition e.g. strengthening children's resilience as learners or exploring ways to give them more autonomy to take more responsibility in their learning.
- Longitudinal-research studies that track 'learning dispositions' across educational contexts from the Nursery stage to the Primary School level and beyond would form an informative area of research to identify and measure the dispositions that are most relevant to learning during early and middle childhood.
- Evaluating portfolios for tracking the 'learning dispositions' such as advocated by Carr and Claxton (2002) could provide further evidence on identifying key 'learning dispositions' for children's learning in classrooms and to gather information on ways to strengthen them.

Some final thoughts.

The final thoughts return to Mead and the absolute concepts of 'mind, self and society' (Mead, 1934). It is together through the 'shared discourses' of their interactions and relationships that teachers and children create the socio-cultural context of the classroom, to form the micro 'society', where their 'selves' as learners are influenced. Teacher and children's learning inclinations, patterns of thoughts and learning dispositions are strengthened or weakened in their 'minds' to learn through the 'participation repertoires', actions and behaviours they create in that shared context (adapted from Mead 1934).

Appendices.

Appendix. 1. Access letters.

The Head teacher

Dear

I am a part-time, mature, Ph. D student at Swansea University and am planning to carry out a classroom-based research study on the following topic: “Children’s learning relationships in a classroom setting”. I would be most grateful if you would allow me to have access to a class of 7 to 8 year-old children and their teacher at your school. The duration of the study will be on one or more days per week over a period of approximately one term.

I am an experienced and qualified teacher and will make every effort to fit in with the normal routine of the classroom. I will observe the teacher and children and also carry out some writing tasks with the children. I will ensure that the school and all participants in the study will be given anonymity and the name of the setting will remain confidential. I will adhere to strict ethical guidelines, and I will ensure that no harm or distress is caused to the children, teachers or any other persons involved in the study.

The purpose of the project is to gather information for academic purposes, the nature of which will be explained clearly to all concerned. If you require further information I will be happy to provide you with details. If you require a reference my tutor at the University will be able to provide one.

Thank you.

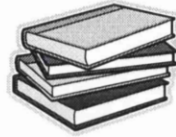
Yours faithfully

C Marian Morris. CEEd, BA, MSc

Dear Children

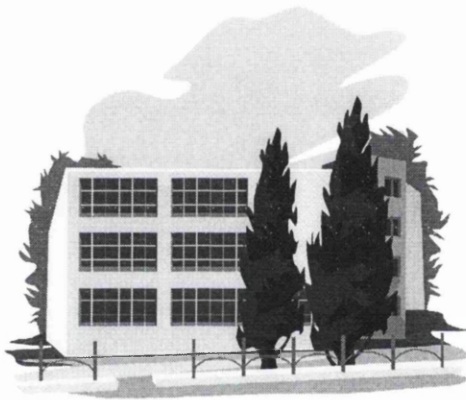
I am a student and I'm working on

a project.



I will be spending some time at your

school



and in your classroom.

I would like to find out more about your learning.



Would you be willing to tell me about your learning?

I will be helping your teacher in the classroom.

Thank you for letting me spend some time with you.

Marian

Appendix 2.

WELSH DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS.

Headteacher Interview 1 / Prif athro Cyfweiliad 1.

Manylion cefndir yr ysgol a gwerthoedd y prifathro

1. Faint o blant sydd gennych yn yr ysgol?
2. Ar gyfartaledd faint o blant sydd mewn dosbarth?
3. Beth yw prif iaith a ddefnyddir yn yr ysgol?
4. Beth yw amcanion yr ysgol am addysg plant?
5. Ydy' rhain wedi selio ar beth i chi'n gredu neu, gwerthoedd chi'n teimlo sy'n bwysig i addysg plant?
6. Pwy neu beth bu'r dylnwadau pennaf ar eich gwerthoedd a'ch syniadau am addysg plant?
7. Sut ydych yn gweld y cyd – bwysedd rhwng arwain a chefnogi staff a'u rheoli?
8. Ydych yn cymryd rhan mewn dysgu gyda'r plant?

Dylanwadau diwylliant a chymdeithasol ar addysg plant.

9. Tra'n ystyried galwedigaeth rhieni pa fath o ddalgylch sydd gan yr ysgol?
10. Beth yw cefndir ethnig y rhan fwyaf o blant syn'n mynychu'r ysgol?
11. Pa iaith a siaredir yn y cartref gan y mwyafrif o'r plant?
12. Sut mae rhieni a gofalwyr yn cael eu hannog i gymryd rhan mewn dysgu gyda'r plant?
13. Ydy y rhan fwyaf o rieni / gofalwyr yn awyddus i gymryd rhan mewn dysgu gyda'r plant?

14. Sut fydddech yn dweud bod ymgyfraniad (involvement) rhieni yn dylanwadu ar ddiddordeb plant mewn dysgu yn y dosbarth?

Polisi ar Addysgu a Dysgu.

15. Beth yw polisi'r ysgol ar addysgu a dysgu?

16. Pwy gyfrannodd at ddatblygu'r polisi yma?

17. Beth fu'r prif gyfaniad at y polisi , Polisi'r Llywodraeth – Y Cwricwlwm Cenedlaethol neu adnabod anghenion plant?

18. Pa effaith gafodd traddodiadau a gwerthoedd Cymreig ar lunio'r polisi?

19. A fydddech yn disgrifio dulliau'r ysgol fel tr addodiadol neu blaengar?

20. Oes gennych ddulliau arbennig o addysgu chi'n ffafrio?

21. Pa rinweddau arbennig sydd angen ar athro neu athrawes effeithiol?

Cyfweliad 2 Prifathro

Perspectif prifathro ar ddysgu plant

Hunan-reolaeth plant a'u dysgu

22. Ydych chi'n teimlo ei fod yn bwysig i ymgynghori â phlant am eu dysgu?
23. Beth yw rhai o'r manteision o ymgynghori a phlant?
24. Faint o reolaeth a chyfrifoldeb ydych yn meddwl y dylai plant gymryd dros eu dysgu?
25. Sut byddwch yn eu hannog i wneud hyn?
26. Pa sgiliau sydd angen ar blant er mwyn dysgu?
27. Sut fydddech yn disgrifio rôl y plentyn fel dysgwr?
28. Pa ddulliau chi'n gredu yw'r gorau i blant ddysgu?
29. Pa wahaniaethau ydych wedi sylwi ar, yn y ffyrdd mae plant yn ymateb i ddysgu yn yr ysgol?
30. Beth fydddech yn dweud sy'n cyfrannu at y gwahaniaethau yma mewn ymateb plant?
31. Oes yna blant sydd yn wrthryn at ddysgu? Pam i chi'n meddwl eu bod yn wrthryn?
32. Ym mha ffordd mae'r ysgol yn cynllunio, paratoi, trefnu a chefnogi er mwyn cwrdd a'r amrediad eang o anghenion unigol sydd gan y plant yma er mwyn bod yn ddysgwyr?
33. Beth yw'r peth pwysicaf sydd angen ddysgu ar blant i fod yn ddysgwyr?

34. Pa werthoedd arbennig sydd gan ddysgwyr llwyddiannus?

Dylanwadau ar ddysgu plant yn y dosbarth

35. A fydddech yn dweud mae'r athro neu urddolion sydd ar dylanwad mwyaf ar agweddau plant tuag at ddysgu yn y dosbarth?

36. Beth sy'n annog plant i ddatblygu'n ddysgwyr awyddus a medrus?

37. Sut mae diwylliant yr ysgol yn annog cymhelliad y plant tuag at ddysgu a chael pleser wrth hyn?

38. Pa ffactorau sydd yn cyfyngu'r dysgu sy'n cymryd lle yn yr ystafell ddosbarth?

39. Ydy'r cwricwlwm presennol yn hyrwyddo dysgu neu yn ei gyfyngu?

40. Ydy dulliau asesu yn cael effaith ar blant a'u dysgu?

41. Yn eich profiad sut fydddech yn dweud fod y berthynas rhwng y plentyn a'r athro yn dylanwadu ar ddiddordeb a bwriad plant tuag at ddysgu?

42. Pa wahaniaethau ydych wedi sylwi arnynt rhwng teuddiadau bechgyn a merched at ddysgu?

43. Ydych yn meddwl bod plant yn datblygu patrwm cyson o ymateb at ddysgu, neu batrwm o arferion at ddysgu? Pa fath o batrwm neu arferion ydych wedi sylwi sydd gan blant yn y dosbarth neu'r ysgol?

44. Pa ffactorau eraill fydddech yn dweud sy'n dylanwadu ar dueddiadau plant tuag at ddysgu?

45. Tra'n gweithio mewn grwp ydych chi'n meddwl dylai plant drafod eu syniadau a cefnogi eu gilydd tra'n dysgu? Ydy'r rhan fwyaf o blant yn medru gwneud hyn?

46. Oes yna rhywbeth yr hoffech ychwanegu ynghlyn a sut mae plant yn dysgu ac yn ymateb i'r addysg a'r nodau addysgiadol a osodwyd ar eu cyfer?

Class teacher interviews Welsh.

Cyfweliad 1. Athro / Athrawes ddosbarth.

a)Manylion Dosbarth.

T1.1. Faint o fechgyn a merched sydd gennych yn y dosbarth, a pha amrediad oed ydynt? Oes yna blant ac anghenion arbennig?

T 1.2.Beth ydy iaith gyntaf a siaradir gan y mwyafrif o'r plant :-

- yn y cartref
- yn y dosbarth?

T 1.3. Sut fydddech yn disgrifio amrediad agweddau a dyfalbarhad y plant yn y dosbarth at ddysgu?

T 1.4.Oes yna oedolyn ychwanegol sydd yn helpu'r plant gyda dysgu? Pa fath o help yw hwn?

T 1.5 .A fydddech yn dweud fod plant yn y dosbarth o'r un cefndir o ran diwylliant a dosbarth cymdeithasol? Faint o blant sydd yn cael cinio rhad?

b) Cefndir athro / athrawes , credau a gwerthoedd.

T1.6. Beth yw eich iaith gyntaf?

T 1.7.Sut fydddech yn disgrifio eich gwaith fel athrawes/ athro ynglyn â dysg y plant?

T1.8. Oes gennych farn pendant am sut mae plant yn dysgu orau?

T 1.9.Beth fydddech yn dweud yw'r gwerthoedd pwysig mewn athro /athrawes effeithiol? Beth fydddech yn dweud yw eich cryfderau chi fel athro / athrawes?

T 1.10. Pa gymwysterau sydd gennych a pha fath o ddulliau hyfforddiant a gawsoch?

T 1.11. Ydych ffordd o ddysgu wedi selio ar eich hyfforddiant neu ar ffordd ymarferol o weithio sydd wedi datblygu trwy brofiad?

T 1.12 Beth ydych yn hoffi fwyaf am ddysgu'r dosbarth presennol?

T 1.13. Pa ffactorau sy'n cyfyngu eich gwaith fel athro/ athrawes gyda'r dosbarth yma?

c) Amcanion, cynllunio a threfnu'r cwricwlwm a'r dosbarth.

T 1.14. Beth yw'ch prif amcanion ar gyfer y plant yr ydych yn dysgu?

T1.15. Fel canran disgrifiwch pa ran mae y canlynol yn cyfrannu at eich amcanion:

- Polisi'r ysgol
- Polisi cenedlaethol
- Eich dehongliad.

T 1.16. Ydych yn cynllunio i gwrdd ag anghenion unigol pob plentyn?

T1.17. Sut mae'r dosbarth wedi ei drefnu ar gyfer helpu'r plant i ddysgu?

T 1.18 Ydych chi'n teimlo bod gennych ddigon o ryddid i drefnu'r dosbarth a chynllunio'r cwricwlwm?

d) Cyd destun diwyllianol a chymdeithasol y dosbarth.

T1.19. Faint o bwysigrwydd chi'n rhoi ar berthnasau cymdeithasol yn y dosbarth e.e. Rhwng chi a'r plant a rhwng y plant a'u gilydd?

T 1.20. A ydych yn ystyried perthynasau cyfoedion a'u dylanwadau tra'n trefnu'r cwricwlwm a gweithgareddau'r dosbarth?

T 1.21. Ydy'r bechgyn a'r merched yn gweithio mewn grwpiau cymysg?

T1.22. Pa wahaniaethau ydych wedi sylwi arnynt yn y modd mae bechgyn a merched yn ymateb at ddysgu yn y dosbarth?

e) Arddull addysgu a threfn y dosbarth a dysgu..

T1.23. Pa beth i chi'n feddwl sy'n bwysig i blant ddysgu?

T1.24. Pa ddulliau chi'n gredu sydd orau ar gyfer cefnogi plant i ddysgu?

T1.25. A fydddech yn disgrifio eich arddull addysgu fel traddodiadol neu blaengar?

T1.26. Sut fydddech yn disgrifio y cydbwysedd rhwng dulliau ffurfiol ac an-ffurfiol?

T1.27. Ydy'r plant yn gweithio am y rhan fwyaf o'r amser mewn grwp neu fel unigolion? Sawl plentyn sydd mewn grwp? Beth yw lles y fyrdd gwahanol yma?

T1.28. fel canran o'r amser mae'r plant yn gweithio yn y dosbarth rhwng amcangyfrif o'r amser mae'r plant yn dreulio'n gweithio fel:

- Dosbarth cyfan
- Cydweithio mewn grwpiau
- Mewn grwpiau ond yn gweithio'n unigol
- Fel pâr

T 1.29. Ydy'ch yn teimlo fod hwn y cydbwysedd cywir?

T 1.30 Faint o bwyslais ydych yn rhoi ar iaith yn y dosbarth?

T1.31.Sut fyddwch yn annog y plant i drafod eu syniadau gyda'i gilydd?

f) Dysgu ac Aseu.

T.1.32. Sut ydych yn aseu ac yn cofnodi datblygiad dysgu'r plant?

T.1.33. Ydych wedi arsylwi ar effaith mae aseu yn gael ar hunan – hyder plant?

T.1.34 Oes cyfleoedd i'r plant wneud hunan asesiad?

Cyfweliad 2 . Athro / Athrawes Ddosbarth.

g)Hunan reolaeth plant.

T2.1 Faint o ddewis gwaith mae'r plant yn gael yn y dosbarth?

T2.2 Ydynt yn gwneud penderfyniadau neu'n cymryd rheolaeth o'u dysgu?

T2.3 Sut fyddwch yn annog y plant i feddwl am eu dysgu?

T2.4. Oes yna reolweithiau arbennig yn ystod y dydd i annog y plant i ddechreu gweithio neu gymryd cyfrifoldeb am eu dysgu?

T 2.5. Ydych wedi sylwi ar unrhyw strategaethau arbennig mae'r plant yn dangos tuag at ddysgu?

T2.6.Ym mha ffyrdd y byddwch yn helpu plant unigol?

T2.7. Beth yw eich nôd mewn episod hir o ddysgu gyda plentyn neu grwp o blant?

T2.8. Ydych yn medru treulio gymaint o amser a hoffech yn esbonio neu yn ymestyn dysg plant unigol neu grwp bach ? Beth sy'n creu rhwystr?

T2.9 Sut fyddech yn disgrifio cydbwysedd eich gwaith yn y dosbarth? (fel canran)

- Yn rheolu'r dosbarth
- Yn gwella neu datblygu hunan barch a hunan hyder y plant
- Yn addysgu'r plant

h)Perthynas plentyn-athro.

T2.10 Yn eich barn pa mor bwysig fyddech yn dweud yw cefnogaeth sensitif gan yr athro mewn ennyn diddordeb plentyn mewn dysgu?

T2.11 Sut fyddech yn dweud bod eich perthynas gyda'r plentyn yn effeithio'i hunan farn fel dysgwr/ dysgwraig?

T2.12. Ydych yn meddwl fod y rhan fwyaf o'r plant yn cymryd rhan actif yn eu dysgu?

T2.13 Sut ydych yn annog y plant i ddatblygu'n ddysgwyr â chymelliant?

i)Dysgu a pherthynas cyfoedion.

T2.14 Ydy'r plant yn dysgu o'u cyfoedion yn o gystal ac o'u athro / athrawes?

T2.15 Pa gyfleoedd a greur yn y dosbarth er mwyn i blant weithio gyda'i gilydd?

T2.16. Ydych chi'n teimlo ei fod yn bwysig i'r plant gael eu tywys i gydweithio?

T.2.17. Ym mha ffordd mae perthynas cyfoedion yn dylanwadu ar agweddau plant tuag at ddysgu?

T2.18. Yn eich dosbarth ydy y rhan fwyaf o rhyngweithio yn positif ac yn berthnasol i ddysgu?

T.2.19 Beth fyddech yn dweud sy'n atal neu amharu ar rhyngweithio positif rhwng cyfoedion?

T2.20 . Sut fyddech yn disgrifio y perthynasau cymdeithasol yn y dosbarth yma?

Children's worksheets. / Cardiau gwaith y plant.

Cerdyn 1. Dysgu yn yr ysgol.

W1. Wyt ti'n hoffi'r ysgol?

W2. Ysgrifenna am beth wyt yn hoffi yn yr ysgol?

W3. Wyt ti'n teimlo dy fod yn perthyn yn y dosbarth?

W4. Beth sydd yn gwneud i ti deimlo'n gartrefol yn y dosbarth?

W5. Beth wyt ti'n ddysgu yn y dosbarth?

W6. Pam wyt ti eisiau dysgu?

W7. Wyt ti'n hoffi dysgu? Ysgrifenna am beth wyt ti'n hoffi dysgu yn yr ysgol.

W8. Oes rhywbeth nad wyt yn hoffi am ddysgu yn yr ysgol?

Cerdyn 2. Beth mae'r athro / athrawes yn dweud wrthoch am ddysgu?

- W9. Beth mae'r athro/ athrawesyn dweud wrthoch am ddysgu?
W10. Wyt ti'n gwranddo ar beth mae hi / fe'n ddweud?
W11. Beth arall mae'r athro/ athrawes yn dweud wrthoch am ddysgu?
W12. Sut ydych yn dod mlan gyda'r athro /athrawes?
W13. Oes yna reolau amddysgu yn y dosbarth? .
W14. Pwy sydd yn helpu chi fwyaf gyda dysgu?
W15. Wyt ti eisiau dysgu?
W16. Beth wyt ti eisiau dysgu?

Cerdyn 3. Am blant eraill a'u dysgu

- W17. Pwy yw'r dysgwyr gorau yn y dosbarth?
W18. Sut wyt ti'n gwybod hyn?
W19. Pam wyt ti'n meddwl eu bod y dysgwyr gorau?
W20. Beth mae'r athrawes yn dweud am eu dysgu?
W21. Beth mae eith ffrindiau yn dweud am eu dysgu?
W22. Oes yna blant sydd ddim yn gweithio yn y dosbarth?
W23. Pam wyt ti'n meddwl nad ydynt yn gweithio?
W24. Beth arall ma nhw'n gwneud?

Cerdyn 4. Am dy ddysgu

- W25. Beth mae'r athro / athrawes yn dweud wrthyt am dy ddysgu?
W26. Beth mae plant eraill yn y dosbarth yn dweud am dy ddysgu?
W27. Oes yna rywbeth fyddai'n gwneud ti yn well dysgwr / dysgwraig?
W28. Beth sy'n stopio ti i ddysgu neu dy arafu?
W29. Ydy'r athro / athrawes yn siarad gyda ti am dy waith?
W30. Beth mae hi / ef yn ddweud?
W31. Wyt ti'n gofyn cwestiynau am dy waith?

ENGLISH DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS.

In-depth Interviews

Interview 1. Head teacher

School characteristics and Head teacher beliefs and values

- 1 How many children do you have in the school?
- 2 On average how many children are there in each class?
- 3 What is the main language used in the school?
- 4 What would you say are the school's aims in relation to children's education?
- 5 Are these based on particular beliefs or values that you feel are important in relation to the education of children?
- 6 Who or what have been the main influences on the educational beliefs and values you have?
- 7 How do you see the balance between supporting and guiding staff and controlling them?
- 8 Do you get involved with the children and their learning?

Socio-cultural influences on children's learning

- 9 In terms of parental occupation what type of catchment area does the school serve?
- 10 What is the ethnic background of the majority of children who attend the school?

11 What is the first language spoken at home by the majority of the children who attend the school?

12 How are the parents encouraged to become involved with the children's learning?

13 Are most parents eager to be involved with children's learning?

14 In what way do you feel parental involvement influences children's interest in classroom learning?

Policy on teaching and learning

15 What is the school's policy on teaching and learning?

16 Who was involved in the development of this policy?

17 Has this been mainly influenced by Governmental Policy eg National Curriculum, or through the identification of children's needs?

18 In what way has this been influenced by the traditions and values of Welsh culture?

19 Would you describe the school's approach as progressive or traditional?

20 Are there particular methods of teaching that you favour?

21 What special qualities do you feel an effective teacher needs?

Interview 2. Head teacher

Head teacher perspectives on children and their learning

Child autonomy and learning

- 22 Do you feel that it is important to consult with children about their learning?
- 23 What are some of the benefits of consulting with the children?
- 24 How much control and responsibility do you think children should take over their learning?
- 25 How do you encourage them to do this?
- 26 What skills do you think children need for learning?
- 27 How would you describe the role of children as learners?
- 28 What do you feel are the best ways for children to learn?
- 29 What differences have you observed in the way children respond to learning in school?
- 30 What would you say accounts for the differences in the children's responses?
- 31 Are there children who show active resistance towards learning? Why do you think they resist?
- 32 In what way does the school plan, prepare, organise and support to meet the range of individual needs that all these pupils have so that they become learners?
- 33 What do you feel is most important for children to learn about being learners?
- 34 What special qualities do successful learners have?

Influences on children's learning in the classroom

- 35 Would you say that teachers or peers have the greater influence on the children in the classroom wanting to learn?
- 36 What encourages children to develop into keen and competent learners?
- 37 How does the school's culture influence children's motivation to learn and ensure they gain pleasure from learning?
- 38 What are the factors that restrict the learning that takes place in the classroom?
- 39 Do you feel present curricula enhance or restrict learning?
- 40 Do assessment methods have an impact on learners and learning?
- 41 In your experience do you feel that teacher / child relationships influence children's interest and intentions towards learning? In what way would you say?
- 42 What gender differences have you noticed in children's inclination towards learning?
- 43 Do you think children develop a consistent pattern of responses towards their learning or habits or learning? What kind of patterns or habits have you noticed in your school / classroom?
- 44 Are there other factors that influence children's tendencies towards learning?
- 45 When working in a group do you think children should discuss their ideas and support each other in their learning? Are most children able to do this?
- 46 Is there anything else you would like to add about children and their learning and the way they respond to the learning goals that are set for them?

Interview 1. Class Teacher

a) Class details

T1.1 How many children do you have in your classroom and what age range and gender are they?

T1.2 What is the first language spoken by the majority of the children in the class?

T1.3 How would you describe the range of attitudes of the children in your class towards their learning?

T1.4 Is there additional adult support available to help the children in the classroom with their learning?

T1.5 Would you say that children in the class are from a similar background in terms of social class and culture?

b) Teacher background, values and beliefs

T1.6 What is your first language?

T1.7 How would you describe your work as a teacher with regard to children's learning?

T1.8 Do you have particular views about how children learn best?

T1.9 What do you consider to be the important qualities of an effective teacher?
What would you say are your strengths as a teacher?

T1.10. What qualifications do you have and could you tell me about the methods of teaching in which you were trained?

T1.11. Are your approaches to teaching based on how you were trained, or from your experiences of learning?

T1.12. What do you enjoy most about teaching your current class?

T1.13 What factors would you say limit your work as a teacher with this particular class?

c) Aims, curriculum planning and classroom organisation

T1.14 What are your main educational aims for the class of children you are teaching?

T1.15 Can you describe the relative contribution of the school's policy, national policy and your own interpretation to those educational aims?

T1.16 How do you plan to meet the individual educational needs of the children?

T1.17 Could you explain how the classroom has been organised to help children's learning?

T1.18 Do you feel you have enough freedom in organising your class and in planning the curriculum?

d) Socio-cultural classroom context

T1.19 How much emphasis do you place on the social relationships within the classroom, e.g between yourself and the children and between the children and their peers?

T1.20 Do you consider the peer relationships and their influences when planning the curriculum and classroom activities?

T1.21 Are boys and girls mixed when participating in all activities?

T1.22 Have you observed differences in the way boys and girls respond to their learning in class?

e) Teaching style, classroom organisation and learning

T1.23 What do you feel is most important for children to learn? Do you set them learning goals?

T1.24 Do you have views about the best ways for you to support children to learn?

T1.25 Would you describe your teaching style as traditional or progressive?

T1.26 Do the children work mainly in groups or as individuals? How many children are there in a group? How would you describe the benefits of these differing approaches?

T1.27 As a percentage of the total time spent working in the classroom give an estimate of how much time is spent by the children working:

- as a whole class
- in groups collaboratively
- in groups working individually
- individually
- in pairs?

T1.28 Do you think this is the right balance?

T1.29 How much emphasis do you place on language?

T1.30 Are children encouraged to discuss their ideas together?

f) Assessment and learning

T1.31 How do you assess and record children's progress with their learning?

T1.32 Have you observed what impact assessment has on children's learning?

T1.33 How do you encourage children to persevere with their learning?

Children's Worksheets.

Card 1. Learning in school.

W1 .Do you like school?

W2. Write about what you like in school?

W3. Do you feel you belong in the class?

W4. What makes you feel you belong in the class?

W5 . What do you learn in school?

W6. Why do you want to learn?

W7 .Do you enjoy learning? Write about what you like learning in school?

W8 .Is there anything that you don't like about learning in school?

Card 2.What the teacher tells you about how to learn?

W9.What does the teacher tell you to encourage you to work hard and learn?

W10. Do you listen to what s/he says?

W11. What else does the teacher tell you about learning?

W12. How do you get on with your teacher?

W13. Are there rules about learning in class?

W14.Who helps you the most with your learning?

W15.Do you want to learn?

W16. What do you want to learn?

Card 3.About other children and their learning?

W17. Who are the best learners in class?

W18.How do you know this?

W19.Why do you think they are the best learners?

W20.What does the teacher say about their learning?

W21. What do your friends say about their learning?

W22.Are there children who don't work in class?

W23. Why do you think they don't work?

W24.What else do they do?

Card 4. About your learning.

W25. What does the teacher say about your learning?

W26. What do your classmates say about your learning?

W27. Is there anything that would make you a better learner?

W28. What stops you learning or slows you down?

W29. Does the teacher talk to you about your work?

W30. What does s/he say?

W31. Do you ask questions about your work?

Glossary.

Dispositions.

Dispositions as 'summaries of act frequencies' '

Buss and Craik put forward a definition of '*dispositions*' as '*summaries of act frequencies*' (1983:105) that represent trends or frequencies of acts. As an example of the disposition of '*curiosity*' in children, they refer to examples of children who are e.g. always asking questions, those that snoop and pry and generally poke around their environment. Katz (1993:3) identifies a limitation to their definition in that they;

...do not address the role of motivation or intentions associated with the act of frequencies of which dispositions are constituted.

Distinguishing dispositions from some closely related concepts.

In order to clarify the concept it is useful to distinguish '*disposition*' from some closely related concepts such as '*traits, thought processes, skills, habits, work inhibition and motives*'. Katz and Rath (1985:3) suggest the terms '*trait*' and '*disposition*' differ in two major ways;

1. disposition implies a **trend** in a person's action rather than an emotional state, thus terms like honesty, ambition and courage do not fit the definition of a disposition, but describe aspects of a person's character and the management of his or her emotions. **Disposition** on the other hand can be used to designate actions and characterize their frequency. An individual's **disposition** can be implied by terms such as explorer, problem solver, bully, whiner, and so forth, which may however be accompanied by emotional states.
2. the second way dispositions can be distinguished from traits is that of **intensity**.

Katz and Rath (1985:4) explain the difference between '*habits*' and '*dispositions*' by suggesting

That dispositions are patterns of actions that require some attention to what is occurring in the context of the action 'although with practice and experience the acts may appear to be spontaneous, habitual or even unconscious' (303). The term habit should be used to refer to acts

that are neither intentional nor the consequence of thought reflection, and analysis. Disposition, on the other hand, is a term to be used to refer to trends in actions that are intentional on the part of the actor in a particular context and at a particular times .

They contrast '*habits*' and '*dispositions*' by suggesting that

In as much as intentionality is a mental process, we see dispositions as '**habits of mind**'—**not as mindless habits**. They are classes of intentional actions in categories of situations, and they can be thought of as 'habits of mind' that give rise to the employment of skills and are manifested (ideally) by skilful behaviour.

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