

**Knowing Differently, Being Differently:  
Creating new opportunities for inclusion by  
using narrative approaches to challenge  
perspectives on special educational needs**

**Joy Jarvis**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of the University of Hertfordshire for  
the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
based upon Published Work**

**April 2005**

## Abstract

This thesis is the story of one teacher's practice in the field of special educational needs. It examines the purpose and themes of her published work. The purpose of this writing has been to challenge perspectives of children, and of learning and teaching, in the context of inclusion. This has been undertaken by exploring hidden aspects of teacher-learner relationships, developed and demonstrated in classroom interaction. These include attitudes and assumptions that may limit learning, and involve the themes of identity, agency and voice.

Research, writing and teaching has been used to challenge perspectives of teachers, and teacher educators, in relation to what we know about learners with special educational needs and how we come to know about them. It argues for an ontological focus in relation to understanding the learner and an epistemology based on imagination and empathy.

The contribution to knowledge claimed in this thesis involves the development of a pedagogical approach that enables teachers to identify and challenge underlying assumptions in the field of special educational needs. The process has the potential to empower teachers to change their perspectives and to act in relation to these new understandings in inclusive classrooms.

Contents

Abstract	i
Contents Page	ii
List of Figures	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Introduction	vi
List of the Submitted Published Work	x
The Critical Appraisal	1
Starting Points	2
The Professional Context	2
The Learners' Context	4
The Teachers' Context	5
The Teacher-Educators' Context	6
The Writing Context	7
Streams of Story	9
Language and Identity	12
Agency and Voice	13
Themes for the Learner	15
Themes for the Teacher	16
Themes for the Teacher-Educator	18
Pebbles in the Stream	21
Writing for Oneself, for Others and with Others	22
Contributing to the Knowledge Base of the Profession	24
Supporting 'Noticing'	25
Challenging Perspectives	26
The Use of Narrative	28

Reading Stories	29
Writing Stories	31
Being Differently	34
Endings and Beginnings	38
Contribution to Knowledge	40
Personal Developments	41
Bibliography	44
Appendix	52
The Submitted Published Work	
Contribution/Ethics Statements	

List of Figures

Figure One	The Journey	1
Figure Two	The Project Model	36

## Acknowledgements

I acknowledge, with gratitude, the role of colleagues, co-authors and students in my continuing professional development. I am grateful to all members of the School of Education, University of Hertfordshire, for being such inspirational and supportive colleagues. In particular I would like to thank Sally Graham, for opening my eyes to images, Amanda Clark, for technical support and Mary Read, Head of School, for some 'reflective space'. Finally I would like to thank my supervisors, Tim Parke, Alessandra Iantaffi and Stuart Powell for their advice and encouragement.

## Introduction to the Thesis

This thesis is the story of one teacher's enquiry into practice. It explores how teaching, research and writing have interacted over the course of her career as a teacher and a teacher educator. It identifies the significance of her work in the field of inclusive education for children with special educational needs.

The submission consists of 11 publications and a critical appraisal of their themes and purpose. The included publications are a representative sample of the teacher's 29 pieces of published work, 25 of which are single or first authored publications. The publications have been chosen to illustrate the range of topics, methodologies, audiences and writing purposes. The critical appraisal is an analysis of the submitted publications using hermeneutic exploration of texts (Patton, 1990), as understanding of themes emerges in a circular way from both the complete body of work and the individual papers.

The research underpinning the publications has been undertaken within a qualitative framework. The critical appraisal is located within an interpretive epistemology and, more specifically, a constructivist approach. Interpretive and constructivist approaches are 'principally concerned with knowing and being' (Schwandt, 1994 p119), the foci of this study. They emphasise understanding the world through the interpretation of events in relation to individual constructions, which develop in an experiential, social context. Personal construct psychology (Butt & Burr, 2004) identifies the individual acting as a scientist, continually refining hypotheses in the light of new experiences. The possibility of people bringing about change in themselves, by

redefining their interpretations, is fundamental to the argument presented in this thesis. The potential for transformative education; for 'an alternative way of looking at practice and research' (Pope & Denicolo, 2001 p xv) brought about by internal change, rather than external imposition, underpins the work undertaken in the submitted publications.

The title of the thesis indicates that its main concern is with ways of knowing and ways of being, that is epistemology and ontology. The 'knowing' is related, here, to forms of knowledge about learners (particularly those with special educational needs), about inclusion, and about teachers. The initial papers see knowing as accumulating knowledge, while later work takes Kelly's constructive alternativism approach to knowing (Butt & Burr, 2004), considering the usefulness of individuals' constructions in relation to children with special educational needs and to inclusion and how they can be challenged. The 'being' relates to teacher-educators, teachers and learners acting in classrooms. It focuses, particularly, on the attitudes and beliefs that underpin this action. A developing understanding of the reciprocal nature of knowing and being is shown in the critical appraisal. This rests partly on an identified focus of the study: narrative approaches to learning. Narrative approaches allow both the telling of what is known, and the coming to know, through writing and reflecting on stories.

The contribution to knowledge claimed in this thesis rests on the development of a narrative approach to challenge teachers' perspectives on children with special educational needs and on inclusion. The argument made is that current approaches on courses for teachers tend to deal with technical aspects of provision, rather than challenging perspectives. This focus may ignore the

emotive and moral elements involved in teaching. These aspects need to be addressed in order to support teachers' work in the emotional and morally complex world of education (Hargreaves, 1998; Campbell, 2003).

Themes emerging from research, teaching and writing undertaken by the author in her career, have come together in the development of a pedagogical approach to using narrative to explore perspectives in the field of special educational needs. In this approach teachers are challenged to reflect on both their own, and societal, assumptions related to difference and diversity through reading and writing particular stories. Ontological beliefs and the epistemological basis of practice are explored through imagination in relation to understanding other worlds, and through narrative writing and reflection. Being and knowing are considered through an approach that is different from that used on most current courses in this field, and this can result in new teachers knowing differently about children and inclusion. The way this approach is undertaken also supports action, so that there is potential for being differently in classrooms. This work is designed to create new opportunities for inclusion as a creative process of redefining our schools rather than a problem solving exercise.

The term inclusion is used here to mean more than the placing of all children in their local schools. It involves the celebration of diversity and a commitment to social justice. This can be seen as part of the democratic purpose of education, which Dewey (1966, p182) suggested means 'freeing intelligence for independent effectiveness'. Dewey argued that this is essential to allow children to be active learners and citizens, and to enable teachers to

participate in decision making in educational contexts. Both aspects will be considered within the critical appraisal that follows this introduction.

Each piece of writing in this body of work had an identified audience and purpose, and this has informed its content and form. The critical appraisal too has its own remit. This paper has been written, in part, for fellow teacher-educators with the purpose of sharing insights into practice and of giving an example of a non-traditional approach to undertaking a thesis. As the published work has aimed to include a range of readers, so too will the critical appraisal. Teachers have argued that the language of research reports inhibits the reading of them (Gore & Gitlin, 2004), and therefore this text will have an accessible writing style, including the use of the first person. The presentation of the text involving subheadings, a clear font and illustrations, is designed to support accessibility. A description of the published work is included prior to the critical appraisal, to support ease of access to the subsequent text.

In the critical appraisal, lecturers and others involved in teacher education, will be referred to as 'teacher-educators'. The term 'trainee', which orientates one towards a training perception of teacher education, will be avoided, instead the terms 'qualifying teacher' and 'student', which includes other education practitioners, will be used.

## **Published Work Submitted for this Thesis**

**1 Jarvis, J (1989) Taking a Metaphon approach to phonological development: a case study *Child Language, Teaching and Therapy* 5, 1 p16-32**

This paper gives an account of a study of a speech development programme undertaken by the author with five year old 'Luke'.

**2 Jarvis, J & Lamb, S (1994) Talking isn't always easy: children with speech and language difficulties *Early Education Autumn* p3-6**

This paper describes four different types of language difficulty and illustrates these with stories of children and early years practitioners.

**3 Jarvis, J (1999) Teacher language in the classroom: equal access for all? *New Era in Education* 80, 3 p71-77**

This paper, based on work undertaken in schools and a university, explores issues of access to teacher language in the classroom for children with language differences or difficulties.

**4 Jarvis, J (2000) Is bilingualism an obstacle to inclusion for deaf children? in Shah, S (ed) *Equality Issues for the New Millennium* Aldershot: Algate Press p121-129**

This chapter, based on work undertaken in mainstream and special schools for deaf pupils, explores issues for sign bilingual children in mainstream classrooms.

**5 Jarvis, J & Lamb, S (2001) Interaction and the Development of Communication in the Under Twos: Issues for Practitioners Working with Young Children in *Early Education* 21, 2 p129-138**

This paper analyses aspects of a study undertaken by the authors of a pair of twins developing their communication skills during their first year, and identifies the implications for practitioners in early childhood settings.

**6 Jarvis, J (2002) Including a deaf child in an early years context: issues for practitioners Miller, L., Drury, R & Campbell, R (eds) *Exploring Early Years Education and Care* London: David Fulton p101-111**

This chapter explores issues of inclusion for young deaf children in mainstream contexts, through a case study of Jessica, a fictitious four year old.

**7 Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Tyler, D and Hamilton, P (2003) Parenting classes and personal development: issues for young offender institutions *Prison Service Journal* 145 p19-21**

This paper, based on a study undertaken in a young offender institution, explores the way in which personal development issues for young offenders can influence, and are influenced by, parenting classes.

**8 Jarvis, J (2003) 'It's more peaceful without any support': what do deaf pupils think about the support they receive in mainstream schools? *Support for Learning* 18, 4 p162-169**

This paper presents deaf pupils' perspectives on support in school, drawn from the findings of a research project exploring deaf pupils' perceptions of inclusion in mainstream secondary schools in England.

**9 Jarvis, J Montgomery, L & Storey, M (2003) Storying and Deaf Children *British Association of Teachers of the Deaf Magazine* November p19-20**

This article, based on work undertaken with teachers of deaf children, explores issues involved in developing deaf children's understanding and use of fictional narrative.

10 Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Hamilton, P & Tyler, D (2004) The role of parenting classes for young fathers in prison: a case study *Probation Journal* 51, 1 p21-33

This paper, based on work undertaken in a young offender institution, explores how the process, as well as the content, of parenting courses influences their role and outcomes.

11 Jarvis, J., Dyson, J., Thomas, K., Graham, S., Iantaffi, A & Burchell, H (2004) Learning Through Creating Stories: developing student teachers' understanding of the experiences of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the British Educational Research Association, Manchester*  
([www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003733.htm](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003733.htm))

This paper explores a research project that uses the creation of stories to challenge student teachers' perspectives on special educational needs and inclusion.

# The Critical Appraisal



Figure 1

## Starting Points

The image at the beginning of this critical appraisal introduces this section, in which I explore the context of my published work. In the second section, 'Streams of Story', I identify themes in this writing. The third section, 'Pebbles in the Stream', analyses the writing purposes, while the final part, 'Endings and Beginnings', explores the significance of the work and looks towards future developments.

### The Professional Context

The context of the published work is shown on the image representing my professional journey. This image has been chosen because it shows that the journey has been taken with others. In a thesis by published work, perhaps more than other theses, this is likely to be the case. In my case, this joint working is embedded as a purpose, function and outcome of the process of producing work intended for publication. The writing is based on, and connected to, aspects of my teaching career, and could be seen to be in a symbiotic relationship, in that one depends on the other. This was not my initial perception of my published work when I started to write this critical appraisal. I originally saw writing as secondary to, and indeed separate from, my primary role of teaching. I deliberately chose to place the chronological details of my teaching roles as a class teacher, advisory teacher in the fields of deafness and language disorder, and currently as a teacher-educator, on the left of the image, which is read first, to signify the primacy of this aspect of my professional life. The papers are placed separately, only linked by chronology. This indicates an aspect of what Eisner (1997) has called 'The promise and perils of alternative forms of data representation.' While images can enable new ways of seeing (Greene, 2001), they can also, like verbal

metaphors, limit one's perceptions. In this case the footsteps need to walk across the path as well as along it, as the writing has both influenced, and been influenced by, teaching.

The identification of my own change in perspective while undertaking this critical appraisal indicates the temporary nature of the story I am telling. I will argue that this narrative has changed my perspective, as much as I hope the narratives in my published work may have challenged the perspectives of others. It is also a story for now, which would be written differently in the future. The interpreting and foregrounding of events are the product of my current perspectives, and so, as with all autobiography, this story can be seen as invented (Freeman, 2003). Miller (1994, p75) argues that making a narrative of an aspect of a life, as I am doing when exploring my work, 'imposes intelligibility on past events', but it is only selective intelligibility. Stories told mean, also, stories lost, hidden or open to new interpretations at a later date. The function of this critical appraisal, therefore, is not to attempt a 'definitive' analysis of the enclosed published work, but rather to challenge my own and my colleagues' thinking to allow new perspectives to emerge. Clandinin and Connelly (1994, p418) argue that a difficult but important task for narrative is 'the retelling of stories that allow for growth and change'. The reason for undertaking this piece of work is to use an exploration of my past teaching, research and writing to illuminate present practice for the purpose of future development. This includes not only my own professional development, but also practice in the field of teacher education in relation to inclusion locally, nationally, and internationally.

## **The Learners' Context**

All my writing has been about learners in different contexts, so I need first to describe these learners and their educational and social contexts. Most of the individuals in my writing could be seen as having some form of difficulty in relation to learning. In the first paper, for example, the learner has a speech difficulty; in the second, the children have different forms of language difficulty. A number of papers (4, 6, 8 & 9) are about deaf children, while others (papers 7 & 10) are about young men in prison, many of whom had previously been excluded from school. The papers have been written at a time of increasing emphasis on the notion of inclusion in the UK. This has involved policy and practice initiatives related to social disadvantage, race, gender, sexuality and disability (Topping & Maloney, 2004). These initiatives are designed to break down barriers to participation, encourage the celebration of diversity and lead to equality of opportunity. The terminology shift from integration to inclusion is intended to mandate change in the context, such as a mainstream school, rather than the expectation that the learner will change, or will be supported to conform within a pre-existing context (Farrell & Ainscow, 2002).

In relation to schools, however, the increased central control of curriculum and teaching approaches could be seen as militating against responding to diverse needs. The learners featured in my papers have been in schools with a national curriculum, prescribed teaching approaches for literacy and numeracy and the use of end of key stage assessments, league tables and inspection to enforce compliance. These elements could be seen to be limiting opportunities for responding to diverse needs. The concept of all needs being met within a school is also limited by the labelling of some children as having special

educational needs (DfES, 2001). The majority of the learners I have worked with, and written about, have been labelled in this way. The idea of ability, and lack of ability, is central to thinking about attainment and classroom grouping in the UK (Hart et al, 2004). As a deficit model of disability pervades society (Corbett, 1996), this group of children has been seen not only as different, but as deficient, and the climate of low expectations is represented, often unwittingly, in official documentation such as a recent OFSTED (2004, p8) publication referring to 'pupils with SEN or other low attainers'. This is likely to affect the perceptions that teachers will have of these learners and of what constitutes inclusion.

### **The Teachers' Context**

The current context of educational prescription and accountability means that teachers today are less likely to have their own 'secret stories' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) of practice than even 10 years ago. Not only curriculum, but also teaching approaches are increasingly prescribed. Teachers have had little involvement with the development of curricula initiatives, their role being to deliver them (Kirk & MacDonald, 2001; Alexander, 2004). Current practice starts with attainment targets for specified age groups and proposes the use of differentiation to meet these objectives for those learners having difficulty. Whether or not the objectives are appropriate for children with a range of complex needs is not the focus, and this may lead to children receiving education that not only fails to meet their needs but may do them harm (Jordan & Powell, 1994).

This context may lead teachers to perceive their role as one of teaching a specified curriculum, and to viewing some learners as being unable to access

this curriculum due to lack of ability (Hart et al, 2004). The issue of the appropriateness of teaching approaches and curriculum content in relation to individual needs may not be addressed. For example, an emphasis on a phonic approach to the teaching of reading, requiring the learning of phoneme-grapheme relationships in a particular sequence, is unlikely to meet the needs of young deaf readers. This topic of teachers' perspectives on their role and on learners, is key to my writing which has been undertaken in order to help teachers identify and challenge these perspectives.

### **The Teacher-Educators' Context**

As teachers' understanding of their role, and of the learners they work with, develops within a social and educational context, so too does that of teacher educators. The courses that they teach for qualifying teachers, and to a certain extent those for experienced teachers, are now prescribed, with an emphasis on the achievement of standards (previously competences) and on curriculum content. This has been enforced by an inspection system with draconian consequences for non-compliance (Furlong et al, 2000). The designation of student teachers as 'trainees', emphasises the move from teacher education to training, and can lead to a focus on skills rather than understanding. Teacher-educators can struggle to balance the work they would like to do in relation to understanding educational issues and the principles of pedagogy, with students' expressed needs for classroom management skills and techniques for curriculum delivery.

Teacher-educators, usually, though not always, also reside within a university context and can find it hard to balance what they perceive to be their continued role within their original professional context, such as schools and

colleges, with their role within the university. This can lead to ambivalence as to their identity. While they may be happy working with teachers in schools, for example, and taking a professional role nationally and internationally in a particular field, as I have done in the field of deaf education, they may be less confident in having a role in the academic context. This relates in part to the issue of research and writing. The Research Assessment Exercise, with its funding implications, has had an effect on the type of published work produced, particularly by devaluing work produced for non-academic audiences, including teachers (Murray, 2004).

Teacher-educators, often with long careers behind them as teachers, may well lack experience and confidence in the research process and may feel that their time is better spent in professional development activities in the field, rather than in writing. While now an established academic writer, hooks (1994 p2) notes that she used to believe that writing '..was all about private longing and personal glory, but teaching was about service, giving back to one's community.' Often teachers, and by implication teacher-educators, highlight a moral agenda as a key aspect of their practice (Hansen, 1998). If research and writing is not perceived by teacher-educators to be contributing to this agenda, then it is unlikely that they will choose to undertake it. This will have implications for the number of teacher-educators who undertake this work and the messages given to qualifying teachers about its value.

### **The Writing Context**

My published work has been concerned with learners and learning in contexts that purport to be inclusive. Many of these learners have been labelled as having special educational needs. My aim in teaching and writing has been to

develop inclusive practice. By this I mean both reducing barriers to participation and also by including diverse abilities and experiences within the learning context. It is by examining the contexts of the actors in the texts that I find the themes of my work. Learners will be affected by teachers' perspectives on special educational needs and on the form and purpose of learning and teaching. These perspectives may present barriers to inclusion. If barriers are to be broken down they must first be identified. Teacher-educators are in a position to take a lead in identifying these barriers and to share their insights with qualifying and experienced teachers. They may be inhibited by the current context of teacher education and their perception of their role. Barriers need to be broken down here too. In the next section I will show how the themes of my writing have developed from the contexts within which I have been working, and how these themes relate to the challenging of perspectives and to the development of more inclusive practice for learners, teachers and teacher-educators.

## Streams of Story

*[Haroun] looked into the water and saw that it was made up of a thousand thousand thousand and one different currents, each one a different colour, weaving in and out of one another like a liquid tapestry of breathtaking complexity; and [the Water Genie] explained that these were the Streams of Story, that each coloured strand represented and contained a single tale. Different parts of the Ocean contained different sorts of stories, and as all the stories that had ever been told and many that were still in the process of being invented could be found here, the Ocean of the Streams of Story was in fact the biggest library in the universe. And because the stories were held here in fluid form, they retained the ability to change, to become new versions of themselves, to join up with other stories and so become yet other stories ....' (Rushdie, 1990 p72)*



© L. Schlegel

This section addresses the question 'What is the published work about?' The initial quotation and illustration remind me that there are many interrelated themes in my writing and that I am choosing to explore those which appear to be most significant now. At one level the papers are all about learning and teaching. In papers 1, 7, 9 and 11 I write about research I have undertaken into my own teaching in an early years classroom, a young offender institution and in higher education. In the other papers I analyse aspects of the learning environment provided for learners in homes, schools and universities. Looking more closely I see that all the papers involve examining interactions between learners and teachers. This is because as an observer in my own, and other people's, classrooms I was concerned that the quality of interactions did not facilitate inclusion. This is illustrated by the extract below between a mainstream teacher and a deaf child:

*Context: Child is completing a work sheet on tooth decay and teacher comes to sit beside him. Code: MCT - mainstream class teacher CHI - child*

MCT: too many sweets so what's the

what's the next word

[PAUSE]

*[general background noise from the classroom]*

CHI xxx[unintelligible]

MCT prepares

prepares

don't think

it hardens

[PAUSE]

prepares

*[background noise while MCT looks through the child's work]*

MCT urr ahh you've left a word out

CHI a word out

MCT it says too many sweets something decay

you need there's one word before decay  
you'll have to get that rubber again Sam  
what is it  
too many sweets cause or make

CHI cause

MCT cause

means make

make your teeth decay

*[MCT talks to another child while Sam fill in the missing word]*

MCT Sam come on pet

Let's have decay rubbed out and we've got another word to put in  
before it

(Hopwood & Gallaway, 1999 p179)

There are many influences surrounding this exchange but the focus in my early published work was fairly narrow. My initial response to observations of frequent, similar examples was a linguistic one. I saw the issue as one of teachers having problems in responding appropriately to children's linguistic needs. There is a danger, of course, in outsiders, particularly academics, identifying what they see as 'problems' with teachers' work and pointing these out, as it reinforces the academic-teacher divide and the issues of power and lack of mutual understanding that can lead to the two groups failing to work together effectively (Gore & Gitlin, 2004).

As a teacher of deaf children, where the area of concern is language development, it is perhaps not surprising that I had a linguistic focus. Some of my earlier papers, therefore, focused on the linguistic aspect of interaction. Papers 3 and 4, for example, explore why some children may have difficulties understanding teachers and what could be done about it. Paper 5 discusses the development of adult-child interaction in a twin context and how this relates to group contexts in early years settings. In these papers I am

particularly concerned about the extent to which teachers can identify the child's level of comprehension and then support the exchange to encourage learning and language development.

Interaction is not just a linguistic phenomenon, however. Pearce (1994), for example, reminds us that speakers bring more than language skills to an exchange. As well as the context of the episode itself they also bring their relationship, their understanding of their own and the other's roles and this is all embedded in a culture. Returning to the example, and recalling my earlier analysis of learner and teacher contexts, I see that the learner is pushed into a passive, responding role as the teacher pursues a particular view of learning and teaching and of her role in this process. The lack of success on the part of the child is likely to perpetuate a deficit model of the learner, which will affect both the child and the teacher's future interactions. This example demonstrates that the themes of my writing, while focussing on interaction, are not just about language but are also about teachers' and children's identities. The child had no agency or voice in the interaction and one could argue that if the teacher had no alternative approach to teaching then perhaps she did not either. The themes of language, identity, agency and voice, can be seen as the streams of story in my writing, which I will now explore.

### **Language and Identity**

Language is developed with other people in a cultural context that shapes who we become. Children develop a sense of personal self, and later a range of identities in relation to other people. Bakhtin argues that we become ourselves in dialogue (Holquist, 1990). Vygotsky (1978) suggests that

intermental experience leads to intramental abilities; our voices develop from the selective use of other voices. The language we use develops from cultural discourses that surround us, not only spoken but also visual, and we position ourselves, and others, in relation to these discourses (Burr, 1995). This is why interaction between teachers and learners is such an important area of focus for my writing. Participants are not just exchanging linguistic meanings; they are establishing their own, and each other's, identities.

The discourses surrounding learning and teaching and special educational needs develop in the educational and social contexts previously described. Historical and current images of how teachers act in classrooms, such as experiences of being taught and models of teaching gained from courses and school placements, will all influence the way teachers approach interaction with pupils (Weber & Mitchell, 1995; Richardson, 2003). Traditional, conservative images of teacher identity predominate in society, which may lead to interactions such as the one above. In that interaction the learner is positioned as unsuccessful and lacking in agency as a learner. In the article from which the transcript was taken it was noted that the child was having 'behavioural difficulties'. One might argue that this was one way in which he could have agency and voice within this context.

### **Agency and Voice**

A person's self-esteem, in a western cultural context, relates, partly, to his or her ability to influence events; to have agency. Bandura (1989) argues that agency is strongly influenced by self-efficacy beliefs that drive motivation and perseverance, and influence achievement. The extent to which individuals do have agency within a culture is debatable (Burr, 1995). However in a

western cultural context, agency is seen as important in relation to motivation and learning. Children are seen as active, rather than passive learners of language, for example (Wells, 1986; Gregory et al, 2004). A sense of agency develops pre-linguistically in play and in interactions with carers (Gerhardt, 2004). Carers scaffold these interactions, by responding at an appropriate level, to enable children to participate (Bruner, 1983). In joint involvement episodes between children and carers, children's cognitive and social growth initially takes place (Schaffer, 1996). So too does the child's perception of himself or herself as a learner.

An aspect of agency is having a voice that is able to influence events and is heard by others. This indicates, however, that agency and voice relate to an environment. Contexts may encourage or discourage an individual's agency and voice and thereby affect their development. Reciprocity is also seen in relation to identity, as self-concept and self-esteem as a learner will be influenced by significant others. The development of positive learning dispositions can be supported, or inhibited, by teachers and by other adults and peers in educational contexts (Carr, 2001). Learners with special educational needs are often supported in classrooms by teaching assistants. This relationship may lead pupils to become dependent, to have limited opportunity to exercise choice and agency and to develop a poor perception of themselves as learners (Howes, 2003). The themes of identity, agency and voice, embedded in interaction, are prominent in my published work. I will now discuss how these themes relate to learners, teachers and teacher-educators in relation to my writing.

## Themes for the Learner

The importance of the themes of identity, agency and voice for the learner is identified in my papers. In the first paper, for example, the learner, 'Luke', was working with me on a programme designed to improve his speech intelligibility. The activities I used gave him the metalinguistic skills to take control of his own learning. Through the knowledge he was given about sound contrasts he could repair his speech production independently of an adult. This also supported his development of agency and voice, so that he was able to say when he felt that he should cease the speech programme. An important factor here is that I followed his lead, and did indeed end the speech programme at his request, which gave him a clear sense of his ability to influence what happened to him. This response of the adult following and supporting the child mirrors effective practice in early language development, as shown in paper 5, where the twins were clearly eliciting the communication information they needed from responsive adults.

While teaching in relation to Luke's speech was framed as two people exploring the sound system together, work undertaken with young men in prison (papers 7&9) was about exploring concepts of parenting together. Sharing stories allowed the teacher to appreciate different ideas and experiences of parenting, so that she could engage more effectively with the learners. It enabled learners and teachers to explore each other's identities, helping to develop mutual comprehension. This is important in a prison context where, as in the field of special educational needs, stereotyping abounds. The way in which the classes were conducted provided space for the young men to discuss and develop their ideas. They have to make choices about if, and how, fatherhood will be part of their identity. They need to be supported to know

that they can make changes in, and for, themselves. In a prison setting, where students have limited control over other aspects of their lives, the importance of having opportunities to have agency, and to influence what happens to them, may be possible only in an education context. This highlights the role of the teacher, in giving opportunities for the students to have some control of the learning process. Without this opportunity they are unlikely to see themselves as powerful learners, able to influence their own futures.

The issue of identity development was also a focus of research and writing in relation to deaf children in inclusive contexts. Developing identities can be problematic for deaf children using sign language who may lack role models in mainstream schools and who may be in environments where their language and culture may be seen as deficient rather than different. This is explored in paper 4, while the research reported in paper 8 (and also in Iantaffi et al, 2003; Jarvis et al, 2003) allows teachers to hear the voices of children as they talk about their identities and about their experiences of inclusion. While many of my papers attempt to speak for learners, in this project we created a space in which the learners themselves could have their voices heard.

### **Themes for the Teacher**

In relation to teachers, the themes of identity, agency and voice, embedded in language and interaction, are implied in my papers. I am arguing that teachers need to follow the lead given by learners, to listen to their voices and relinquish an element of control in order to enable them to develop agency. However, if the teacher chooses to be less controlling then outcomes are less predictable, and the teacher becomes more vulnerable. In order to be

prepared to take the risk involved in doing this, teachers need to have a sense of self-efficacy, agency and the strength of their own voices. Due to the social and educational influences described earlier, however, teachers may feel themselves to be in a 'black hole' whereby they have no agency (Moyles, 2004). They may feel that they have to undertake certain tasks, and teach in particular ways, due to testing, league tables and inspections, even if this conflicts with what they believe. If they are then given more opportunity to choose different approaches they may lack the confidence to make choices (Ward, 2004).

From my own perspective, working nationally in the UK with teachers of the deaf after the introduction of the literacy strategy into primary schools, it was clear that many teachers felt that they no longer knew how to teach reading. They did not have the confidence to reject aspects of the given scheme even if it conflicted with their own beliefs about good teaching. Partly this may be due to the increasing isolation of teachers of the deaf in resource bases and support services, if it is easier to develop a voice in collaboration with others (Featherstone et al, 1997). I find a similar situation for experienced mainstream teachers in relation to the new primary national strategy (DfES, 2003), however. Many of them express lack of confidence in using their own initiative to develop cross-curricular links, despite having worked in this way earlier in their careers.

These examples suggest that while many excellent teachers work intuitively (Claxton, 2000), they need to be able to explain their practice if they are to challenge the accepted wisdom. 'Revolutionary' teachers (Ashton-Warner, 1963) have always had to fight against authoritative discourses, but this

requires knowledge of pedagogical principles and an epistemology that is not only tacit but that can be expressed. This involves not only conceptual knowledge, but having the language to express this knowledge. While teachers in the UK have often been sceptical about the relevance of educational theory and research in the field (Gore & Gitlin, 2004), this has been exacerbated by current approaches in teacher education, which have reduced this form of input (Furlong et al, 2000). While reflecting on practice has been the way in which teacher-educators have in general sought to bring a wider perspective to skills based teaching courses, this often remains at the level of reflecting on skills rather than exploring the discourses of education and issues surrounding knowledge and teaching (McIntyre, 1993). This leaves new teachers vulnerable when they meet children who do not respond to conventional approaches. One way in which we could judge the effectiveness of a teacher-education course is the extent to which it gives teachers the tools to enable them to work with these learners.

### **Themes for the Teacher-Educator**

In paper 11, I describe an example of my work as a teacher educator attempting to give qualifying teachers a way of understanding the needs of children with special educational needs, so that they can then develop principled practice. This approach, using the reading and writing of stories from the perspective of a learner with special educational needs, was not based on explicit principles, but rather on experience and tacit knowledge. Having been aware of the role of stories in working with learners, and having used them in nearly all of my publications, I decided to try the project described. While I could identify the outcomes in terms of student learning, I did not know how these outcomes had been achieved. It was only when I

began to research the project and to read relevant literature, that I began to understand both the strengths and the limitations of this work.

Initially, I had a naïve perspective on the role of story in this context, and it was only by exploring it more deeply that I was able to be more analytical. This more balanced perspective is explored in my most recent writing (appendix 1), and, having achieved a greater level of understanding of the process, I am now able to use it more effectively. So, for example, by coming to understand how concepts of disability are framed culturally and in language, I now start sessions on the education of children with special educational needs by exploring words and images so that students can see how their own understanding has been influenced. Additionally I also explain why I am doing this, so that qualifying teachers become aware explicitly, and not just tacitly, of what they are learning. This, in turn, will give them more control over the process.

Writing about an aspect of her work as a teacher-educator Colne (1996, p310) writes, 'I believe that knowing what exactly it is that we are doing is important.' It is essential that teacher-educators can both use and articulate principled practice. The articulation not only provides a means of sharing with fellow teacher-educators and with students, but also with staff in other parts of the university. Most academics are involved in teaching, and it is teacher-educators who should be able to lead discussions about learning and teaching across the university. Writing, as I discuss in the next section, can be one way of developing our voices as teacher-educators.

Engaging in research into practice, and encouraging colleagues and students to do the same, supports our understanding of our work. It adds another dimension to our voices. We become involved in knowledge creation, which supports our agency within the education system. In the next section I liken my writing to pebbles that can be arranged in different configurations. I am not searching for 'the truth', rather I am seeking coherent and useful patterns to guide future actions.

Pebbles in the Stream



© Art Wolfe / [www.artwolfe.com](http://www.artwolfe.com)



© Creastock - Pix

This section addresses the question posed in relation to my published work, 'Why have the papers been written?' The images introducing this section remind me that when a pebble is dropped into water it is seen differently and it produces ripples. I see my papers as producing ripples in the stream of my professional life and potentially in the lives of others. Martin & Kompf (1996, p 72) argue that as a concept undergoes change, then a 'ripple effect is created', which influences other related concepts and affects perceptions. This is what I was intending to do through my writing.

### **Writing for Oneself, for Others and with Others**

Writing for one's own professional development can take many forms and writing for publication implies that it will be read by others and is not, therefore, primarily for oneself. However the discipline of writing and attempting to shape ideas into a coherent piece of work for external readers can help to develop one's own ideas more fully. By trying to be explicit, one comes to know more. As the type of paint chosen will influence the finished picture, so the writing process, and the writing form used, will develop the ideas, so that they become more than they were before (Richardson, 1994). The writing process becomes part of the development of knowing; I know differently because I have written about what I am coming to know. The acting influences the knowing.

When working with others on joint projects, the sharing of writing can develop mutual understanding of the topic and generate more ideas than one person could have done alone. At least half the papers I have written have been undertaken with others. I have worked with a speech and language therapist for example (papers 2 & 5), prison service educators (papers 7 & 10),

colleagues in my own and other universities (paper 11 and Jarvis & Knight, 2003) and with parents of deaf children (Jarvis & Riley, 2000). In the future I propose only to undertake published work with others, particularly those who are new to writing, as I see it as providing more opportunities for people to be included in the writing community. This has the benefit of allowing more people's ideas, particularly in this case those of teachers and other educators working in different contexts, to be heard and so help to develop professional theory and practice. It allows people to gain new perspectives on themselves and on the significance of their own work.

In the case of paper 7, on prison education, for example, this was written in collaboration with colleagues in a young offender institution and then submitted to a journal to which the institution subscribed. When the article was published that edition was displayed in the staff room, which gave status to the work being done. A more 'academic' version, as in paper 10, can be written for a different audience. It could be argued that if people have not written the text but have contributed to the ideas, then they should be acknowledged, but not given co-author status. However, this seems to me unethical, in that it assumes that the writing process itself is the most important aspect, while I consider the development of the ideas to be more significant. It also suggests exclusivity, rather than inclusion, contributing to the maintenance of the academic-teacher divide rather than the breaking down of this barrier.

Paper 9, about story and young deaf children, which was written for a professional magazine, developed from some collaborative work with teachers of deaf children. One teacher was concerned that the work she was doing,

using play materials to support imaginative writing, was seen by mainstream teachers as inappropriate in a key stage 2 setting. She, on the other hand, saw it as essential to help the deaf child involved understand the concept of an imaginary story. Many teachers of the deaf are professionally isolated (Jarvis, 2003) and she was looking for confirmation that she was using appropriate practice. Collaborating with another teacher working in the same way, but in a resource base where there was more professional support, meant that her practice could be validated. Of equal importance, though, was having it published. This raised the status of the work, confirmed the practice of other teachers of the deaf who were using similar approaches, and the text could be used to challenge sceptical others. In this way sharing of practice through writing could lead to more appropriate inclusive practice. The power of the written text to give status to ideas and practice is significant. When research and practice is published it can support professional development and influence teachers' perspectives on who can write and on their own identities as creators of knowledge.

### **Contributing to the Knowledge Base of the Profession**

Some published work can contribute to the development of inclusion by adding information about practice. The first paper included in this thesis, for example, is a case study of one child's response to a speech development programme. Lees & Urwin (1991), in a text written for speech and language therapists, use this paper as an example of how writing undertaken in this way can contribute to the evidence base of that profession. The research underpinning paper 8, on deaf pupils' perceptions of inclusion (University of Hertfordshire, 2002), added to knowledge about inclusion as well as allowing the voices of the deaf pupils themselves to be heard. The work leading to

paper 11, on using story to help qualifying teachers understand the perspectives of children with special educational needs, is adding to the knowledge base about practice in teacher education. An advantage of writing conference papers is that one can obtain immediate feedback. An advantage of having these published is that they are available for more people in the profession and can contribute to national, and international, debate in the field. Reading about practice can enable practitioners to see events through professional lenses, and so support observation or 'professional noticing' (Mason, 2002).

### **Supporting 'Noticing'**

Professional noticing is a key aspect of being a professional. So, for example, having completed a linguistics degree while teaching deaf children, I was able to notice much more about their language. The language had not changed, but my ability to notice aspects, based on new knowledge, was enhanced. This explains my focus on the linguistic aspect of interaction in my earliest writing. As Eisner (2002, p84) notes, 'seeing is epistemic', and professional knowledge channels looking. It can also, of course, limit one's frame of reference. Initially my perception was that lack of knowledge about language development and interaction was limiting teachers' ability to notice this aspect of their practice. Many of my papers, therefore, were designed to give information, so that practitioners could notice more professionally in this area.

In papers 2 and 3, for example, I give information about children with language difficulties and about classroom language so that teachers and others can notice these things more in their own classrooms. In these papers I make assumptions about how people will make links with their own practice.

In paper 5, about twin language development, I am more explicit about modelling how these links could be made. However, I am still making the assumption that noticing something will result in the development of practice. This is not necessarily the case, as acting will require motivation, energy and a reason to act. 'Knowing differently' will not necessarily result in 'being differently'. In later papers I start to be more specific in my writing about noticing, in that I identify surface noticing that may be deceptive, and contrast this with what one might see by looking more carefully and in different ways. So with the account of Jessica, in paper 6, and a similar paper I wrote at the same time about an older child (Jarvis, 2002), there is a challenge to the perspective of someone only noticing inclusion at a surface level. In these papers the deaf children involved are showing the same outward behaviour as other children, and this can be misconstrued as indicating that they are having the same learning experiences as hearing children. Presenting a classroom scenario from the deaf child's point of view can give teachers an imaginative insight into the child's experience. This can challenge the perspective that the child is being fully included in all aspects of school life. At this point in my writing journey I have realised that I need to move to challenging teachers' perspectives.

### **Challenging Perspectives**

I use the term perspective to mean the ways in which people see the world. In a personal construct psychology approach it is to do with construing (Butt & Burr, 2004). It is about beliefs (Richardson, 2003) and assumptions (Mezirow, 2000). These, often tacit, ways of looking at the world, and theorising about events, ourselves, and others, derive from the ways in which we respond to experience. This will be influenced by our culture, language, social context and

how significant others construe the world. Information that conflicts with our perspective may refine or change it, or may be rejected.

This is illustrated by the reflections of a teaching assistant studying for a foundation degree, who was taking a module I was teaching about speech and language difficulties. She was involved with a child who had recently entered a Reception class and who used no verbal language at home or school. One afternoon she noticed that he handed some of the other children their book bags, which were labelled with their names. Reflecting on this a few weeks later she noted that she had attributed the fact that he gave the right bag to each child to coincidence as, 'You don't expect a 4 year old SEN child to be able to read.' Later in the course she read paper 2, which is written around the stories of four young children with speech and language difficulties. Because of her earlier experience she noticed the story of the child who could read print but could not understand gestures, facial expressions and verbal language. She went back to her setting, tested her child and found that he could read the names of all the children in the class, a skill not achieved by any of the other new entrants. She shared this information with the class teacher and they were then able to use his ability to support his learning and communication. Importantly the child was now viewed differently. The label no longer blocked noticing. The teaching assistant noted that she now saw him as 'quite bright' and that she had changed her understanding of the term 'special educational needs.'

Experience that is not mediated may not result in any change in the way one construes the world. An analysis of an event, such as something we identify as a critical incident (Tripp, 1993) can help us to see things differently provided

we undertake critical reflection on assumptions (Mezirow, 2000). This can be difficult to do without the provision of alternative perspectives, and these may, or may not, come from discussion with others. Working in homogenous groups, for example, may reinforce a particular view rather than challenge it (Powell, 2000). Another approach is to imagine the event or situation as if through the eyes of someone else. The experience of role play Kelly (1970) argued, allows someone to see that another perspective is possible. This could in turn loosen constructs, making them more amenable to change. Narrative approaches could play a part in this process.

### **The Use of Narrative**

Narrative is a term that is used in different ways, depending on the context and purpose (Mishler, 1995). Stories are a particular form of narrative by which cultures, and people, share much of their social knowledge. This form is linked to action, but is an interpretation of that action, with meaning, foregrounding of some events, and with a perspective based on values and beliefs (McEwan & Egan, 1995). It involves characters, a linking of events and a sequence. Stories, also, involve emotions. Stories serve both individual and social functions. Hardy (1977 p13), for example, argued that people 'dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticise, construct, gossip, learn, hate and live by narrative.' Sarbin (2004) sees individuals developing their identities through story, while Nair (2003) suggests that stories are ways in which cultures encode theories about the world, and in which individuals express their own perspective on events.

Stories can be seen as a key way of making sense of experience. In relation to teaching, which is based on events and actions, which is multi-layered and complex and which involves values and identities, narrative can be a way of description and explanation. Knowledge in stories is particular but has wider implications, which may be inferred by the reader or listener. Bruner (1986) argues that both the world of action and the world of thought come together in stories. The use of story, therefore, could be a way of exploring the actions and thoughts of teachers working with children with special educational needs. The work undertaken for paper 11 involved both the reading and writing of stories and although these two aspects overlap, I will deal with them separately.

### **Reading Stories**

Autobiographical and fictional stories are one way of seeing the world through different eyes, or, one could argue, of seeing different worlds. It is the idea of there being only one normality, one form of knowledge and one curriculum that must be followed, that makes it difficult for teachers and children with special educational needs to understand each other. Teachers need to be able to move into another world, if only in their imaginations, and story is an ideal way to accomplish this.

Reading stories presented from different perspectives involves imagination and empathy, both human attributes. Empathy involves emotional, as well as cognitive, engagement. Harris (2000) argues that when a person makes decisions about future actions s/he has to imagine outcomes and know what these might feel like. Much of the information to make these decisions may not come from direct experience, but from other people describing

experiences. An individual, therefore, has to imagine him or herself in that situation in order to make appropriate choices of action. Harris (2000, p88) argues that, 'our appraisal of the situation from the protagonists point of view drives our emotional system....' Vicarious experience can lead to emotional involvement, which increases the likelihood of the story affecting the reader. This effect could be resonance with experience, which then alters prior knowledge, changing understanding (Colne, 1996). If readers can empathise with the other person then they are more likely to be able to engage with them where they are. This links to Kelly's sociality corollary (Ryle, 1975 p12) 'To the extent that one person construes the construction processes of another, he may play a role in a social process involving the other person.' This must be seen as a necessary ability to develop in relation to teaching.

Sarbin (2004) argues that when readers engage with a character they become involved in attenuated role-taking, which has physical effects, such as increased heart rate or dry mouth which, in turn, can affect beliefs and attitudes. Reading a story written from the perspective of someone else, in this case a person with special educational needs, could then influence not just cognitive understanding of different realities but emotional experience of them. This is important for motivation to engage with this new perspective. Students involved in the project in paper 11 spoke about the process 'making me see things differently', 'opening my eyes,' or 'showing that I shouldn't just look at things from my point of view.'

As a result of this experience I wanted students to reflect on the stories they tell about children with special educational needs. I wanted them to develop stories based not on deficit, but on a different way of being; stories

of difference, but based on what we all have in common. Stories however, are created between the writer and the reader; they can be seen as pictures, not diagrams (Eliot, 1866 in Hewitt, 1947), and as such will be interpreted. For the teacher aiming to challenge perspectives the choice of stories used will be important, but so, too, will be an exploration of the setting of these stories in their cultural and political context (Carter, 1993; Goodson, 1996). Some students involved in the project began to gain insight into this process, one commenting on the 'depth of thought' involved in the process and noted: '...it was making me really evaluate what I felt and it also threw up my preconceived ideas, you know, why do I think that? What does that make me feel? What influences have I had in my life?' Discussion of stories within this wider context opens up more possibilities for critical reflection and is part of the democratic potential of narrative. Knowledge does not reside in external authority but can be constructed with others. This opens up possibilities for participation and action.

## **Writing Stories**

The writing of stories from the perspective of a child with special educational needs formed the second part of the project in paper 11. This will be considered in relation to two aspects: reflective practice and the function of narrative. The reflective practice paradigm has developed in relation to the general postmodern, postpositivist position on knowledge, now seen as subjective, located and temporary, and the implications this has for professionalism (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Stonach & MacLure, 1997). What does it mean to 'know how to be a teacher'? The reflective practitioner approach argues for the importance of the experience and its interpretation;

for 'being' and then 'knowing'; for representing, critically examining and then developing that practice (Boud et al, 1985; Schön, 1983).

Arguing that story is an appropriate form for recording the action, event based nature of teaching, imbued with values and purpose, researchers and teacher-educators use narrative approaches particularly in relation to describing and understanding teachers' personal and practical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Gudmundsdottir, 1995).

In relation to the project explained in paper 11, the aim was for qualifying teachers to use their knowledge of teaching, their researched knowledge of a particular special educational need and their narrative understanding and abilities, to produce stories in the voice of the child. The intention was not to talk for a particular individual, as people with disabilities have had a long history of non-disabled people talking for them, and not allowing them a voice (Felske, 1994). Rather the activity provided the opportunity for role taking, for showing knowledge in action and, because the form demands it, making a moral point. Stories involve values and beliefs and these will determine the point that is being made. When writing from the perspective of the child the qualifying teachers were making points for the child. So, for example, students noted in interviews: 'I wanted the kind of shock factor to make people think.' and, ' I wanted to bring the positives [about dyslexia] into a poem which people read and that makes you think.'

Because of the positioning of children with special educational needs in relation to society, students placed in the child's position started to explore

issues of social justice. This was sometimes implicitly, in the way in which they wrote their stories, or explicitly in the reflective logs they kept of the writing process. The narrative form supported students' reflection on the context, and its appropriateness for the children, and this included their own actions as teachers. Many of the students reflected on themselves, and on their role and how their concept of what it is to teach had been challenged, saying for example: '... its really opened my eyes to thinking about how what I do in the classroom really effects, not just the children with autism. You've got a lot of children to think about; your role is a key role really. It made me feel really responsible, that I've got a lot of responsibility to make sure that I'm always including them.' What this process appeared to do was to help qualifying teachers to tell different stories about inclusion. They were moving from the integration model towards an understanding of issues of social justice and inclusion.

Reading and writing stories in this way can challenge perspectives on children, classrooms and personal and professional identities. Martin & Kompf (1996) have argued that some constructs are difficult to change. These are likely to be core constructs, particularly those associated with personal identity (Butt & Burr, 2004). In work undertaken in teacher education in relation to perspectives on race and ethnicity, for example, there is evidence that when some qualifying teachers' perspectives are challenged, they reject the possibility of change and become more entrenched in their original views (Wilkins, 2004). This could well be because the process challenges their view of themselves. This could happen also in the area of disability, where perspectives are currently less in the political spotlight, but are no less invidious. Narrative approaches could be seen as having the potential to be

enabling as they are subject to individual interpretation. While this of course is a weakness if one is looking to bring about specific changes, it could be a strength, as it allows for gradual assimilation of ideas without confrontation that could lead to resistance. It could support incremental change to individuals' perspectives (Mezirow, 2000).

### **Being Differently**

The aim of the stories that I used in my published work, and the stories I encouraged students to read and write on courses in special educational needs, was to bring about transformative learning (Pope & Denicolo, 2001). I hoped to challenge perceptions, which could lead to new perspectives on inclusion and intrinsic motivation to change practice. This transformation was designed to lead to changes in action. By challenging perspectives of children with special needs and their own role in inclusion, I wanted teachers, through their new perspective on the child and the classroom, to look critically at inclusion and to develop an inclusive environment in their classrooms. I was taking the view that different ways of acting usually depend on different ways of perceiving. So, for example, a teacher who sees a child hiding under a table in the classroom as 'naughty' is likely to act very differently from one who perceives this as the child needing to feel safe in an enclosed space.

New perceptions may not always lead to changed actions. As teacher-educators we need to move, with our students, beyond perceptions to action. We need to identify the potential constraints on action, and include some support to enable students to 'be differently'. Four ways in which professional development courses could support students in this way will be discussed.

First, helping students to understand the discourses surrounding schools and how this may influence their practice. It could be that the authoritative discourses of the school may inhibit their working. New teachers need to know that this is a not uncommon experience (Schoonmaker, 2002). Some teaching assistants I worked with on foundation degree courses, for example, saw their abilities to act in their school context as limited by teachers' and managers' perception of them and their role (Jarvis & Rees, 2002). Doing something differently might conflict with the teachers' views of themselves, for example as good team members, and so limit their actions. Work looking at discourses surrounding education undertaken during work on inclusion, could help new teachers to be aware that these exist, and can be resisted (Putman & Borko, 2000).

Second, new teachers may not feel that they have the agency and voice to act differently. They need to develop confidence in themselves as autonomous professionals with knowledge and the language to articulate this. The model of learning presented in the project in paper 11 is that of the practitioner researching information using a variety of sources, and using narrative methods to present, and enquire into, practice. This should support new teachers' understanding of how knowledge is constructed and give them a concept of agency, rather than reliance on external authority. This would also relate to the third issue that may limit changing practice: the range of pedagogical approaches available to support working with children with special educational needs. If new teachers are aware of ways of identifying sources of experience and knowledge in this field and how this will interact with their own sensitive professional noticing, particularly understanding the perspective of the child, then they are less likely to see the issue as one of lacking the

appropriate 'manual'. If they see learning as starting with the needs of the child, then they should be more able to devise appropriate ways of teaching individuals. There should be a move from didactic or behaviourist methods to consructivist approaches to teaching (Watson, 2000).

Finally, new teachers' espoused theories may not relate to what they do in practice (Argyris & Schön, 1974). It is easy to think that one is promoting inclusive practice when that may not be the case. Teachers, therefore, need the opportunity to become reflective practitioners, and strategies for critical reflection using narrative approaches, developed during projects such as this one, should be part of their ongoing professional development. A simple model of the key aspects of this project is shown below.

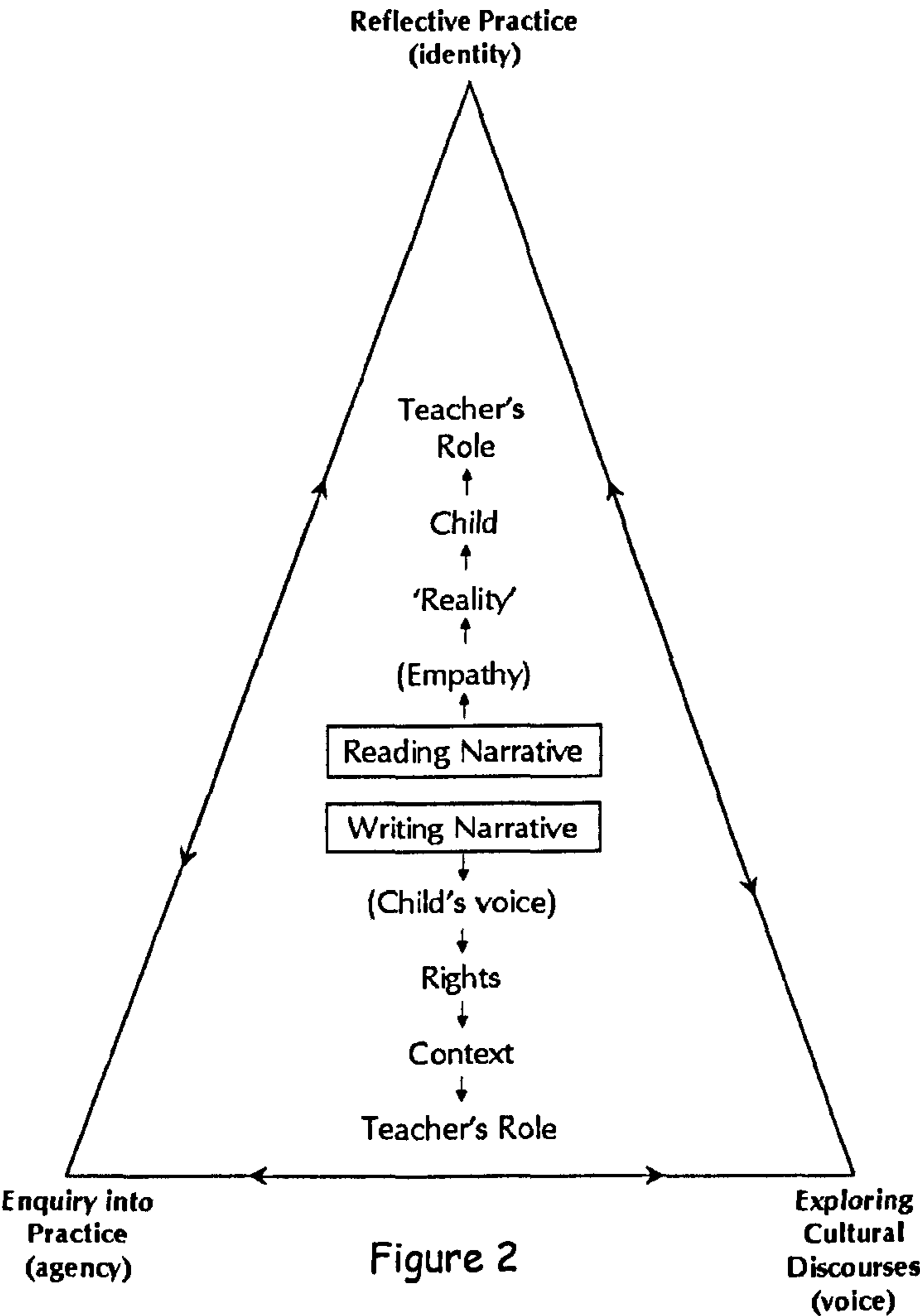


Figure 2

Reading and writing narrative was the action and is in the centre. Reading involved empathy, which has the potential to challenge the reader's perspectives on reality, particularly perceptions of the child with special educational needs. A change in perspective can lead to a new role for the teacher, listening to the child and supporting the child's learning needs, rather than delivering the curriculum. Writing involves the use of the child's voice and can lead to the perspective of learners' rights. This challenges an integration approach to inclusion and can result in the teacher taking a more politically informed, democratic approach in the classroom and with the potential for assuming an activist identity (Sachs, 2004).

The act of writing is shown inside a representation of key parts of the process undertaken during the project. While the three aspects are shown separately, they are linked as shown by the arrows. Reflective practice can support teachers' identity; exploring cultural influences can help them to choose to develop their own voices, while enquiry into practice develops autonomous professionals with agency. The key themes of identity, voice and agency, embedded in a language context, which have been central to my writing from the beginning, are now seen in my current practice. As I discuss in the next section, we return from the end to the beginning.

## Endings and Beginnings

*We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.*

*T S Eliot (Little Gidding, The Four Quartets)*



© Martin Hill 2003

The image and the extract from the poem illustrate the circular nature of the work undertaken in this thesis. Reflection has allowed me to see my writing and teaching as a whole. Through journeying backwards up the stream of my professional life I have been enabled to see it in a different way and to identify patterns. The nature of the pebbles, and of my stories, is that they could be arranged in a different way in the light of new perspectives in the future. The hermeneutic nature of this enquiry is shown by the circle, in which the publications are seen as part of a pattern, and understood individually within this pattern. There is a circularity in this critical appraisal of themes that recur in different contexts and in different lives. I go round the circle revisiting themes for learners, teachers and teacher educators, making and understanding meaning through reflection.

As T.S.Eliot explains, at the end we are back at the beginning, but understanding more. An aim in setting out on the thesis journey was to know more about my own practice in order improve it in the future. To 'know differently', in order to 'be differently'. I now understand that my writing was based on concern for the quality of inclusion for children with special educational needs, exemplified by issues around learner-teacher interaction. An examination of my writing shows that I moved beyond an initial concern with the linguistic aspect of interaction, to embedded issues of identity, voice and agency. I also moved from a simplistic notion of accumulating knowledge in order to bring about change, to one of challenging perspectives so that people can choose to act differently. My claim to have made a contribution to knowledge in the field lies in the work undertaken in this area.

## Contribution to Knowledge

The purpose of my work has been to challenge perceptions that may be inhibiting inclusion. I have sought both to challenge the ways in which learners with special educational needs may be perceived, and the ways in which we come to know about these learners. In relation to teacher education, I am arguing that what Van Manen (1991) has called the 'tact' of teaching has largely been ignored in current courses. Pedagogical tact involves the sensitive, thoughtful action of teachers in their interaction with learners. It concerns relationships between teachers and learners, which inevitably involve affect. Tactful actions involve the use of non-verbal, as well as verbal, communication and are predicated on teachers' understanding of the needs of learners. Part of this understanding will involve being able to 'read the inner life of the other person' (Van Manen, 1991 p125).

This aspect of understanding could be termed 'professional sensibility', as one needs to have 'a sense' of someone's condition in order to interact with him or her successfully (Fox, in Nickalls, 1975; Carter, 1971). Whatever terminology is used, it is essential that we have a language to talk about this aspect of practice so that it can be identified, discussed and developed. How, though, can this sensibility be developed on courses for teachers? It appears to be part of 'being' in the classroom, and as such is developed and shown in action. Van Manen (1991) suggests that it can be developed by listening to children, and by observing tactful teachers in action. I would argue that students need this aspect of practice highlighted for them by teacher-educators who should both model, and articulate this modelling, in sessions. Sensitivity to considering this aspect of practice can be raised, also, through narrative.

If, as Bruner (1996) argues, we construct our realities through narrative, then the use of story is a way of linking 'being' and 'knowing'. Recalling autobiographical stories in relation to education can highlight emotional aspects of learning and effects of teacher actions in the classroom. Developing imaginary stories can support the awareness of other perspectives and engagement with learners no longer seen as 'other'. I would argue for an epistemology based on imagination; narrative 'knowing' leading to tactful 'being' in classrooms.

In addition to arguing for this shift in emphasis in teacher education, I have developed a pedagogical approach that can support this form of learning. This has been developed through teaching and research and has been shared with teacher educators both nationally and internationally (paper 11). I would argue that the model used in this project could underpin much work in teacher education generally. The current focus on curriculum delivery fails to address issues of classroom relationships and the beliefs and assumptions underlying consequent actions in classrooms. By challenging perceptions of individuals and contexts, through processes that empower them, qualifying teachers can develop their own identities and make choices about the actions they take in classrooms.

## **Personal Developments**

The processes involved in the model in figure 2 are also useful for teacher-educators, who have their own identities and contexts to explore. During the writing of this critical appraisal I too have explored the discourses around my profession. I have used reading and writing, including the use of narrative, to develop confidence in my ability to enquire into, and develop my own practice

and that of others. Through undertaking this work I have become aware of what is important to me in my teaching. I now appreciate that my continued focus on issues around interaction between teachers and learners was to do less with language, than with the quality of pedagogical relationships. I understand that my use of telling and listening to stories was not for curricula purposes, but was to do with developing shared understandings in order for tactful teaching and active learning to take place. As I have moved during my career to work with new learners in different contexts, this aspect of teaching had become a focus of 'being' in the classroom. It has now become an area of 'knowing' too, and as such I am able to reflect on this and share it with students and colleagues.

I have also used reflection to examine my identity, which was one of a teacher, and have chosen to start to develop a new identity as a teacher-educator. This has enabled me to change my actions and to take on new roles in the School of Education, including leading a project on exploring teacher-educators' use of reflective practice approaches on their courses. Part of this new identity involves recognising my role as a researcher. My approach to research, as shown in the enclosed papers, has moved from a positivist, objective stance to my current understanding of knowledge as constructed and situated. Through researching and writing this critical appraisal I have changed my perspective on what counts as knowledge and who can contribute to its growth. I now see research undertaken by teachers and teacher-educators as vital for professional learning and an essential part of the development of identity, agency and voice within the teaching profession. The use of narrative, in research as well as teaching, can be an appropriate vehicle for this process.

Clandinin and Connelly (1994 p 425), writing about personal experience research approaches, note: 'Writing for others takes place in the research text. In a fortuitous twist of fortune, the expressions of meaning contained in research texts are often profound for the self.' Exploring narrative writing has enabled me to narrate and locate my own professional story and choose to change the life script (Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). Learners, teachers and teacher-educators all need to have new opportunities for inclusion and the chance to know and be differently. The work undertaken in this thesis is designed to achieve this aim.

## Bibliography

Alexander, R (2004) Still no Pedagogy? Principle, pragmatism and compliance in primary education *Cambridge Journal of Education* 34, 1 p7-33

Argyris, C & Schön, D (1974) *Theory in Practice: Increasing professional effectiveness* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Ashton-Warner, S (1963) *Teacher* New York: Touchstone

Bandura, A (1989) Human agency in social cognitive theory *American Psychologist* 44, 9 p 1175-1184

Boud, R., Keogh, R & Walker, D (1985) *Reflection: Turning experience into learning* London: Kogan Page

Bruner, J (1983) *Child's Talk: Learning to use language* New York: Norton

Bruner, J (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press

Bruner, J (1996) *The Culture of Education* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press

Burr, V (1995) *An Introduction to Social Constructionism* London: Routledge

Butt, T & Burr, V (2004) *Invitation to Personal Construct Psychology 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn* London: Whurr

Campbell, E (2003) *The Ethical Teacher* Maidenhead: The Open University Press

Carr, M (2001) *Assessment in Early Childhood Settings: Learning Stories* London: Paul Chapman

Carter, C (1971) *On Having a Sense of All Conditions* London: Friends Home Service Committee

Carter, K (1993) The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education *Educational Researcher* 2,1 p5-18

- Clandinin, DJ & Connelly, FM (1994) Personal Experience Approaches in Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* London: Sage
- Clandinin, DJ & Connelly, FM (1995) *Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes* New York: Teachers College Press
- Claxton, G (2000) The anatomy of intuition in Atkinson, T & Claxton, G *The Intuitive Practitioner: on the value of not always knowing what one is doing* Buckingham: Open University Press
- Colne, C (1996) Resonance in pre-service education *American Education Research Journal* 32, 2 p 297-325
- Corbett, J (1996) *Bad-mouthing: The Language of Special Needs* London: Falmer Press
- Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS (1994) Entering the Field of Qualitative Research in Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* London: Sage
- Department for Education and Skills (2001) *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* London: DfES
- Department for Education and Skills (2003) *Excellence and Enjoyment: a strategy for primary schools* London: DfES
- Dewey, J (1966) Democracy in Education (1903) in *John Dewey: Selected Writings* London: Heinemann New York:
- Eisner, E (1997) The promise and perils of alternative forms of data presentation *Educational Researcher* 26, 6 p 4-10
- Eisner, E (2002) *The Arts and the Creation of the Mind* New Haven: Yale University Press
- Eliot, TS (1974) *Collected Poems 1909-1962* London: Faber & Faber

Farrell, P & Ainscow, M (2002) *Making Special Education Inclusive: Mapping the issues* in Farrell, P & Ainscow, M (eds) *Making Special Education Inclusive* London: David Fulton

Featherstone, D., Munby, H & Russell, T (eds) (1997) *Finding a VOICE While Learning to Teach* London: The Falmer Press

Felske, AW (1994) *Knowing about Knowing: margin notes on disability research* in Rioux, M & Bach, M (eds) *Disability is Not Measles: New Research Paradigms in Disability* York University: Roeher Institute

Freeman, M (2003) *Rethinking the Fictive, Reclaiming the Real: autobiography, narrative time and the burden of truth* in Fireman, G., McVay Jnr, T, & Flanagan, O (eds) *Narrative and Consciousness: Literature, Psychology and the Brain* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Furlong, J., Barton, L., Miles, S., Whiting, C & Whitty, G (2000) *Teacher Education in Transition: Reforming Professionalism?* Buckingham: Open University

Gerhardt, S (2004) *Why Love Matters: How affection shapes a baby's brain* Hove: Brunner-Routledge

Goodson, I (1996) *Representing Teachers: Bringing teachers back in* in Kompf, M., Bond, W., Dworet, ER & Boak, R (eds) *Changing Research and Practice: Teachers' Professionalism, Identities and Knowledge* London: The Falmer Press

Gore, J & Gitlin, A (2004) [Re] *Visioning the Academic-Teacher Divide: Power and knowledge in the educational community* *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice* 10, 1 p35-58

Greene, M, (2001) *Variations on a Blue Guitar: The Lincoln Center Lectures on Aesthetic Education* New York: Teachers' College

Gregory, E., Long, S & Volk, D (2004) *Many Pathways: Implications of syncretic literacy studies for practice and research* in Gregory, E., Long, S & Volk, D (eds) *Many Pathways to Literacy: Young Children Learning with Siblings, Grandparents, Peers and Communities* London: RoutledgeFalmer

Gudmundsdottir, S (1995) The Narrative nature of pedagogical content knowledge in McEwan, H & Egan, K *Narrative in Teaching, Learning and Research* New York: Teachers College Press

Hansen, D (1998) The Moral is in the Practice *Teaching and Teacher Education* 14, 6 p 643-655

Hardy, B (1977) Narrative as a Primary Act of Mind in Meek, M., Warlow, A & Barton, G *The Cool Web: The Pattern of Children's Reading* London: The Bodley Head

Hargreaves, A (1998) The Emotional Practice of Teaching *Teaching and Teacher Education* 14, 8 p 835-854

Harris, P (2000) *The Work of the Imagination* Oxford: Blackwell

Hart, S., Dixon, A., Drummond, MJ & McIntyre, D (2004) *Learning Without Limits* Maidenhead: Open University Press

Hewitt, R (1947) Introduction to Eliot, G *Middlemarch* London: Oxford University Press

Holquist, M (1990) *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World* London: Routledge

hooks, b (1994) *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* New York: Routledge

Hopwood, V & Gallaway, C ( 1999) Evaluating the linguistic experience of a deaf child in a mainstream classroom *Deafness and Education International* 1, 3 p 155-171

Howes, A (2003) Teaching reforms and the impact of paid adult support on participation and learning in mainstream schools *Support for Learning* 18, 4 P 147-153

Iantaffi, A., Jarvis, J & Sinka, I ( 2003) Deaf pupils' views of inclusion in mainstream schools *Deafness and Education International* 5, 3 p 144-156

Jarvis, J (2002) Exclusion by Inclusion? Issues for deaf pupils and their teachers *Education 3-13* 30, 2 p 47-51

Jarvis, J (2003) The RNID education guidelines project in the context of the changing roles of teachers of the deaf *Deafness and Education International* 5, 1 p59-66

Jarvis, J., Iantaffi, A & Sinka, I (2003) Inclusion in mainstream classrooms: experiences of deaf pupils Nind, M., Rix, J., Sheehy, K & Simmons, K (eds) *Inclusive Education: Diverse Perspectives* London: David Fulton/Open University

Jarvis, J & Knight, P (2003) Supporting deaf students in higher education in Powell, S (ed) *Special Teaching in Higher Education* London: Kogan Page

Jarvis, J & Rees, M (2002) Working Towards Excellence: Teachers and teaching assistants supporting children with special needs in Brundrett, M., Duncan, D and Silcock, P (eds) *Excellence in the Primary Classroom* Dereham: Peter Francis

Jarvis, J & Riley, K (2000) Listen Hear: Parents supporting parents with deaf children in Wolfendale, S (ed) *Special Needs in the Early Years: Snapshots of Practice* London: Routledge

Jordan, R & Powell, S (1994) Whose Curriculum? Critical notes on integration and entitlement *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 9 1 p 27-39

Kelly, GA (1970) Behaviour as an Experiment in Bannister, D (ed) *Perspectives in Personal Construct Theory* London: Academic Press

Kirk, D & MacDonald, D (2001) Teacher voice and ownership of curriculum change *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 33, 5 p551-567

Lees, J & Urwin, S (1991) *Children with Language Disorders* London: Whurr

Martin, JM & Kompf, M (1996) Teaching in Inclusive Classroom Settings: The use of journals and concept mapping techniques in Kompf, M., Bond, W., Dworet, ER & Boak, R (eds) *Changing Research and Practice: Teachers' Professionalism, Identities and Knowledge* London: The Falmer Press

Mason, J (2002) *Researching Your Own Practice: The Discipline of Noticing* London: RoutledgeFalmer

- McEwan, H & Egan, K (1995) Introduction in McEwan, H & Egan, K *Narrative in Teaching, Learning and Research* New York: Teachers College Press
- McIntyre, D (1993) Theory, Theorizing and Reflection in Initial Teacher Education in Calderhead, J & Gates, P (eds) *Conceptualising Reflection in Teacher Education* London: The Falmer Press
- Mezirow, J (2000) (ed) *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress* New York: Jossey-Bass
- Miller, C (1994) Genres as Social Action in Freedman, A & Medway, P *Genre and the New Rhetoric* London: Taylor Francis
- Mischler, E (1995) Models of Narrative Analysis *Journal of Narrative and Life History* 5, 2 p 87-123
- Moyles, J (2004) Passion, Paradox & Professionalism in Early Years Education in Wragg, EC (ed) *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Teaching and Learning* London: RoutledgeFalmer
- Murray, J (2004) 'A Different Sort of Academic'? Perspectives on academic life from professional educators involved in the initial education of teachers, nurses, social workers and doctors *Paper presented at the annual conference of the British Educational Research Association, Manchester*
- Nair, RB (2003) *Narrative Gravity: Conversation, Cognition and Culture* London: Routledge
- Nickalls, J (ed) (1975) *The Journal of George Fox* London: Religious Society of Friends
- Office for Standards in Education (2004) *Special Educational Needs and Disability: Towards Inclusive Schools* London: OFSTED
- Patton, MQ (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation: Research Methodology 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn.* London: Sage
- Pearce, WB (1994) *Interpersonal Communication: Making Social Worlds* London: Harper Collins

Pope, M & Denicolo, P (2001) *Transformative Education: Personal construct approaches to practice and research* London: Whurr

Powell, R (2000) Case-based teaching in homogeneous teacher education contexts: a study of preservice teachers' situative cognition *Teachers and Teacher Education* 16 p 389-410

Putman RT & Borko, H (2000) What do New Views of Knowledge and Thinking Have to Say about Research on Teacher Learning? *Educational Researcher* 24, 1 p4-15

Richardson, L (1994) Writing: A Method of Inquiry in Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* London: Sage

Richardson, V (2003) Preservice Teachers' Beliefs in Raths, J & McAninch, A *Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Performance: The Impact of Teacher Education* Greenwich: Information Age Publishing

Ritchie, J & Wilson, D (2000) *Teacher Narrative as Critical Inquiry: Rewriting the Script* New York: Teachers College Press

Rushdie, S (1990) *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* London: Granta Books

Ryle, A (1975) *Frames and Cages: The Repertory Grid Approach to Human Understanding* London: Sussex University Press

Sachs, J (2004) Identity: Learning to be a Teacher in Denicolo, P & Kompf, M (eds) *Connecting Policy and Practice: Challenges for Teaching and Learning in Schools and Universities* London: Taylor and Francis

Sarbin, TR (2004) The Role of Imagination in Narrative Construction in Dainte, C & Lightfoot, C (eds) *Narrative Analysis: Studying the Development of Individuals in Society* London: Sage

Schaffer, HR (1996) Joint Involvement Episodes as Contexts for Development in Daniels, H (ed) *An Introduction to Vygotsky* London: Routledge

Schoomaker, F (2002) *Growing up Teaching* New York: Teachers College Press

Schön, DA (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* Aldershot: Ashgate

Schwandt, TA (1994) Constructivist, Interpretivist Approaches to Human Inquiry in Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* London: Sage

Stonach, I & MacLure, M (1997) *Educational Research Undone: The Post Modern Embrace* Buckingham: The Open University

Tripp, D (1993) *Critical Incidents in Teaching: Developing Professional Judgement* London: Routledge

Topping, K & Maloney, S (2004) Introduction in Topping, K & Maloney, S (eds) *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Inclusive Education* London: RoutledgeFalmer

University of Hertfordshire (2002) *Inclusion: what deaf pupils think* London: RNID

Van Manen, M (1991) *The Tact of Teaching: The Meaning of Pedagogical Thoughtfulness* Albany: State University of New York

Vygotsky, LS (1978) *Mind in Society* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press

Ward, H (2004) 'Cowed' Teachers Lack Confidence *Times Educational Supplement* 23-7-04 p4

Watson, J (2000) Constructive instruction and learning difficulties *Support for Learning* 15, 3 p135-141

Weber, S & Mitchell, C (1995) *That's Funny You Don't Look Like a Teacher: Interrogating Images and Identity in Popular Culture* London: The Falmer Press

Wells, G (1986) *The Meaning Makers: Children Learning Language and Using Language to Learn* London: Hodder & Stoughton

Wilkins, C (2004) Student Teachers and Attitudes Towards 'Race': the role of citizenship education in addressing racism in the curriculum in Wragg, EC (ed) *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Teaching and Learning* London: RoutledgeFalmer

## Appendix

Jarvis, J (2005) Telling Stories in Class: an exploration of the use of narrative in a higher education context  
To be published in *Journal for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching* 2, 1 p6-13  
*ISSN 1743-3932*

# Journal for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching

Volume 2 Issue 1  
Spring 2005  
ISSN 1743-3932

## Contents

Editorial	
<i>Helen Burchell</i>	3
Articles	
Telling stories in class: an exploration of aspects of the use of narrative in a higher education context <i>Joy Jarvis</i>	6
Making higher education a more creative place <i>Norman Jackson</i>	14
Evaluating the Weekly-Assessed Tutorial Sheet approach to assessment: background, pedagogy and impact <i>Mark Russell</i>	22
Investigation of the perceived usefulness of a StudyNet group discussion facility by international students <i>Andy Gillett and Claire Weetman</i>	40
Report	
A tutorial on plagiarism and collusion <i>Ruth Barrett</i>	40
Book review	
Small Group Teaching: Tutorials, Seminars and Beyond <i>Mary Thornton</i>	42
Conference report	
Plagiarism: Prevention, Practice and Policy <i>James A. Malcolm</i>	45

**Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching**



This journal is an initiative of CELT towards fulfilling one of its four core areas of activity: research, development and dissemination of good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment.

*Cover photograph by Jeff Jones*

**Editorial Board**

Helen Burchell (Chair)  
Professor David Bonner  
Amanda Jefferies  
Dr Mary Thornton  
Dr Rosie Turner-Bisset

[h.burchell@herts.ac.uk](mailto:h.burchell@herts.ac.uk)  
[d.g.bonner@herts.ac.uk](mailto:d.g.bonner@herts.ac.uk)  
[a.l.jefferies@herts.ac.uk](mailto:a.l.jefferies@herts.ac.uk)  
[m.e.thornton@herts.ac.uk](mailto:m.e.thornton@herts.ac.uk)  
[r.turner-bisset@herts.ac.uk](mailto:r.turner-bisset@herts.ac.uk)

# Telling stories in class: an exploration of aspects of the use of narrative in a higher education context



Joy Jarvis  
Principal Lecturer  
School of Education  
J.Jarvis@herts.ac.uk, ext 5678

## Summary

*This article explores some of the ways in which reading and writing stories can be used by staff and students in higher education. It discusses when and why the story form might be useful and conversely why, in certain circumstances, it might be unhelpful. It explores the use of fiction and poetry in learning and teaching contexts with students who are engaged in professional education courses. Examples are given from a current, funded research project where students write stories using a different perspective than their own. The potential for reflecting on practice and for transformative learning is identified. Suggestions are made for future cross-university collaboration on the use of this story approach.*

## Introduction

*It was the last day of term. 150 students were in the lecture theatre for the final session before the start of the holiday. The lecturer had carefully prepared a PowerPoint presentation using both text and pictures. The lecturer started the session. Many of the students started writing. They were writing Christmas cards that were then passed around and opened by others. Smiles of acknowledgement were given. The lecturer felt separated from the students. She stopped and walked in front of the desk. "I want to tell you a story," she said. The students stopped what they were doing. They looked at the lecturer. She started telling a story about an example of workplace practice related to the topic of the lecture. The silence in the room was intense. All the students listened attentively. At the end of the story the lecturer went back to her PowerPoint slides and the students went back to their Christmas cards.*

This type of scenario may not be entirely unfamiliar to colleagues working in a higher education context. As lecturers we often use stories in class: from anecdotes and small vignettes to case studies from practice. We may find that students attend to, and engage with, these stories. Why do we tell them and why do students listen? Do we ask them to tell stories? If so, how is this supporting their learning? The use of different forms of narrative in research, for both data collection and data presentation, has expanded rapidly during the past ten years as researchers using qualitative approaches have become more confident with a range of creative approaches (Lyons and LaBoskey, 2002). At the same time, some lecturers are using forms of storytelling in their teaching. This article explores some of the ways stories can be used in higher education, with evidence drawn from a current, funded research project.

## Why story?

The use of the story in the scenario above had not been planned, but was an intuitive response to a particular context. It could be argued, of course, that the students' changed listening behaviour was less a positive response to the story than reaction against an over-familiar PowerPoint lecture format that can lack personal engagement. Telling a story can allow a lecturer to get closer to the students, both physically and metaphorically. It can lessen the distance between the teacher and the learner. It may allow us to reveal part of ourselves, either because we include ourselves as characters, or because we show personal perspectives on events. When we tell stories, our verbal and non-verbal communication changes, making language easier to understand. Bruner (1990) has argued that we learn about the social world most easily in narrative form and it is often how we recall, recount and anticipate experience. Even if we are not teaching about the social world we may nevertheless choose to link our paradigmatic content with fables, metaphors or social-world examples in order to provide students with a link to more abstract concepts. As narrative is a use of language that is traditional, learnt from a young age and easily memorable, it may be more accessible to learners than ideas presented in propositional form. Putting complex ideas into an easier, more familiar genre could be seen as supporting inclusive teaching practice.

Stories can also lead to active learning on the part of the student. In the traditional lecture format I was using at the beginning of my unsuccessful teaching session described at the start of this paper, I was the person who was identifying key information. In relation to the story, however, it was the students who had to infer the meaning of the text. Adults, and indeed children, expect there to be a message or a point to a story and actively look for this. They also understand the metaphorical role of stories and while responding

to them personally they do not limit their interpretations to the particular example. They may make generalisations from stories and use these to generate their own stories. However, there can be both limitations and dangers inherent in the process. One of the questions we need to ask is 'which stories are we telling?'

#### **Which stories?**

One of the reasons that the students in the scenario at the beginning of this article listened to the story may have been because it was about professional practice in which they were shortly to engage. Hearing stories about practice is one of the ways we learn about it, and students who are about to undertake some form of work-based experience are likely to be motivated by stories of this type. As lecturers we often take an aspect or principle of practice and contextualise it. We show how a situated issue or dilemma may look and give examples of strategies to deal with it. One difficulty is, of course, if the example is remembered rather than the principle it is designed to illustrate. We need to be aware that students need insights into the range of contextual factors that influence practice. If only one example is storied or if influences framing everyone's stories are not highlighted, they may reject the story, thinking it would not work in their situation, and therefore also reject the underlying principles.

Stories about 'how we do things here' are one form of induction into a profession and into a workplace. Students can learn the language and procedures of their chosen field from stories told by lecturers. They can also see how professionals in a particular area engage with the ideas in a practice context, how they reflect on their own work and enquire into their practice. One danger with

workplace stories, however, is that they can perpetuate forms of practice without challenging them: for example, they can lead to lack of resistance to, or failure to identify, discriminatory practices. In most professional contexts only certain sorts of story would be acceptable. Mattingly (1991), researching stories told by people implementing a World Bank project, found that only stories related to a particular political agenda could be told. In schools, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) identified 'sacred stories' told by managers, 'cover stories' told by teachers to demonstrate to colleagues and managers how they responded to the sacred stories, and finally 'secret stories' acted out by teachers in their own classrooms and shared with a few trusted colleagues. The status of stories could, of course, change, if new ideas and policies developed. Secret stories could then change from possible resistance to the sacred story, to becoming part of a new sacred story. So, for example, a teacher might have a secret story of undertaking some cross-curricular work in teaching at a time when the sacred story was about subject teaching. If, at a later date, the sacred story advocated making links between subjects, the teacher's practice would become part of that story. Students need to be aware of the range of stories that may be told and whose stories they are.

#### **Whose stories?**

Lecturers will often tell stories of examples of their own practice or professional work they have recently observed. This may be partly to show that they are not as remote from the 'real world' as students may imagine, but is often to identify what they consider to be good practice. This may be approaches or methods that they would wish students to emulate. A danger, of course, is that these stories may then conflict

with those told by practitioners when students attend work-based placements – what could be characterised as a 'real world' versus 'ivory tower' conflict. Rather than wanting to protect students from what we believe to be the 'wrong' stories, we need to give them tools to examine stories: ours, theirs and those of other people. We need to help them to view these stories through different lenses; to identify their cultural and institutional assumptions; and to apply different theoretical models to the examples of practice. Stories need to be analysed, both in discussion with staff and peers and in relation to appropriate literature, as this supports the development of critical reflective practice.

The 'storying' of experience in the field of professional development is increasing (Bolton, 2001; McDrury and Alterio, 2003). Professionals, or students in a particular field, are encouraged to write storied accounts of examples of practice both for themselves and, often, to share in groups. Burchell and Dyson (2000), for example, undertook an action research project with lecturers in higher education who were reflecting on their practice in relation to dissertation supervision. As part of this process each lecturer wrote a story, in whatever form they wished, about their experience of supervising dissertations. While the participants were surprised to be asked to write in this format in an academic context, they were able to do so. As we all tell stories in everyday life there is no mystery about the writing form. Participants found that the writing process itself allowed for reflection and self-discovery, while sharing stories with other people enabled them to see different perspectives on current concerns.

Concerns, issues and dilemmas may be unconscious and may be revealed through the story writing process. Practical knowledge is

situated and developed in action. Stories are about actions, but are not the actions themselves. They are constructions in which there is foregrounding of particular elements, interpretation of events and implied intentions, motivations and anxieties. The story writing process, which is descriptive not analytic, may in this way raise awareness of intuitive practice so that it can be examined. Story influences may remain tacit, but can nevertheless result in changed practice because if much professional action takes place in relation to tacit knowledge then changing this knowledge could result in the development of practice. This change can come about by experiencing resonance or dissonance in relation to stories.

Resonance can be experienced when we hear or read a story that 'speaks to us' cognitively or emotionally. Stories generally involve emotion, an element that may be limited in academic discussion of practice but that is frequently present in action. We could experience an 'echo' (Conle, 1996) between a story and our own experience or, as we imagine the other's story, we may respond kinaesthetically or 'feel with' them (Sarbin, 2004). Our response will be individual and the resonance may be unrelated to the particular detail of the story. While this resonance could simply confirm our own story, it may well alter it subtly and our thinking process may 'move' to involve new contexts, or internalise a wider and deeper understanding of our original perceptions (Conle, 1996). While this could result in changing our actions in professional practice, dissonance between stories could also have this effect. A perceived conflict between a story and our own understanding can be a catalyst for change (Golembek and Johnson, 2004). If our engagement with the story involves emotion, so that it matters to us, we may be stimulated to resolve the

contradiction by reconceptualising our ideas. Alternatively, of course, we may find this too threatening and reject the story. A key issue for lecturers using story in a professional development context is that, while the personal nature of the response to story is essential for changing individual perspectives, and for giving people the potential for choosing to change practice, these private responses may be hidden from the lecturer. If changes are subconscious, they may indeed be hidden from the students themselves. This is problematic for professional development where lecturers have responsibility for developing ethical practice. Personally held beliefs in relation to race, gender or disability, for example, will impact on professional practice and need to be 'surfaced' (Schon, 1983) so that they can be reflected on. Dialogue with peers and lecturers around stories of practice allow for an understanding of different perspectives and for an understanding of how our own stories have developed in personal and cultural contexts. A danger may be, however, that a discussion group is too homogeneous to be able to see beyond particular professional or cultural frames and minority views may be silenced by the group context. The use of fiction can be a way of approaching these issues.

#### **What about fiction and poetry?**

Staff and students can present examples of practice in fictional form which may help authors to distance themselves from personally sensitive material, particularly if it is to be discussed with others. It will also help deal with ethical issues inherent in discussion of examples of professional practice. Social workers, for example, have used Harry Potter to explore notions of appropriate parenting and the ways in which decisions are made about

supporting children and families (Seden, 2002). This reduces the potential for people feeling personally criticised, but can allow them to take on new ideas and perspectives. Harry Potter stories are also used in other forms of professional practice. Business students, for example, can look at management in relation to a range of personalities at 'Hogwarts' and at issues of knowledge management in this setting (Herman, 2004). This has the benefit of engaging students through humour. Additionally, by analysing examples not normally associated with their professional practice, students may be able to identify the principles underlying this practice more clearly. Fictionalising practice can also help the author to look at different viewpoints if a range of voices is included in the telling. Hearing the voices of clients, patients, or students, for example, can lead to more informed practice. This may also be possible through talking with or interviewing people, but may be problematic in contexts of unequal power relationships.

Reading published fictional texts can be a way of gaining simulated experience including understanding the perspectives of other people. Stories, from Greek tragedies to tales exploring current issues of cultural difference, have been used to carry messages about understanding the 'other' (Nassbaum, 1997). Through imagination and attenuated role-taking, readers can empathise with people who may be seen as different from themselves (Sarbin, 2004). Perceptions gained from fiction can result in a changed understanding of others which could lead to readers deciding to take different action in the real world (Gerrig, 1993). For this reason Coles (1989) used fictional texts involving doctors to explore experiences and roles in medical contexts and he was particularly concerned that doctors should develop a 'moral imagination' in relation

to understanding the perceptions of patients. This was seen as contributing to more sensitive and effective professional practice.

A key issue in the use of fiction is that cultural assumptions exist within the form of the story as well as its content. Different cultures will have different 'storying' conventions and if not appreciated and shared then this type of work can lead to misunderstandings. This is particularly true in relation to poetry. Poetry can be evocative and emotionally engaging and, as it does not necessarily denote a particular example, it can be less overtly challenging than an account of practice, thereby limiting the possibility of hostility or rejection. Poetry may be particularly relevant in work contexts where emotional issues need to be explored. However, as noted in a previous edition of this journal (Roberts, 2004), the language of lectures and seminars includes vocabulary, allusions and examples that are culture-specific and this is exacerbated when poetry and metaphors are used. While metaphors can allow us to see things in new ways and lead to conceptual understanding, they can also lead to misunderstanding if, for example, one of the categories used is not understood in the same way by all participants. For example, if a person or institution is referred to as 'a rock', the understanding of this concept will depend on perceptions and experiences of 'rock' which could include 'solid' or 'hard' or alternatively 'likely to be undermined' if the concept is linked to rocks being eroded by the sea.

**A current research project using story**

Over the last two years the School of Education has undertaken a research project exploring the use of reading and writing fiction and poetry in developing student teachers' understanding and knowledge in the field of special educational needs. Initially the project

was funded by the University's Learning and Teaching Development Fund and it is currently supported by the Teacher Training Agency. A reason for using a story approach in this area of education is ably demonstrated by a recently published and widely read novel, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* (Haddon, 2003). The story is told from the perspective of a young person with Asperger's Syndrome and shows how fiction can help people understand the ways in which a child with this condition may experience the world and the reasons for particular behaviour. While a condition such as Asperger's Syndrome can be explained factually, the fictionalisation embeds the information in a context and leads to a level of emotional engagement and empathy on the part of the reader. One aim of the research project was to use the strengths of story to help student teachers understand pupil perspectives and thereby be enabled, potentially, to take more appropriate actions in the classroom.

***Learning/Teaching approach***

For a final-year module education students have read fiction, poetry, autobiographies, information texts and websites on an individually chosen disability, such as deafness or autism, and have then written stories or poems, supported by images, from the perspective of and in the voice of a child with that condition. While the module was primarily undertaken through self-study, students were supported by staff-led sessions exploring the use of words and images as forms of representation, and by peer-group reflective work. Students were also required to keep reflective logs charting the development of their project and their thinking. The students' stories and logs were used as evidence of learning for assessment purposes, while evidence from

questionnaires completed by all the participants and interviews from a proportion of students helped the research team to analyse course outcomes. Further details of the project can be found in Jarvis et al (2004).

### Outcomes

Students engaged wholeheartedly with the project, perhaps in part due to its novelty factor. Transformative outcomes in relation to student perspectives were identified. Students' work demonstrated resonant and dissonant aspects as they developed their stories and related them to their previous understanding in the field. They began to see children with special educational needs as being part of the group of all children, not 'other' and defined by their, often problematic, behaviour. They also recognised conflict between what they had thought was their own good practice as teachers and it being identified as exclusive or patronising when they looked at it from a child's perspective. Seeing teachers through the eyes of pupils gave students a disconcerting, but potentially empowering, different view of themselves. Through stories they were also able to portray teachers using both appropriate and inappropriate classroom strategies in relation to their fictional child selves. The potential exists, therefore, for the use of the more appropriate strategies once the students start work in their own classrooms. Some students were enabled to see a wider perspective beyond the school, and articulated their commitment to working to end the educational and social discrimination against people with disabilities. All students reported that they had been changed in some way by the course. "We now see things differently," reported one student. What they saw differently varied between individuals and future development of this work will include more opportunities for students to share their insights.

### Future work

The research project will continue in the next academic year with work being undertaken on different, shorter courses for student teachers where less time is available for exploring special educational needs. We will again aim to exploit the potential of story to effect change, so will continue to ask students to read and write fiction, but will include subsequent organised discussion of these stories with staff and peers. We will be using personal-construct psychology methods to identify changes in student perspectives following the project. In the development of the project we will be aiming to share insights with others engaged in similar work and with those using story approaches in a range of education contexts. In this way we hope to understand more about the use of story in helping to develop student, and indeed staff, learning.

### References

- Bolton, G. (2001) *Reflective Practice: writing and professional development*. London: Paul Chapman
- Bruner, J. (1990) *Acts of Meaning*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press
- Burchell, H. and Dyson, J. (2000) 'Just a Little Story: the use of stories to aid reflection on teaching in higher education' in *Education Action Research* 8 (3) 435-50
- Clandinin, J. and Connelly, M. (1995) *Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes*. New York: Teachers College Press
- Coles, R. (1989) *The Call of Stories: teaching and the moral imagination*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin
- Conle, C. (1996) 'Resonance in pre-service education' in *American Education Research Journal* 33 (2) 297-325
- Gerrig, R. (1993) *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: on the psychological activities of reading*. New Haven: Yale University
- Golombek, P. and Johnson, H. (2004) 'Narrative inquiry as a mediational-space: examining emotional and cognitive dissonance in second-language teachers' development' in *Teachers and Teaching* 10 (3) 307-27

Haddon, M. (2003) *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*. London: Random House

Herman, R. (2004) *Teaching Management through Literature: a bibliography*. London: The British Council

Jarvis, J., Dyson, J., Thomas, K., Graham, S., Iantaffi, A. and Burchell, H. (2004) 'Learning through creating stories: developing student teachers' understanding of the experiences of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms' in a paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Conference at the University of Manchester  
[www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003733.htm](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003733.htm)

Lyons, N. and LaBoskey, V.K. (Eds.) (2002) *Narrative Inquiry in Practice: Advancing the knowledge of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press

Mattingly, C. (1991) 'Narrative reflections on practical actions: two learning experiments in reflective storytelling' in Schon, D. (Ed.) *The Reflective Turn: case studies in and on educational practice*. New York: Teachers College Press

McDrury, J. and Alterio, M. (2003) *Learning Through Storytelling in Higher Education*. London: Kogan Page

Nassbaum, M. (1997) *Cultivating Humanity: a classical defence of reform in liberal education*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

Roberts, P. (2004) 'Integrating International Students: what might English language teaching methodology be able to offer?' in *Journal for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching* 1 (1) 14-21

Sarbin, T. (2004) 'The role of imagination in narrative construction' in Dainte, C. and Lightfoot, C. (Eds.) *Narrative Analysis: studying the development of individuals in society*. London: Sage

Schon, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: how professionals think in action*. Aldershot: Ashgate

Seden, J. (2002) 'Parenting and the Harry Potter stories: a social care perspective' in *Children and Society* 16 (5) 295-305

#### Biographical notes

Joy Jarvis is Principal Lecturer in the School of Education. She teaches on a range of courses for qualifying and experienced teachers, particularly those focusing on the education of children with special educational needs. She is interested in creative approaches to working with students, particularly the use of narrative.

# Published Work

## Paper One

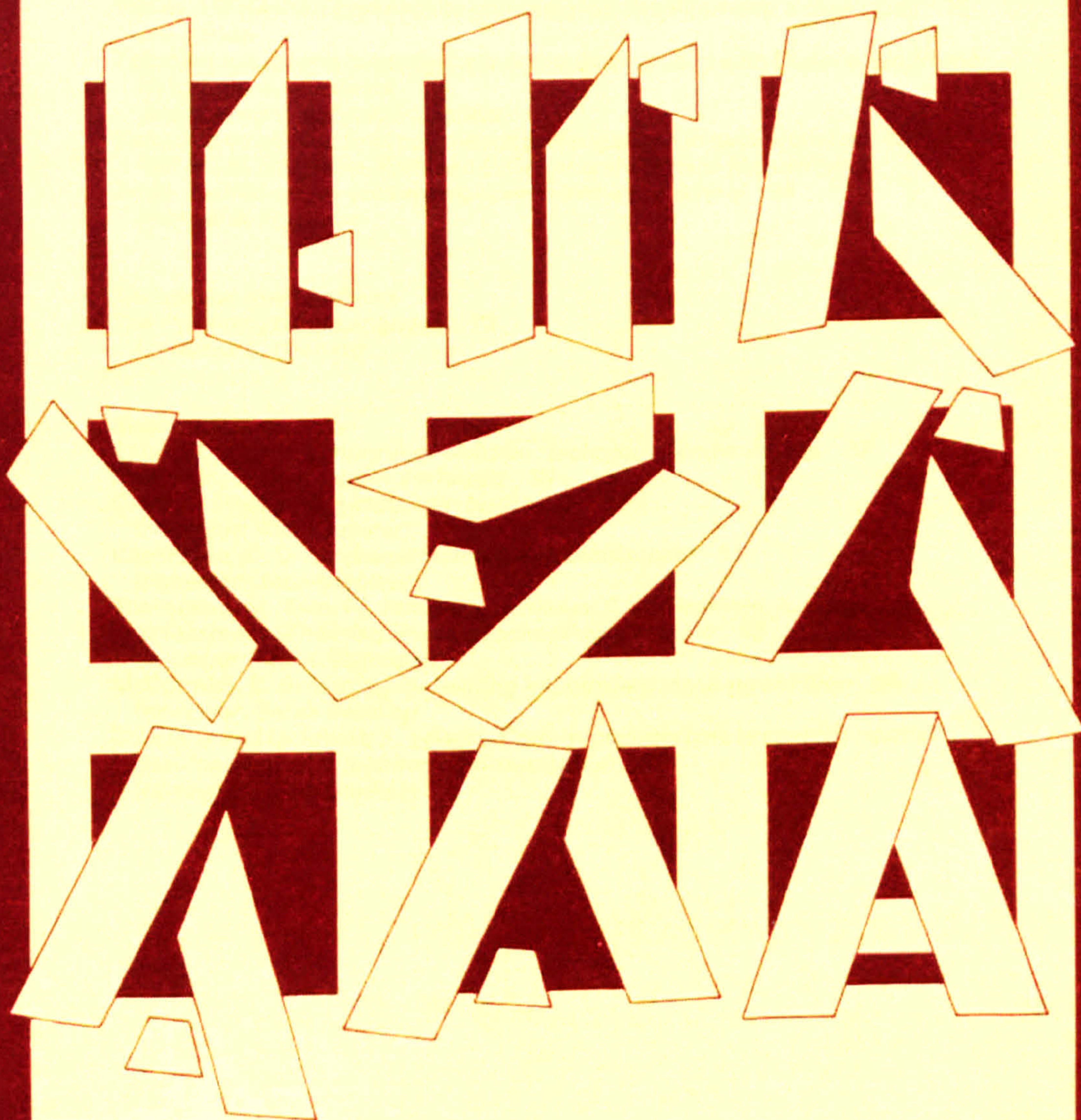
Jarvis, J (1989) Taking a Metaphon approach to phonological development: a case study *Child Language, Teaching and Therapy* 5, 1 p16-32  
ISSN 0265-6590

# **Child Language Teaching and Therapy**

Volume 5, Number 1 1989

**Edward Arnold**

ISSN 0265-6590



# Child Language Teaching and Therapy

## Contents

### Articles

The use of nonwords in teaching reading to a 13-year-old language-impaired pupil: an intervention case study 1

*Cheryl Davies and Eva Grauberg*

Taking a Metaphon approach to phonological development: a case study 16

*Joy Jarvis*

Teaching expressive language to a non-speaking child with Down's Syndrome: classroom applications 33

*Judith Wright and Asher Cashdan*

Reducing vowel and final consonant prolongations in twin brothers 49

*Patricia M. Hargrove, Kathleen E. Dauer and Michelle Montelibano*

Adult-to-child group-addressing speech in the pre-school 64

*Michael A. Forrester*

### Computer applications

The Pye Analysis of Language 79

*Laurence B. Leonard*

### Book reviews

Sanders, D. M. *Teaching deaf children: techniques and methods* 87

Luterman, D. *Deafness in the family* 87

Grant, J. *The hearing impaired: birth to six* 87

(reviewer: Alec Webster)

Hasenstab, M. S. *Language learning and otitis media* 91

(reviewer: John Bamford)

Thompson, M., Biro, P., Vethivelu, S., Pious, C. and Hatfield, N. *Language assessment of hearing impaired school-age children* 93

(reviewer: Merle Marcuson)

McCormick, B. *Screening for hearing impairment in young children* 94

(reviewer: Sarah Beazley)

Coupe, J. and Goldbart, J., editors, *Communication before speech: normal development and impaired communication* 95

(reviewer: Helen Bradley)

# Taking a Metaphon approach to phonological development: a case study

**Joy Jarvis**  
Stevenage

## **Abstract**

*This case study outlines speech work undertaken with one child over an academic year. It discusses the decisions which were made with regard to the content and method of the teaching programme and details the activities which were used. The child's progress is described and questions are raised about the effectiveness of our programme.*

## **Introduction**

### **Initial assessment**

Luke entered school in September 1987 aged 4;9. He presented as an alert, well-motivated child of average intelligence. His hearing was normal, and his comprehension of language, assessed using the Reynell Developmental Language Scales, was appropriate for his age. His speech, however, was extremely difficult to understand.

Luke could articulate most English adult phonemes in an imitation situation, the only ones he had difficulty with being generally late-developing sounds: /ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ, θ, ð/. He could perceive minimal-pair differences in adult speech, even in pairs of words he produced as homonyms. He was also aware when his production did not match the adult word model, although he was unable to alter his own speech. He often said 'I can't say that'.

Luke's response to requests for clarification was either to repeat

Address for correspondence: Area Advisory Centre, The Grange, High St, Stevenage SG1 3BD, UK. This work was undertaken when the author was teacher-in-charge of the Infant Partially-Hearing Unit, Stevenage.

what he had just said in what appeared to be the same form, or to speak louder, a natural response to the question 'Pardon?' It was possible that he was making differences in his speech, but that these did not cross phonemic boundaries so were not perceived by the listener. He could not, however, distinguish between what appeared to be homonyms in his own tape-recorded speech. It seemed that he was having difficulty with making appropriate contrasts in his speech, so we undertook a phonological assessment.

We analysed both a picture-naming and a connected-speech sample using PACS (Grunwell, 1985). Both samples gave an identical picture of Luke's strengths and weaknesses (Figure 1). Luke appeared to have a wide inventory of phones. These he used in an appropriately contrastive way in word-final position and in syllable-initial position within words. There was, however, very little contrast in word-initial position. Only seven consonants were used in this position, with the addition of /l/ which was used in the production of his own name. This appeared to be an advanced form, as no other initial-/l/ words were produced.

There was little evidence of free variation, and Luke's system in word-initial position seemed static. When we looked at simplification rules as a way of describing the data, we found that in word-initial position he showed a consistent pattern of fronting, stopping, gliding of /l/ and of fricatives, context-sensitive voicing, and cluster reduction. Often, of course, these processes combined, as for example in the production of [di:p] for /fi:p/. His preferred phone was [d], which was used for nine adult consonants and was one of the major reasons for his being frequently misunderstood. It is interesting to speculate why Luke showed phonological difficulties only in word-initial position. Chiat (1983) suggests that this may be due to the influence of stress and word boundaries. Luke, for example, pronounced *making* correctly but *my car* was [mai da:].

Having obtained information about Luke's speech production and its relationship to the adult system, we needed to use this information in planning and implementing a teaching programme. It was decided that the teacher of the deaf who worked with hearing-impaired children in a unit which was part of Luke's school would be responsible for organizing his speech work on a withdrawal basis. This was because the teacher had a particular interest in phonological development. It also meant that, as the teacher was 'on the spot', Luke's speech sessions could be fitted into his normal school timetable without too

Syllable initial word initial

m		n					
b		d		tʃ		dʒ	
w		r		j			
r		d					
j (l)		r/w		j		h	
		j (l)				ø	

Syllable initial within word

m		n					
p		t		tʃ		dʒ	
f		r		j			
w		r		j			
r		d					
j (l)		r/w		j		h	
		j (l)				ø	

Syllable final word final

m		n					
p		t		tʃ		dʒ	
f		r		j			
w		r		j			
r		d					
j (l)		r/w		j		h	
		j (l)				ø	

Figure 1 Systems of contrastive phones and contrastive assessments: Luke in September 1987

much disruption. The teacher was then faced with the four central questions which, as Crystal (1987) notes, will dominate our teaching decisions: what to teach next? why? how? for how long? It was decided that the question ‘why?’ applied to all the other questions equally, and each of these three questions was considered, with an attempt to give principled reasons for the decisions which had been made.

**What to teach next?**

A number of different factors were taken into account when planning the content of the teaching programme. These included information about normal phonological development, so that an attempt could be made to follow a broadly developmental route. In addition we would give priority to the elimination of processes which had most effect on his intelligibility. We also wanted to achieve early success, so that Luke would realize that he could change his speech.

We decided to start with the elimination of the gliding of /l/. Although this sound is often developed late, Luke used it in his name and easily imitated words beginning with /l/. We hoped that by starting with this process Luke would make early progress. Prevocalic voicing seemed to be the obvious next target as this process is usually suppressed very early, and as it affects many contrasts it has a big influence on intelligibility. We decided to tackle the process in phoneme pairs in sequence, starting with the bilabials, then the alveolars, and finally the velars.

Our third target was to be the stopping of fricatives, and this was to be followed by fronting. It might have been more logical to have tackled these in the reverse order, but we felt that the concept of difference in manner of production might be more easily understood than place difference. Our final two objectives were to be the gliding of fricatives and cluster reduction, the latter being common in the speech of young children.

**For how long?**

We can consider this question in two ways. First, how often shall we see the child, and how long will each session last? Secondly, when shall we stop targetting a process and move on to the next stage in our programme? The number and length of sessions is often determined more by practical considerations, but it would be useful to know whether intensive therapy followed by monitoring, or more regular but less frequent sessions, is the more effective procedure. In Luke's case we started with three 20-minute individual sessions per week. This was reduced to two sessions in the third term, and later to one, before the programme finished at the end of June.

When considering how long to target a process, it would seem that traditionally a high level of accuracy in connected speech was expected before the child could move on to the next objective. More recently it has been suggested that as normally it is several months before a new

contrast is used consistently in connected speech (even among normal children), it is possible to withdraw treatment at an earlier stage, and the targetted process will continue to develop naturally (Ingram, 1986). We decided, therefore, that once Luke had generalized the suppression of a process into a few single words, we would move on to the next objective. This might, perhaps, be rather optimistic, but the option of returning to an earlier target was always available.

#### **How are we going to teach?**

The teacher was looking for a method of working with processes or groups of phonemes and of operating with the phonological system as a whole. The *Metaphon* approach (Dean and Howell, 1986) aims to change the child's central processing through a two-phase programme of treatment. These inter-related phases aim at developing children's metalinguistic awareness, so that they can talk about and manipulate phonemes. They can then use this knowledge to repair their speech and effect a change in their phonological system. We decided therefore to attempt to use this method with Luke.

### **Implementing the teaching programme**

#### **Gliding of /l/ (Sept–Oct)**

As this process involved only one phoneme, we decided to use traditional minimal-pair therapy using initial /l/ and /j/ words. In addition, as there are few appropriate minimal pairs for these phonemes, we played a number of games in which Luke gave the teacher a tick if she said a word correctly (e.g. /leg/) and a cross if she said it wrongly (e.g. /jeg/). These games proved to be highly popular! Luke was able to take the role of the teacher and produce word-initial /l/ words. After three weeks of these activities, he was asked to name a number of pictures, including initial-/l/ words, some of which had not been used in therapy. All the initial-/l/ words were produced correctly, suggesting that he was beginning to generalize the process, even though there was no change in his connected speech. We therefore moved on to our next objective.

#### **Context sensitive voicing (Oct–Dec)**

In the *Metaphon* approach, voiced sounds are described as 'noisy' and voiceless sounds as 'quiet'. As suggested we first explored these

dimensions with non-speech sounds. When we started working with speech sounds, Luke had no difficulty distinguishing between a quiet /p/ and a noisy /b/. Perception in the consonant-plus-vowel situation was more difficult, however, the voicing of the following vowel making both /pa:/ and /ba:/ 'noisy'. At the same time Luke attempted production of these syllables, even though he had not been asked to do so, and it became clear that he could not produce /p/ before a vowel. We had therefore started at the wrong level of therapy. As Stackhouse (1984) notes, a child needs to have 'articulatory ease' with sounds in combination, before the phonological use of these sounds can be explored.

The main reason for this mistake was that we had not considered that, when we are describing speech in an abstract way, we also need to consider articulatory reality. In this case, the production of voiceless plosives at the end of words, which Luke could do, involved different articulation from the same phonemes produced in word-initial position, which he was unable to do. We therefore worked at the phonetic level of speech, using candles, bubbles, and straws to emphasize the aspiration involved in initial plosives. After two weeks Luke was able to babble with /p/ plus a vowel, so we returned to our phonological programme.

Having emphasized aspiration in our phonetic work, we decided not to continue with the noisy-quiet classification, but to use the descriptions 'air coming out' or 'air not coming out'. This rather clumsy description was nevertheless effective in distinguishing between word-initial /p/ and /b/.

During the first phase of the programme, the teacher produced /p/ plus a vowel or /b/ plus a vowel, and Luke had to run to a hoop containing a candle (to signify aspiration) or to an empty hoop (signifying no aspiration). He also had to pick up a picture card with bubbles (for aspiration) or a blank card (for no aspiration), or to put a counter in an appropriately labelled container.

After nonsense syllables, we moved on to single-syllable words: *pear-bear*, *pin-bin*, *pea-bee*, *peg-beg*, and *pen-Ben*. Although we were concentrating only on perception, Luke generally attempted to produce the word, feeling for air on the back of his hand, before he made his classification. Presumably this was because we had used an 'articulatory' form of description. Also, perhaps, production was aiding perception.

When Luke was able to classify the six minimal pairs, plus two new

## 22 *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*

ones which were introduced to see if he could generalize to new words, we moved on to phase two of therapy. All the games followed a similar pattern. Two objects, such as a (teddy)bear and a pear were placed on the table. The teacher had a set of cards depicting these objects, and she chose one card and placed it face downwards on the table. She then said the word depicted on the card. Luke had to decide which of the two objects the teacher had said, pick it up, and then turn over the card to see whether he had made the right choice. When the game had been played successfully a few times, the roles were reversed. The teacher did not tell the child whether he had said the word correctly, but the feedback in the game gave him information about the effectiveness of his communication. It was, of course, necessary to emphasize the responsibility of the speaker for effecting communication, so that the listener was not blamed for being inattentive or stupid.

After five weeks of working with the /p-b/ contrast, we worked for two weeks in the same way with /t-d/, and then for a further two weeks with /k-g/. Although the pattern of work was the same, Luke achieved results much more quickly, presumably because he was developing his skills and generalizing from one phoneme pair to the others.

In addition to the structured work, Luke had been involved in play and craft activities with other children, and the teacher had taken the opportunity of pointing out features of her own speech, e.g. 'Pencil. That's an air-coming-out one, isn't it?' No comment was made on Luke's speech, and he was never asked to imitate the teacher's model. The aim was to facilitate generalization from the speech sessions to everyday communicative situations.

By the end of the first term, we had not been successful in bringing about any change in Luke's spontaneous speech. That he had learnt a great deal, however, was brought home to the teacher by an incident in the last week of term. Luke and a friend were making plasticine party food, and Luke had made a cake. His friend asked what it was, and Luke replied [deɪk], which was what would have been expected from his initial assessment. 'What?' queried his friend. At this point Luke paused and his mouth moved as if uncertain what to do. Finally [teɪk] he pronounced. His friend still did not understand. Luke tried again and produced [keɪk]. Communication had been effected. Luke was now aware not only that he could change his speech, but was able to do so. He seemed to have learnt that change was needed in word-initial consonants, and he could presumably perceive the difference between

his own production and some form of underlying representation of the word. He was able to use his knowledge of the properties of phonemes to change both the manner and place of production.

### **Stopping (Jan–Feb)**

The fricative-stop contrast is described using the Metaphon approach as the difference between long and short sounds. These dimensions are great fun for the teacher and child to explore together before starting work with speech sounds. We decided to target the process of stopping, using all the phonemes simultaneously. The pairs we chose were /s-t/, /z-d/, /ʃ-t/, /v-d/, and /f-w/. Clearly the last pair does not in fact illustrate a fricative-stop pair, but /f/ was realized as [w], and the teacher wanted to develop Luke's use of what is usually one of the first fricatives to appear.

/θ/ and /ð/ were not targetted, on the grounds that they are difficult to pronounce and are usually late to appear. On reflection, this was probably a mistake, as we were not aiming at accurate production, but rather at the ability to make contrasts. If we had included them at this stage, it might have helped Luke to see similarities between all the fricative sounds. As it was, his gliding of dental fricatives continued late into the academic year. /h/ was not included, as it was not used by his brothers in the school, and this was considered to be part of his accent.

At first, individual consonants were spoken by the teacher for classification. At least two pairs of phonemes were used in each game. Luke had to respond in some appropriate way, e.g. by feeding long or short paper worms to a bird puppet. Howell and Dean (personal communication) have brought together numerous examples of activities which can be used. Single-syllable minimal-pair words were then used for the same activities. Luke had no difficulty in understanding the concept of long and short sounds, and could sort minimal pair words accurately after only a few sessions. Phase two activities were also successfully undertaken, contrast being made in production, although phonetic accuracy was not always achieved, e.g. /ʃ/ being produced as [s]. It is interesting to speculate whether Luke achieved success so quickly in this part of the programme because the fricative/stop contrast was in some way 'easier' than the voiced-voiceless concept, or whether his metalinguistic skills had been developed during the previous term, and that this made new distinctions easier to acquire.

At the beginning of the sixth month of the teaching programme, two factors were noted which suggested that Luke was developing his metalinguistic skills: his use of repair, and his ability to generalize from structured activities to connected speech. In relation to the first point, he was able to use information about phonemes to make a change in his output. On one occasion, for example, he announced to his teacher [aɪm du:pəmæn] (*I'm Superman*). The teacher responded 'That's a long one'. [aɪm su:pəmæn], he shouted, as he ran off. In relation to the second point, Luke showed the ability to generalize knowledge about a group of phonemes to include a sound which had not been targetted. A group of children were playing with a collection of hats. Luke suddenly announced 'That's a long one'. When asked by the teacher what he meant, he explained patiently 'h-hat it's a long one'. It was indeed, and we spent the rest of the session collecting other words beginning with /h/. It would be interesting to know whether Luke could have made the generalization that /h/ belonged to the set of fricative sounds if we had not been explicit about their description. Did the description help to highlight similarities, or would he have made the same deduction if he had worked with a group of fricative consonants and had not been given a method of describing them? It would seem likely that deduction had been aided by discussion.

### Fronting (Feb)

The last process targetted prior to the mid-year assessment was that of fronting of velars. We did not attempt to use palato-alveolars, which were also fronted, as Luke could not produce these phonetically. Stage one activities included listening for front-back contrasts between /t-k/ and /d-g/, and classifying them by posting letters into the front or back door of a play house, putting dolls in the front or back of a train, or sticking gummed paper shapes on the front or back of a friend. Luke had no difficulty, after only one session, in understanding what was meant by this place distinction, and during the second week undertook phase two production activities with ease. These included giving instructions to the teacher where the target words were at the end of a sentence, such as 'Run to the dough' (play dough) or 'Run to the go' (a green traffic light).

Luke's ability at five years old to understand place distinctions in the production of plosive consonants can be accounted for, perhaps, by the heightening of his metalinguistic awareness over the previous six months. He was now much more conscious of what he was doing when

he was producing speech. This awareness, and his ability to talk about speech production, is evidenced in a conversation with the teacher just prior to the mid-year assessment.

T: How do you feel about your speech now?

L: It's getting better.

T: Yes, it's loads better. I think we'll do some more work on back sounds.

L: Like /k/.

T: Yes, and perhaps some more work on long sounds in words.

L: Like *zoo* and *helicopter*.

### **Mid-year assessment**

At the end of February samples were again taken of Luke's picture-naming and spontaneous speech. These were analysed in the same way as before. The results from the picture-naming sample showed that in single words Luke was able to use more contrasts in initial position. [d] was used for only two additional phonemes, and there was free variation with the appropriate production. Fronting, stopping, gliding of /l/, and prevocalic voicing were used occasionally, rather than consistently.

Luke's connected speech sample did not show such a dramatic change. [d] was used for seven adult consonants. Velars were fronted consistently, and stopping was also consistent apart from one production of *house*. Prevocalic voicing was also consistent apart from two words (*Thomas* and *two*), produced in stressed positions in sentences. The gliding of /l/, however, was only evidenced once in the whole sample. It is interesting to speculate why this was the first process to show almost complete generalization into connected speech. Was it because it involved only one phoneme rather than a group, or was it because it was the first process we targetted?

It is also interesting to note the difference between the two samples (see Figure 2). This is not surprising, as we would expect the connected speech sample to show less development, because the child would be concentrating on pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic aspects of language in addition to pronunciation. It is very useful, however, at this stage in the teaching programme to have the results from a picture-naming sample, so that we can see that Luke is generalizing his new concepts and now needs time to complete this process in connected speech.

Picture naming

m	n
p	b
t	d
k	g
f	
s	z
h	
w	r l j

m		n					
<sup>p</sup> p	<sup>b</sup> b	<sup>t</sup> t	<sup>d</sup> d	<sup>f</sup> f/s	<sup>d3</sup> s	<sup>k</sup> k/d	<sup>g</sup> g
<sup>f</sup> f	<sup>f</sup> f	<sup>f</sup> f	<sup>j</sup> j	<sup>j</sup> s			
		<sup>s/d</sup> s/d	<sup>z</sup> z				
<sup>w</sup> w		<sup>w</sup> w		<sup>j</sup> j		<sup>h</sup> h	
		<sup>l</sup> l					

Connected speech

m	n
b	
t	d
h	
w	r l j

m		n					
<sup>1</sup> <sub>a</sub>	<sup>1</sup> <sub>b</sub>	<sup>1</sup> <sub>t</sub>	<sup>1</sup> <sub>d</sub>	<sup>1</sup> <sub>tj</sub>	<sup>1</sup> <sub>d3</sub>	<sup>1</sup> <sub>k</sub>	<sup>1</sup> <sub>g</sub>
b	b	t/d	d		d	d	d
<sup>1</sup> <sub>w</sub>		<sup>1</sup> <sub>w/r</sub>	<sup>1</sup> <sub>j</sub>				
		<sup>1</sup> <sub>d</sub>					
<sup>1</sup> <sub>w</sub>		<sup>1</sup> <sub>r</sub>	<sup>1</sup> <sub>j</sub>	<sup>1</sup> <sub>h</sub>		<sup>1</sup> <sub>ø/h</sub>	
		<sup>1</sup> <sub>l</sub>	<sup>1</sup> <sub>j</sub>				

**Figure 2** Syllable Initial Word Initial contrastive phones in Luke’s speech, February 1988: picture-naming and connected speech samples

**Consolidation** (Mar–Apr)

During the next two months we attempted to give Luke ample opportunity for continuing his generalization. No new processes were targetted. Instead, the teacher and child played board games and discussed pictures and stories, and occasionally the teacher would point out features in her own speech. Luke’s speech was rarely focused on, so that no pressure was put on him to try to improve his production. Our aim was to make him more aware of contrasts in connected speech.

Two changes were noted during this period. First, Luke started to develop word-initial consonant clusters, although clusters were never targetted in the teaching programme. [fr] was used for fricative plus consonant, and [br] for plosive plus consonant. It is interesting that the

context-sensitive voicing rule was now used before a consonant, as evidenced by [bleɪ] for *play* and later [gləʊz] for *close*. Luke's production of his sister's name, *Claire*, tells us a little about his development of clusters. At the beginning of the project she was called [deə]. After six months she was [dleə]. This was at the stage when /l/ was being established in word-initial position. A month later she was [gleə], where fronting had now been suppressed, but context-sensitive voicing was still in operation. By the end of the eighth month, she was [kleə] consistently.

At the same time Luke was using, increasingly, his newly established phonological competence in connected speech. He showed numerous examples of self-correction at phrase level [dəʊ ɪz jæt wʌn-səʊ ɪz jæt wʌn] (*so is that one*), at word level [maɪ dɜ:n — tɜ:n] and at syllable level [aɪ wɒnt sʌm beɪ-peɪpə]. Over these two months the suppression of targetted processes in connected speech was rapid, and was nearly complete by the end of the project.

#### **Gliding of /ð/ (May)**

Although /ð/ is a late-developing sound, and Luke was not yet five-and-a-half, we decided to target the gliding of /ð/. This was because /ð/ is a commonly used consonant, and Luke's realization as /j/ made his speech sound 'odd' and at times difficult to understand. We therefore repeated phases one and two of the Metaphon approach with all the fricative sounds, including /θ/ and /ð/. During production work at phase two level, the dental fricatives were produced as /f/ and /v/, which was highly acceptable developmentally.

Only two sessions had been undertaken at phase two level when Luke went on holiday for a fortnight. When he returned there was no evidence at all of the gliding of fricatives. The teacher never heard him use [j] for /ð/ again. Instead he used [d], which can be a developmental stage, and is also more acceptable to the listener. It seemed remarkable that this change should have been instituted so quickly. No work had been undertaken by the parents, who had not been aware we were targetting this particular process. Olswang and Bain (1985) have suggested that perhaps all one does during therapy is to stimulate the normal phoneme acquisition process. If this is the case, why was it that Luke spontaneously developed consonant clusters, but continued to glide his production of dental fricatives until this process was specifically targetted?

## 28 *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*

By June, Luke was attending the unit on a one-session-a-week basis. He clearly did not think that these sessions were necessary, as in the last week of June he told the teacher 'I ain't coming to speech no more. My talking's alright now'. He felt that the need for therapy was over, and that he had more important things to do in his own classroom. In some ways, we could argue, Luke's speech was not 'alright', as a few difficulties remained. However, in many ways his speech was 'alright', as he was intelligible to unfamiliar adults and children, and his class teacher reported that he did not stand out in the class as a child with a speech problem. We therefore decided to end our programme and undertake our final assessment.

### **Final assessment (July)**

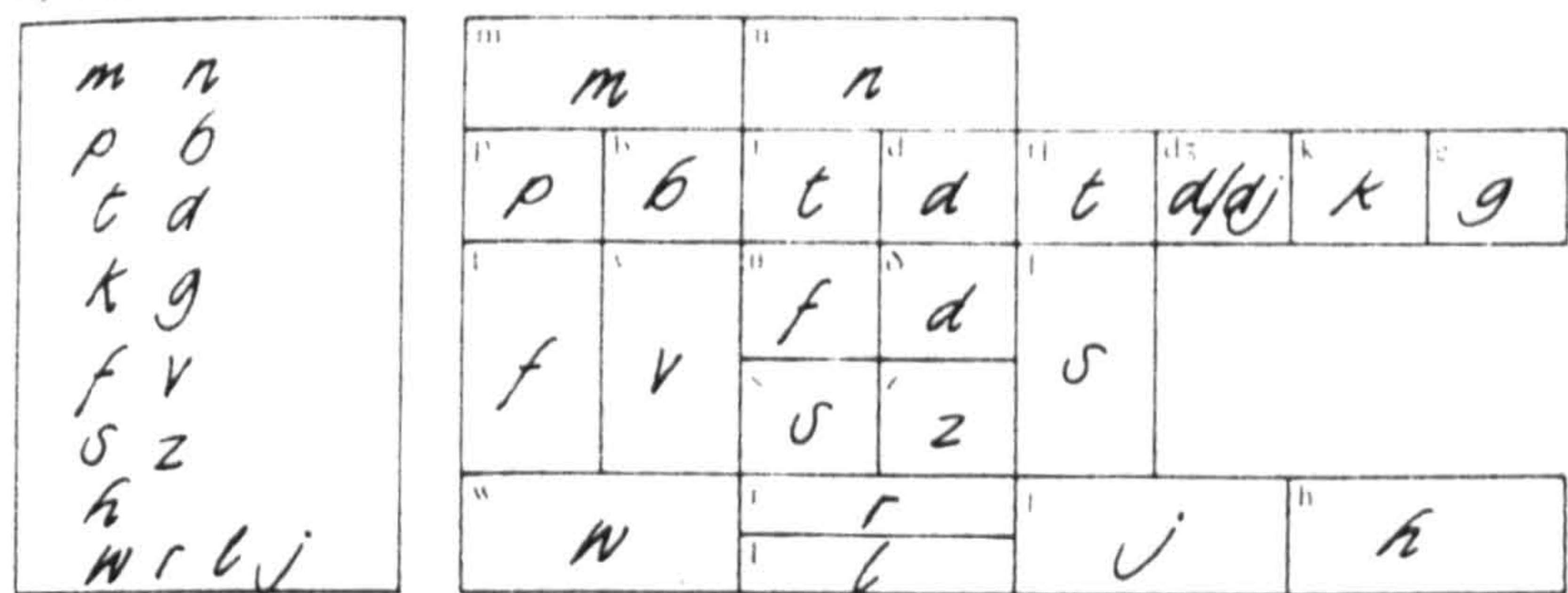
The results obtained from Luke's spontaneous speech and picture-naming samples were identical, suggesting that Luke had generalized the target processes into connected speech. Was this also a sign that we should stop treatment for the time being and see how his system develops? Context-sensitive voicing, the gliding of /l/ and of fricatives, and the fronting of velars seem to have been eliminated. There is only one example of cluster reduction in a sample of 200 words. Stopping is used only for the realization of /ð/ as [d] (see Figure 3).

It is interesting to note that a remarkable change in Luke's intelligibility has been achieved without any change in his phonetic inventory. Apart from /h/, Luke uses no new consonants, and this shows the importance of being able to use existing resources in an appropriately contrastive way. What appears to have happened is that his use of processes in word-initial position has been brought into line with his use of these processes in other word positions.

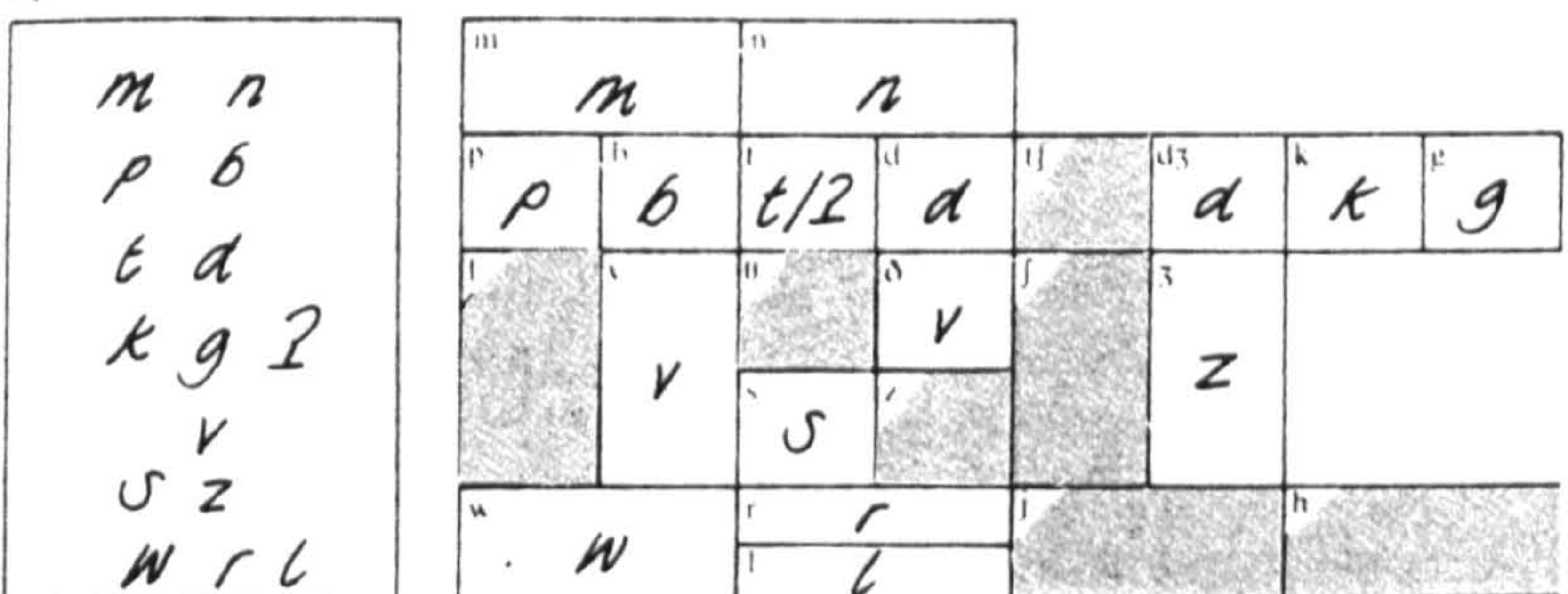
### **Discussion**

This case study has highlighted a number of factors we need to consider when deciding what we are going to teach, for how long, and how. Initially our assessment was inadequate, in that we did not obtain enough information about Luke's articulatory skills to enable us to make appropriate decisions about where to start our teaching programme. Clearly Luke's difficulties had a phonetic element, and

Syllable initial word initial



Syllable initial within word



Syllable final word final

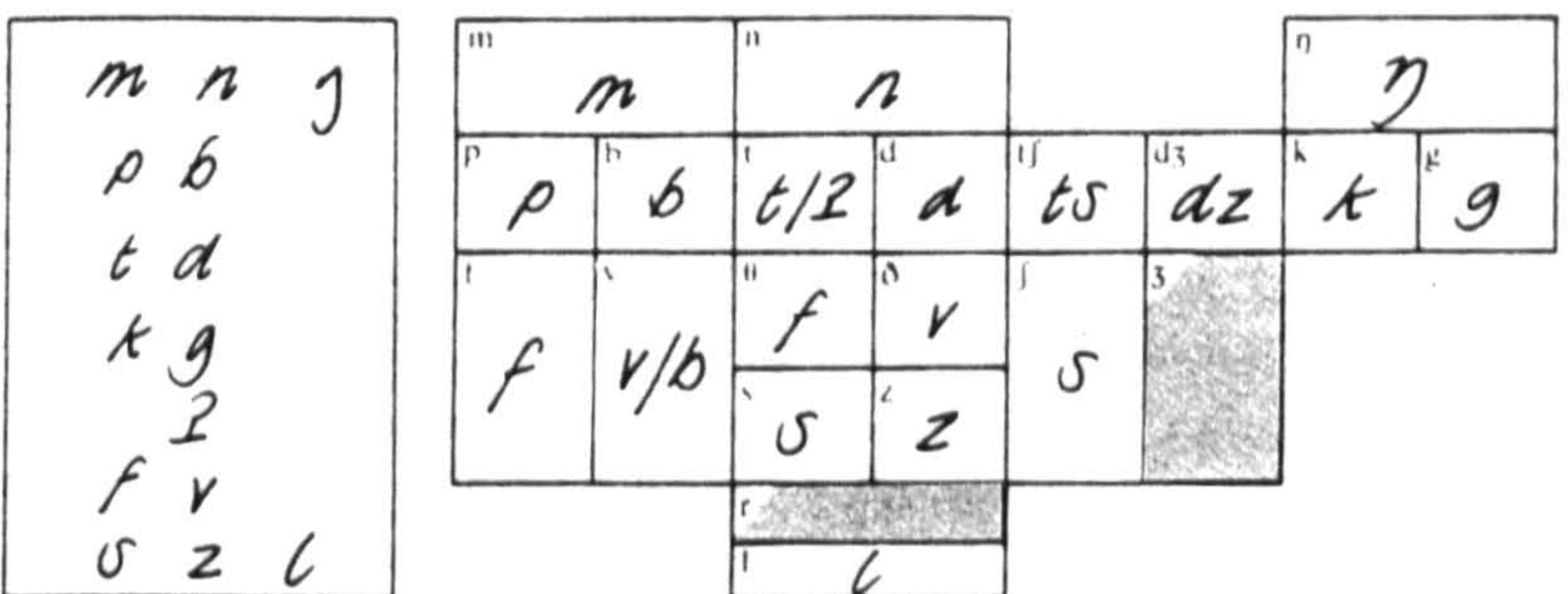
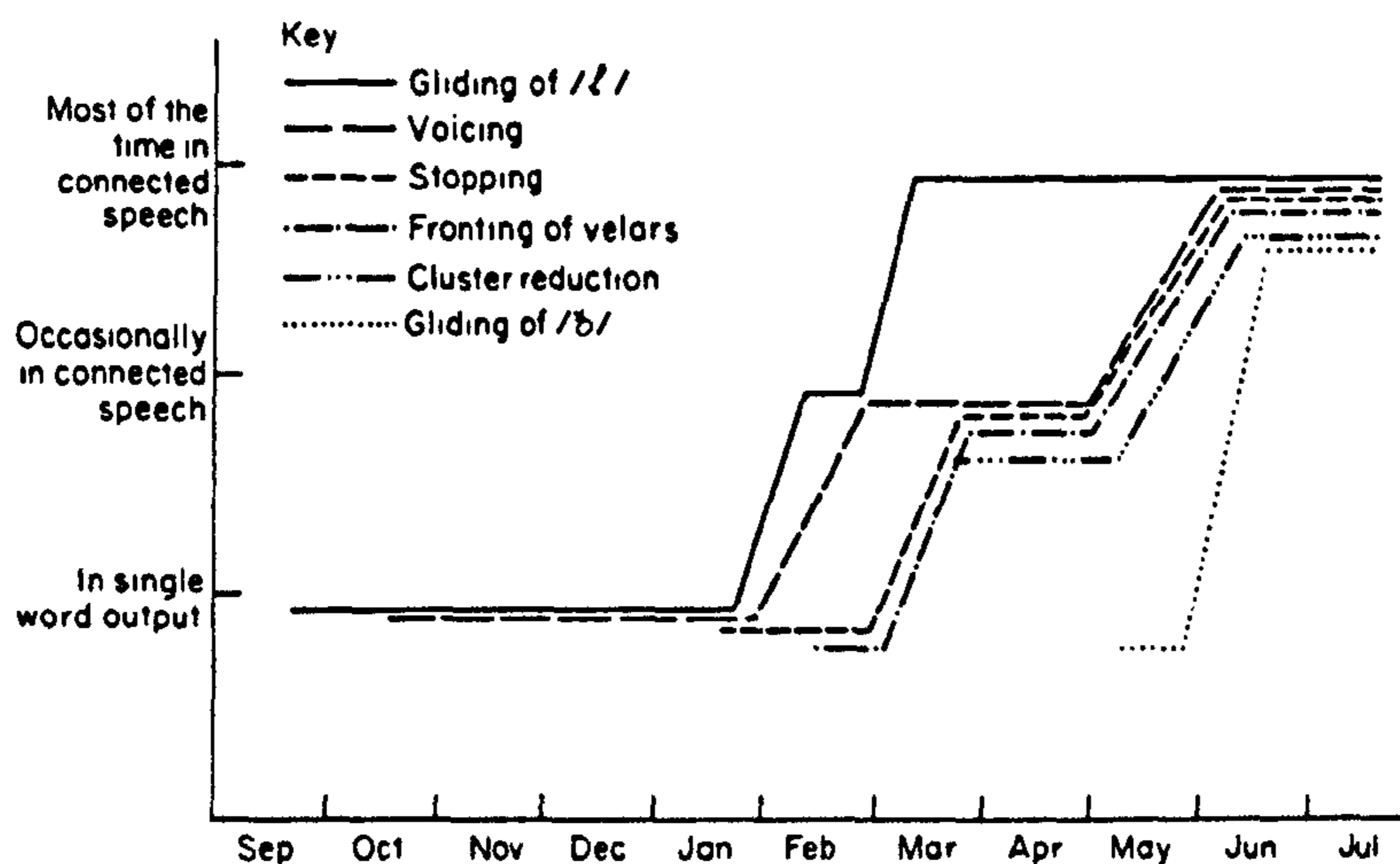


Figure 3 Systems of contrastive phones and contrastive assessments: Luke in July 1988

problems at this level remain. He is unable to articulate any of the adult phonemes which remain to be developed. He is, however, attempting to make phonological contrasts with the use of [ts] for /tʃ/ and [dz] for /dʒ/. If Luke does not increase his phonetic skills over the next few months, it may be necessary to intervene again in his speech development. It appears that we were right, however, to have

### 30 *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*



**Figure 4** Reduction in the use of simplification processes

intervened at the phonological level, as Luke showed phonetic ability, such as the production of word initial /l/ and /g/, which was not being exploited phonologically.

Another area which we had not considered in depth was provision for generalization. What activities would best help with this process, and how could parents and class teachers be included? Also, how should we plan for periods of teaching and periods of consolidation? What signs should we look for that could show us when a child needs a time for consolidation rather than teaching?

Another important question is whether, when using phonemes to illustrate processes, it is best to introduce these SEQUENTIALLY, as we did with our voicing contrasts, or SIMULTANEOUSLY, as with our fricative-stop activities. In this case both seemed to have been effective, but it would be interesting to have evidence from other case studies. In addition, when targetting processes, is it better to do this sequentially (as we did in this case study), or would it have been better to have worked on more than one process at a time? The latter would seem to equate more with normal development. If we tried this simultaneous approach using the Metaphon method, which processes could be targetted together without interference between them?

We can see on the graph (Figure 4) that Luke seemed to be working on the generalization of most of the targetted processes together in a period between March and June. This links with our question of how

long to continue therapy. It is clear from the graph that in all cases generalization of a process into spontaneous speech took place after we had finished working on it. It would seem that in Luke's case it was not necessary to continue therapy beyond a stage when he could produce a contrast in a structured, single-word situation. It would be useful to know whether this is usually the case.

Another feature shown on the graph is that the speed of learning and generalization increases over the year. Initially, several months were needed from the time a process was first targetted until use in connected speech was effected. Towards the end of the programme, however, change happened much more quickly. Presumably Luke's language acquisition skills were improving over this period. If this is the general pattern of progress, such knowledge will help us with the planning and timing of programmes.

It is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the Metaphon approach compared to any other approach we might have taken. All we can do is say which factors seemed to have contributed to its successful use with Luke. In the first place, the games and activities are fun and non-stressful. There is no pressure on the child to speak 'properly', but an emphasis on two people exploring the sound system together.

Secondly, Luke had no difficulty segmenting syllables and classifying phonemes. He was able to talk about sounds and use his knowledge to undertake repairs to his speech. Using the Metaphon approach, children are not just given the data from which to make their deductions about the phonological system, but are given strategies to help them to organize this data. It would seem likely that this aids the process of development.

Thirdly, we were working with groups of phonemes rather than individual pairs of phonemes. This would seem to give a clearer picture of similarities and differences between consonants, and perhaps helped a child with a very reduced system of contrasts to expand his system rapidly.

Finally, Luke did not have to rely on the teacher as a model for imitation, or as someone who would monitor and correct his speech. The responsibility for effecting change lay with him. Luke was able to use his increasing skills to monitor and repair his own production. It would seem likely that this aided generalization into connected speech. Certainly the Metaphon approach enabled Luke to develop his phonological system over the academic year and to improve, considerably, the intelligibility of his speech.

## References

- Chiat, S. 1983: Why Mikey's right and my key's wrong: the significance of stress and word boundaries in a child's output system. *Cognition* 14, 275–300.
- Crystal, D. 1987: Meeting the need for case studies. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* 3, 305–10.
- Dean, E. and Howell, J. 1986: Developing linguistic awareness: a theoretically based approach to phonological disorders. *British Journal of Disorders of Communication* 21, 223–38.
- Grunwell, P. 1985: *Phonological assessment of child speech*. Windsor: NFER-Nelson.
- Howell, J. and Dean, E. 1987: 'I think that's a noisy sound': reflection and learning in the therapeutic situation. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* 3, 259–66.
- Ingram, D. 1986: Explanation and phonological remediation. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* 2, 1–19.
- Olswang, L. and Bain, B. 1985: Monitoring acquisition for making treatment withdrawal decisions. *Applied Psycholinguistics* 6, 17–38.
- Stackhouse, J. 1984: Phonological therapy: a case and some thoughts. *College of Speech Therapists Bulletin* January, 10–11.

(Received 30 November 1988)

## Paper Two

Jarvis, J & Lamb, S (1994) Talking isn't always easy:  
children with speech and language difficulties *Early  
Education Autumn* p3-6  
ISSN 0960 281X



The British Association for  
Early Childhood Education

# EARLY EDUCATION

Number 13

Autumn 1994



## IN THIS ISSUE

- ☐ Speech and language difficulties
- ☐ First impressions in a classroom



**British Association for Early Childhood Education**  
111 City View House, 463 Bethnal Green Road,  
London E2 9QY, Tel/Fax 071-739 7594

EARLY EDUCATION is published three times a  
year by BAECE

Typesetting by Learning Design Centre

Editor: Ruth Waters

Assistant Editor: Ann Kent

Advertising Officer: Jenny Rabin.

ISSN 0960 281X

## Contents

### Talking Isn't Always Easy

Joy Jarvis and Sue Lamb

3

### Working Together

6

### 100 Days in School

John Loader

7

### Conference Reports

8

### Book Reviews

11

### Obituaries

Molly Brearley

13

Margaret Tait

13

Diana Litt

14

### Diary Dates

15

### Coming Soon

6

### Cover Picture:

*Talking and playing at the Margaret McMillan  
Nursery School.*

## Editorial

Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education, and her team are more sympathetic to the need for expansion of nursery provision than their predecessors. We hope that there will be a greater emphasis on quality as well as quantity in their plans. Representatives of BAECE met with Eric Forth, Minister for Education, on his first day in office to emphasise the need for high quality provision for under fives. Michael Richardson, Under Secretary of State for Education with responsibility for schools and under fives, asked the Early Childhood Education Forum, of which BAECE is a member, for suggestions as to how the provision for under fives could be expanded and the form it should take. Again, Forum members stressed the place of quality in the provision and suggested improvement in early years education would need extra funding to make it possible.

BAECE appreciates these opportunities for co-operation and dialogue with the Department for Education.

Mrs Shephard insists that it is her department's role to fund education and not day care. To this end school inspectors are drawing up the criteria to be met by providers of nursery education whether state, private or voluntary who wish to benefit from government funding.

The possible voucher system may help parents to avail themselves of existing pre-school places if they wish but it will not provide the extra nursery places needed. A recent survey showed that almost half the mothers who sent their children to playgroups would have preferred them to attend a nursery school or day nursery and at least 200,000 under fives receive no provision at all.

Part of the expansion strategy is to lower the school starting age from five to 'the academic year in which they become five,' i.e. four year olds. This is only acceptable if the conditions are made suitable for four year olds and they are not required to begin the National Curriculum, otherwise the benefits of nursery education will be lost. BAECE has battled long and hard to ensure that four year olds in school receive appropriate education for their stage of development.

We welcome John Major's pledge at the Tory Party Conference to provide nursery education for all four year olds whose parents wish it: a long term goal he hopes to achieve within the lifetime of this parliament. BAECE was cheered by Mrs Shephard's assurance that new money would be available for new provision. Work is to begin on the form this expansion should take and consultations with experts in the field have begun. We look forward to this new development and will urge that the high standards we campaign for are met.

**Ruth Waters**

# TALKING ISN'T ALWAYS EASY

## Children with Speech and Language Difficulties

Joy Jarvis and Sue Lamb

Sally, aged four, rapidly completes a puzzle of a cat. "That's nice," comments an adult "What is it?" A look of panic crosses Sally's face. She knows what it is but she can't say the word 'cat'. She can't say any word clearly.

In another nursery class in the same town Peter is reciting a story which he has learnt by heart. An adult asks him to join in a game. He doesn't look at her and sits alone in the book corner.

James is in his first term in the reception class. He is playing with a garage. When asked what he is doing he replies slowly "car in there".

These children are very different but they all have something in common; they have a specific language impairment.

We are all aware of the central importance of language in our lives. We are eager to welcome a toddler into the talking community. For some children, however, progress towards understanding and using language will be slow, painful and frustrating. "If my son wants something," reported a mother of a four year old with language difficulties, "I have to get things out of the cupboard until I finally discover what it is. Sometimes I just can't work it out and we get so frustrated." Another mother, with a bright, delightful, unintelligible daughter said: "I wouldn't want any child to go through what my daughter has had to go through."

The effect of a language impairment on a child and a family can be devastating, yet the reasons behind these difficulties are far from clear. These children do not have developmental delay, hearing impairment or lack of appropriate language stimulation. They are not mute due to emotional or other problems nor are they just beginning to learn English while already fluent in their first language. These are all possible reasons for a language delay but having eliminated them there remains a group of children who have a specific difficulty with understanding or using language. The size of this group is hard to estimate but it is suggested that about ten per cent of children have a significant level of language difficulty.

As they get older, some of these children will receive support in their mainstream schools while a smaller group will need a special unit or school. In their early years however, they will be in their local provision and we have found that if appropriate strategies are used at this stage many children will not only improve their language skills but will become more confident and able to participate in group activities. In this article therefore, we are going to look at four language areas: speech,

understanding language, expressive language and using language. We will outline the features of difficulties in these areas and detail the strategies that early years professionals have used when working with these children.

### Speech difficulties

Four year old Sally was a child with speech difficulties. She used quite long sentences with good intonation but was completely unintelligible. Some children in her class had problems producing one or two speech sounds such as 'ch', 'r' or 'the'. They also reduced their consonant clusters saying 'kool' for 'school' for example but this is part of normal speech development.

Sally had problems with the whole system of speech sounds. This can be called a **phonological difficulty**. She couldn't copy speech sounds consistently and the harder she tried the worse her speech became. She appeared to have dyspraxia which results in being unable to articulate speech sounds rapidly in sequence. Many children with this difficulty also have a history of eating problems and of dribbling. Some are clumsy. Sally had problems using the climbing frame in the nursery. On the positive side she was very successful with puzzles and board games. She enjoyed imaginative play, loved stories and followed complex instructions easily. She tended to play alone however, and had very limited communication with other children.

During her year in the nursery class the staff developed a number of strategies to support Sally's learning:

- They boosted her confidence by encouraging her to succeed in non-language areas.
- They did not ask her to copy sounds or repeat words but modelled back her utterances to check that they had understood and to give her a model of clear speech.
- They talked with her about real activities, where the context was clear, so that they had more chance of understanding her.
- They encouraged her to use gesture and other non-verbal ways of expressing herself.
- They developed strategies for situations where spoken language was used, such as choosing time and news time. For choosing time they used photographs and for news they encouraged the use of a home-school book where parents and staff could record items of news so that the child's explanations could be put in context.
- Finally they liaised with her speech and language therapist so that they could undertake appropriate activities at school.

These included games to develop her sense of rhythm so that later she could use the appropriate number of syllables in words. Nursery rhymes and rhyming games were played. Listening to sounds was emphasised. One popular game involved a bird puppet controlled by an adult which said the names of items pulled out of a bag by the children. The puppet had several tries at saying the word: "pup, tup, cup". When it got it right it was given a paper worm! Only the puppet did the talking. The children's job was to listen carefully. The staff found similar games useful for other children in the class too. When Sally left the nursery class she was more confident, able to use a range of strategies to show what she meant, had improved listening skills and a better sense of rhythm and rhyme but she was still unintelligible. She next attended an infant speech and language unit where she had speech work on a daily basis. Now, aged seven, she is about to start at her local junior school. Her speech is fairly clear but problems with other areas of language, particularly written language, are becoming evident.

### **Understanding language**

Staff in the nursery realised that Peter had difficulties when he joined the class. Physically active, he found it difficult to sit and listen in a group. At story time he was restless and unable to follow what was going on. He would copy other children if the group had been given instructions and he was confused when asked something individually.

Peter was quick to understand the routine of the day but would become distressed if this changed. There were activities he enjoyed such as drawing and puzzles but he avoided all pretend play activities. Staff realised that he had a number of abilities, such as being able to read the printed names of all the children after only a few weeks in the class. They also realised that he had a limited understanding of words and sentences. On one occasion, for example, a helper was watching Peter drawing round a template of a square. "Round the corner," she said as she guided his pencil. Peter looked puzzled and got up and went to the book corner. This was his understanding of the word 'corner' at school.

Staff discussed the situation with Peter's parents and his speech and language therapist who felt that Peter had receptive language difficulties. They decided to concentrate their work in three areas: firstly to help Peter to extend his range of play, particularly pretend play which is, like language, symbolic; secondly to help him to use a range of strategies to understand events in the nursery and thirdly to undertake specific language work designed to increase his understanding of vocabulary and concepts. The strategies that staff used were as follows:

- They played alongside him and encouraged him to explore new play areas and new ways of playing with materials.
- They used gesture, pictures and demonstration to explain activities or changes in routine.
- They accepted his use of copying other children as a coping strategy which allowed success.
- They always made eye contact with him before giving instructions or information, sometimes calling his name to direct his attention.
- They used simple language with only one piece of information at a time. Adult language was closely linked to what he was looking at or playing with so that the meaning was more easily interpreted.
- They gave him a short, individual language time to develop basic vocabulary and to help him to generalise words, for example lots of different 'corners'. Simple text was written under pictures so that his reading skills helped his language.

When Peter entered the infants school he was more able to listen in a group and to understand simple instructions. He was beginning to play more imaginatively and could cope more easily with change. He was assessed as needing a statement of special educational needs and has started to receive extra support in the classroom. He will need to be monitored carefully to ensure that his needs continue to be met as linguistic demands increase as he moves up the school.

### **Expressive language**

James was a four year old who listened well in a group and clearly understood what was said to him. He followed instructions easily and enjoyed listening to stories. His spoken language, however was very limited. He used very short sentences such as 'went park', 'play out?', 'me do that'. He often used descriptions rather than the name of something: 'head there' for 'pillow' and 'sand thing' for 'bucket'. Staff noticed that while he understood the names of many items, when he used the words they were often interchanged, for example 'cow' becoming 'sheep'. He appeared to have a word finding difficulty. James' speech often became dysfluent as he searched for words or tried to express a sequence of ideas. He would then become frustrated and give up the attempt to communicate. The other children tended to treat him as a younger child and would often answer for him or tell visitors "James can't talk properly."

The staff decided that they needed to boost James' confidence in himself as a communicator as well as helping him to develop strategies for improving his expressive language. Activities they undertook were as follows:

- They gave him individual time to talk with an adult in a relaxed situation.
- They used pictures, photographs and other visual stimuli for supporting talk and used a home-school book so that news could be more easily prompted and understood. They found that printed captions under pictures helped him to sequence words appropriately.
- They thought carefully about the language they used. They modelled expanded versions of his utterances, for example "Yes, John's riding a bike" in response to "John bike". They would use language that was developmentally slightly more complex than his own use. For example in response to "no play out" they would say "You're not playing outside today" rather than the more difficult negative "You don't want to play outside today."
- They encouraged him to put more words together by modelling alternatives, for example "Do you want to play in the house or on the computer?"
- They helped his vocabulary development and classification by using a scrapbook with pictures of words connected with the current topic. They used a range of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs and encouraged their use in a range of short utterances. For verb development they used the "Podd" computer programme (ESM Publications) which proved very popular.
- They gave him strategies to help him recall an item of vocabulary, including prompts such as "Tell me what it looks like" or "What do you do with it?" Also to say "I can't remember" rather than responding with silence.

James went into his local infants school with more confidence in his ability to communicate. He was putting three or four words together. Now, at six, he is still only using simple sentences but is progressing along developmental lines.

### Using language

Charlie spoke clearly and often used long sentences. He could sing numerous TV jingles and could recite his favourite books by heart. He appeared, at times, to understand what nursery staff said to him but at other times he would give very inappropriate



*Learning 'on' and 'off' through play.*

answers to questions. When talking with him it was often difficult to establish the topic and he would appear to change topic without warning. Staff noticed that he showed confusion with using pronouns and referred to himself as 'you', a stage many young children go through

but one that is usually outgrown fairly quickly. He also took what was said to him literally, so that "Paint the flowers" meant just that.

With regard to his play, this tended to be repetitive and at times obsessive. Coloured toys, for example, were always arranged in a line following the same colour sequence and he would become distressed if someone tried to alter this. Staff were particularly concerned that he did not appear to relate to the other children and they spent time observing him to see why this was the case. They found that he had poor non-verbal skills. He didn't make eye contact and was unaware of how to join a group, often pushing between children without appearing to notice them. On occasions he would take toys which other children were playing with without signalling his intentions or appearing to understand the angry reaction. Through observation staff realised that Charlie had a number of strengths including a good memory and an interest in numbers. He enjoyed counting items and could write numbers over a thousand, including writing odd and even number sequences.

Children like Charlie are perhaps the most complex of all language impaired children to work with so clear planning and liaison between the parents, nursery staff and the speech and language therapist was essential. Advice was also requested from the educational psychologist. The programme they developed was as follows:

- They observed him carefully, keeping an observation diary, to discover what he was good at and what he found difficult.
- They realised that he didn't play in the play house so they encouraged him to go in there and the adult modelled appropriate play accompanied by simple language.
- They encouraged him to make slight changes in his rather rigid play. For example to line up his cars on a ramp rather than on the floor or to play colour sorting rather than colour sequencing.

- They used his strengths to encourage the development of his play. For example he would not use paints, so staff started with painting numbers, which he enjoyed and then moved on to painting houses with numbers on the doors.
- They supported his learning of social skills by giving him small tasks such as handing round drinks.
- They encouraged turn taking by playing lotto and taking turns to put the pictures on the board. Initially this was done individually with an adult but later another child joined them.
- They encouraged him to look at the person speaking to him, using a physical prompt at first if necessary.
- They targeted saying "hello" and "good-bye" at the beginning and end of sessions, giving a prompt if needed.
- They modelled appropriate language in social situations. For example if he wanted to go on the slide an adult would say "slide please", help him to join the queue and stay with him while he had his turn.
- They spent time using picture books and scrap books talking in simple language to help him understand vocabulary and concepts.

Charlie has just started in full time school and a statement of special educational needs has been completed. He will receive support in the classroom and the school should receive advice from the speech and language therapist, the advisory teacher for speech and language difficulties and the educational psychologist.

The children in these case studies illustrate the range of difficulties which can be found in the field of language impairment. Each child needs individual assessment and management. As can be seen in these examples, programmes were based on good observation and multi-professional assessment and planning. A range of professionals may need to be involved with these children. Early years staff are central to the successful working of this team and to the integration of the child with speech and language difficulties. J

**Joy Jarvis** is Senior Lecturer, University of Hertfordshire and **Sue Lamb** is Speech and Language Therapist, North Hertfordshire NHS Trust.

#### Useful books:

Cooke, J. and Williams, D. (1985) *Working with Children's Language* Winslow Press

Crystal, D. (1986) *Listen to your Child* Penguin

Schwartz, S. and Miller, J. (1988) *The Language of Toys* Woodbine House

#### Further Information:

Association for all Speech Impaired Children (AFASIC)

347 Central Markets, Smithfield, London. EC1A 9NH

# WORKING TOGETHER



**THE BOOTS COMPANY**

Working with the community



Jenny Rabin reports on an exciting new project taking place next year

The Boots Company is providing £50,000 to enable BAECE to provide information and support for parents of young children in Plymouth, Cramlington, Airdrie and Nottingham. The project will include setting up an Under Fives Market Place followed by a series of workshops for parents in each area. Ten information sheets on different aspects of child development and early childhood education will be published.

The long term aims of the project are:

- to promote good parenting skills, supporting the role of parents as prime educators from birth
- to provide parents with information about professional, voluntary and private services for under fives in their area
- to convey the importance of high quality education and care and the role of professionals as enablers for under fives and their families
- to develop the concept of the 'triangle of care' as put forward in the RSA report *Start Right*, in which parents, professionals and the community work together towards shared aims
- to demonstrate that the community has a responsibility for the education and wellbeing of its children

If you would like to know more about the project or are involved in similar work with parents in your area we would be delighted to hear from you. I will be writing further updates in this journal so look out for more news.

## EARLY EDUCATION

Coming Soon

Pre-school provision in the Isle of Man

Creating a pond in a nursery garden

## Paper Three

Jarvis, J (1999) Teacher language in the classroom:  
equal access for all? *New Era in Education* 80, 3 p71-77  
ISSN 0028 5048

# NEW ERA IN EDUCATION

The Journal of the World Education Fellowship, formerly THE NEW ERA, founded in 1920 and devoted to the progress of education around the world.

ISSN 0028 5048

Volume 80 Number 3

December 1999

## CONTENTS

- 69 Editorial: Education = Literacy and Numeracy? Sneh Shah

### Refereed Articles

- 71 Teacher Language in the Classroom: Equal Access for All? Joy Jarvis
- 78 A United European Higher Education System?  
The Problems for Trans-National Institutional  
Convergence Andrew Marks
- 84 Trends in Training for School Leadership Rick Davies and  
Miranda Preston

### For and About WEF Members

- 87 A Consultation on Twenty-First Century Education  
Reconstruction
- 90 Moving to South Africa: Co-operation between  
WEF and UNESCO Peter van Stapele
- 92 WEF India Section
- 93 A Human Rights Checklist Rex Andrews
- 94 International Year of Volunteers, 2001
- 95 Questions for WEF GB Members Mark Jones
- 96 Reviews Jean Mead, Peter van Stapele  
and David Turner

*The World Education Fellowship is registered in England as Educational Charity No. 314112*

# Teacher Language in the Classroom: Equal access for All?

Joy Jarvis

## Introduction

The purpose of this article is to explore some of the issues surrounding children's access to the language used by the teacher in the classroom. Understanding the teacher's language is of crucial importance for classroom learning but may be a problem for some children. With the increasing inclusion of children with special educational needs in the classroom ( DfEE, 1998) the issue of access to teacher language becomes extremely important. If there is to be a realistic attempt to include all children within the same educational provision then teachers need to reflect on, and if necessary modify, their use of language in order to meet the needs of all children. Issues teachers and teacher trainers may need to consider are also examined.

## Access to classroom language

Teacher language has been a focus of attention for some time, both in terms of its potential for supporting children's learning and for the difficulties it can cause if children's thinking is limited by the over use of closed questions and a high level of teacher control (Britton, 1970; Bruner, 1975; Jones, 1988). For all children there will be a difference between the type of language used at home and that encountered in school. The classroom ritual of communication exchange has been well documented (Jones, 1988). The group context and the asymmetry of power within the classroom, whereby the teacher structures and controls the interaction, lead to certain types of language being used by teachers. Questions, particularly display questions for example, are used much more frequently in home than in school contexts, and language used by pupils in school tends to involve shorter answers and more elliptical utterances than language used with parents (Wells, 1986).

Interaction in a group context is likely to be less facilitative of language development than one to one interactions of children with an adult and this will be particularly significant for children whose English is not, for whatever reason, developed to an appropriate level. Some children may also have less access to individual interactions with teachers than others. There is some evidence to suggest that teachers speak on average less to girls than to boys, less to black children than to white and less to children who do not initiate interaction (Swann, 1992; Biggs and Edwards, 1994; Sadler and Mogford-Bevan, 1997). In a case study of a four year old Pahari speaker in a nursery class, for example, the child was unable to initiate communication in English although there was evidence

of some attempt to initiated non-verbal communication. However, the author ( Drury, 1997, p.33) notes:

*At first, none of the monolingual staff talk to Nazma (except for classroom management purposes).*

In a study of teacher language in special unit provision for children with language difficulties there was a strong effect of pupil initiative on the amount of language elicited from the teacher (Sadler and Mogford-Bevan, 1997a). This was a small group context where teachers had as a key aim the linguistic development of their children. However, the number of initiations of interaction used by the child appeared to determine how frequently the teacher communicated with that particular child. In one unit session, for example, while one child was spoken to by the teacher sixteen times, another was spoken to one hundred and sixty four times (Sadler and Mogford-Bevan, 1997a). What is of particular significance, perhaps, is that teachers were not aware of this difference until the evidence was shown to them.

There is evidence of the importance of the role of the child in eliciting appropriate child directed speech from parents in the early stages of language development (Pine, 1994). If the child fails to initiate or respond to communication opportunities, parents may not be stimulated to use supportive strategies, thus making the language learning more difficult (Conti-Ramsden, 1994). With teachers also apparently susceptible to the same influence as parents, less interaction time may be given to pupils who are less confident in their communication skills, or who have language difficulties or who are at the early stages of learning English. It may be that children who need to be talked to more are in fact talked to less. Biggs and Edwards (1994), however, in their study of classroom language did not find that pupil initiative correlated with the amount of language used by a teacher to a particular child, rather the correlation was with race. This may suggest either a conscious or unconscious perception of need by the teacher, or subtly different forms of communication used by different communities which may influence interaction.

Vernon-Feagans (1996) studied teachers teaching a topic to children who had been divided into ability groups. In each case the same teacher taught the same topic to the two groups, thereby bypassing individual differences in terms of teaching style. She found that the quality of instruction was fundamentally different, with the lower ability groups receiving poorer interaction in terms of feedback and responsiveness

on the part of the teacher. It was not clear whether this was due to child characteristics or to perception of need on the part of the teacher.

The same author Vernon-Feagans (1996) looked at interactions between individual children and their teacher. The teacher was asked to support each child's telling of a picture story by asking specific questions about the pictures, and if the child made an error to use whatever strategies she thought appropriate to help him/her to answer the question correctly. Vernon-Feagans found that the teachers, who were all white, were more successful in supporting the white American children in this task than the black American children.

This was not due to the number of initial errors in answering the questions, as both groups of children made a similar number of errors. Vernon-Feagans (1996) discovered, however, that the two groups of children made different types of response when answering the questions incorrectly. The white children tended to use a 'no response' error such as *I don't know* whereas the black children tended to make 'irrelevant answers' which appeared to the teachers to be unrelated to the questions posed. The teachers found it much easier to respond to 'no responses' by giving explanations and helping children towards understanding, while they found it difficult to know where to start when the child's answer appeared to be inappropriate. The white children, therefore, had more facilitative input from the teacher. Vernon-Feagans argues that the differences in child response may lie in the child's understanding of the task and the experience of language use within the home community. The result is, he suggests, that the black children in this study received less effective teaching than their white peers.

### Teacher Language for Learning and for Language Development

Two different, though related, functions of adult language in the classroom can be considered. One is related to language to support learning, and the other is involved in the learning of language itself. There is no doubt about the importance of the language used by the teacher to develop a child's understanding of a topic, as made clear by Bruner (1975, p. 6):

*Intellectual development depends upon a systematic and contingent interaction between a tutor and a learner....Teaching is vastly facilitated by the medium of language which ends by being not only the medium for exchange but the instrument that the learner can then use himself in bringing order into the environment*

Of course the person interacting with the learner does not have to be the teacher- for example, it could be another pupil. However, the key role of teacher language in supporting access to concepts in relation to the curriculum is clear.

The role of adult language in supporting the

acquisition of language by the child is also well documented. Supportive strategies include following the child's lead, creating a context of semantic contingency so that language is clearly linked to its context, and adapting language input to the comprehension level of the individual child (Pine, 1994). This is not, however, the normal linguistic context of the classroom and may be incompatible with delivering a prescribed curriculum. Harrison (1998) notes that teachers may find it difficult to teach the curriculum using strategies which support language development. Sadler and Mogford-Bevan (1997b) found that the more equal conversational exchanges between pupil and teacher, in which teachers used supportive child directed speech, tended to occur in non topic based activities, when the conversation could be considered to be *off-task*. The need to concentrate on curriculum objectives may conflict with the need to develop language by responding to child initiatives as shown in the following example of a child working with a teacher in a unit provision for children with language difficulties (Sadler and Mogford-Bevan, 1997b, p. 45):

Pupil: *that's like them things on telly last night*

Teacher: *what?*

Pupil: *like them men I seen on telly last night*

Teacher: *never mind now just tell me what it says here*

The teacher is concerned with a curriculum objective - helping the child identify words in a text. The child's language development, however, could be supported by responding to the initiation and helping him/her to identify the link between the text and experience. This child is showing ability to self-correct and to alter his/her language in response to the teacher's lack of understanding of the original utterance by changing *things* to *men*. Discussion might have led to mutual understanding. Clarification requests from the teacher could help this child to improve the explicitness of his/her language, but in this case the word recognition objective in relation to the task took priority. Leung (1993, p. 178) in her classroom study of interactions between teachers and children who were learning English as an additional language argued that:

*there did not seem to be many opportunities for teachers and pupils to be engaged in meaningful negotiation and comprehension checking.*

The negotiation of meaning and mutual understanding is a key aspect of language acquisition. (Pine, 1994). The reason for the apparent lack of opportunities for this in classroom contexts may be to do with number of pupils, time constraints, the

emphasis on achieving curriculum objectives or to the teacher's understanding of his/her role in supporting learning.

## The Effect of Teacher Language on Child Language

The effect of the teacher's language on the language produced by the child is well documented in studies which consider individual differences between teachers. Biggs and Edwards (1994) and Sadler and Mogford-Bevan (1997b) studied teachers operating in similar contexts who had very different styles of interaction with their pupils. The quality of pupil contribution was noticeably better with some teachers than with others. This was not necessarily related to the number of children in the class, the lesson content or to the teacher's expressed aims and objectives. It appeared to be to do with the style of interaction, although this may be difficult to quantify.

One way to attempt to analyse differences is to code teacher utterances in some way. Wood, Wood, Griffiths and Howarth (1986) reported the results of an experimental study in which teacher utterances were coded in relation to their level of conversational control. Five levels ranging from high control moves such as requesting the repetition of an adult utterance to low control moves using phatic utterances such as *lovely, oh, I see*, were recorded. Teachers were asked to use different levels of control on different occasions in conversation with the same group of deaf children. The study found that children made short, limited responses and lacked initiative when teachers used high control moves and that the same children talked a great deal more, made longer responses and took greater initiative in the conversation when the teacher used low control moves. The study also showed that it was possible for teachers to change their interaction style.

## Teachers' awareness of their use of language

In order to change one's use of language one has to be able to monitor this during classroom interactions while they are happening. Do teachers do this? Teachers interviewed in Sadler and Mogford-Bevan's (1997a) study, for example, stressed the importance of having conversations with children to support their language development and the importance of the language used by the teacher in providing a model of talk. However, when their practice was recorded and analysed, there was little evidence of conversation and the model of talk provided was mainly one of giving instructions and information. It is clearly important, therefore, for teachers to have the tools to help them to reflect on their own language use. Vernon-Feagans (1996, p. 169) noted that the teachers they interviewed *had not been trained to monitor their own talk*.

This has implications both for the initial training

of teachers and for continuing professional development.

Results of research on language in the classroom and its effect on child language and learning have been known for some time and yet it is unclear whether there has been any change in practice in many classrooms. This may be due to the influence of numbers, certain styles of language perhaps being necessary when one is trying to work with large groups. However, similar teaching practices regarding language use are found in large and small group and individual adult-child interactions. Wood et al (1986) expressed surprise when they moved from researching teachers working with large groups of hearing children to observing teachers of the deaf working with small groups of children and found that the language styles were so very much the same. Possibly the issue of the teacher's role is important. In the study reported by Wood et al (1986), as teachers lowered their level of control in conversation so the children became more assertive and less likely to follow the teacher's lead. This could be seen as undermining the teacher's role.

## A Case Study

It was decided to undertake a case study to see whether teachers were able to identify different styles of interaction with children and if they could comment on the appropriateness of the communication in relation to children's learning.

Two video samples of female teachers of the deaf interacting with four year old deaf girls were shown to 15 teachers who were taking a post graduate qualification to be teachers of the deaf and on another occasion to 12 teachers undertaking an MA module in effective teaching in the early years. The videos were also shown to 25 mature students who were undertaking a BA in Early Childhood Studies and who had experience, but not teaching qualifications, in working with young children.

## The Samples

*The first sample* showed a teacher making sandwiches with two deaf four year olds who had good attention and eye gaze, a clear understanding of turn taking in conversation and who could produce a few single words. The aim of the activity was to support the children's understanding of conversation and to learn vocabulary associated with the activity (Part of the transcript of the video is in Appendix 1).

*The second sample* showed a teacher looking at a familiar picture book with one deaf four year old who was at a similar language level to the children in the other sample. The aim of the session was to support the child's understanding of conversation and to develop vocabulary related to the topic of the story (Part of the transcript of the videos is given in the Appendix 2).

## Results

All the teachers and all the early childhood studies students said that the second sample was more facilitative of language development than the first. The reasons they gave were as follows:

- \* The teacher in the first sample:
  - talked too much
  - talked too fast
  - was bossy
  - didn't give the children a chance to say anything.
- \* Whereas the teacher in the second sample:
  - let the child control the pace of the session
  - responded to what the child said or did
  - let the child take the lead

Wood et al's (1986) levels analysis of 30 of each of the teacher's utterances taken from the video transcripts does suggest a higher number of controlling moves for the teacher in the first sample. This sample contained a request for repetition of an adult utterance, the highest level of control, *Say: I want a knife*, which was not found in the second sample. Approximately half the teacher utterances in sample one were questions, while a third of the second sample consisted of questions. Both the samples included information given by the teacher:

### \*sample one

- *that's the brown one*
- *you have the white one*

### \*sample one

- *don't want that one*
- *no, not crocodile*

In the first sample the teacher responds to the child's verbal or non verbal contribution on four occasions while in the second sample there is evidence of a much higher level of responsiveness, with at least eight response moves including a number of imitations of the child (Appendix 1, lines 22 and 25).

When watching the videos with no sound, an activity suggested by Wood et al (1986) when looking at interactions between adults and deaf children who may be more aware of visual than aural cues, it was noted that the teacher in the first sample:

- leaned forward and appeared dominating
- kept control of the equipment
- gave the children an item of equipment only when they gave an acceptable response (i.e. a vocalisation)

- manipulated the children's hands for purposes of demonstration

On the other hand the teacher in the second sample:

- was further away from the child and seemed relaxed
- let the child hold the book and turn the pages.

It is clear that control was not only evident in linguistic terms but that other signals were given to children which are not evident in transcripts alone.

## Discussion

It is not possible to compare these samples of interaction in real terms as they involve different children with different teachers in different contexts. It is not clear whether the greater loquacity of the child in the second sample was due to the teacher's strategies, to the personality and language skills of the child or to the context. A 'looking at a book' activity may be very familiar in school whereas children may have made sandwiches at home but not at school. Additionally it is not clear whether the teacher in the first sample talked so much because the children had very limited expressive language or whether consciously or unconsciously she was attempting to use a language development strategy.

What is interesting is that both the teachers and the undergraduates responded in the same way to the samples and that the undergraduates, at least, were basing this on experience rather than on any formal knowledge of language development strategies. We know that the majority of parents use appropriate child directed speech without any training but that difficulties can arise if the child does not follow the normal developmental pathway and fails to stimulate the adult to produce this speech. In this case parents need to use their strategies more consciously, according to Kelman and Schneider (1994), and in their study teachers and mature students working with young children could identify some strategies used by teachers in video samples. What is not known, of course, is whether they could identify their own strategies. Sadler and Mogford-Bevan's (1997) study suggests that many teachers, even those working as specialist language teachers, are not able to do this and Vernon-Feagans (1996, p. 189) found that

*even good teachers appeared to be unaware of their differential treatment and different effective teaching styles with their children.*

## The Way Ahead?

Individual teachers interact with children in

different ways and the type of interaction will have an effect on the child's learning and the acquisition of language. This is important for all children but may be particularly important for children with a linguistic deficit or delay. Teachers' interaction style may be influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by their perception of their children's abilities, their philosophy of teaching or their understanding of strategies for language development. Additionally they may be affected by the children's language skills in terms of amount of communication initiative taken and type of language used. Teachers may be able to reflect on language used by teachers in video samples but need to be able to analyse and monitor their own language in use. This suggests that teachers in initial and post qualification training need to have the opportunities to develop these skills. As Sadler and Mogford-Bevan (1997a, p.32) argue, trainers need:

*not only to provide instructional input on aspects of language disability, but also to give teachers the opportunity to reflect on their practice; to appraise it and try out and monitor new styles of interaction within the context of the relationship which they already have with their pupils.*

## Bibliography

Biggs, A. and Edwards, V. (1994) I treat them all the same: teacher-pupil talk in multi-ethnic classrooms, in Graddol, D., Maybin, J. and Stierer, B., **Researching Language and Literacy in Social Context**, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters/The Open University.

Britton, J. (1970) **Language and Learning**, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Bruner, J. (1975) **Toward a Theory of Instruction**, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Conti-Ramsden, G. (1994) Language interaction with atypical language learners, in Gallaway, C. and Richards, B. (eds.) **Input and Interaction in Language Interaction**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (1998) **Meeting Special Educational Needs: A programme of action**, London: DfEE.

Drury, R. (1997) Two sisters at school: issues for educators of young bilingual children, in Gregory, E., **One Child, Many Worlds: Early Learning in Multicultural Communities**, London: David Fulton.

Harrison, D. (1998) The natural aural approach: a statement of principles which underlie practice, in **British Association of Teachers of the Deaf**

**Magazine**, September, pp. 9-12.

Jones, P. (1988) **Lipservice: The story of talk in schools**, Buckingham: The Open University Press.

Kelman, E. and Schneider, C. (1994) Parent-child interaction: an alternative approach to the management of children's language difficulties, in **Child Language, Teaching and Therapy**, vol. 1(1), pp. 81-96.

Leung, C. (1993) National Curriculum: ESL in primary education in England: A classroom study, in **Language and Education**, vol. 7(3) pp.164- 180.

Pine, J. (1994) The language of primary caregivers, in Gallaway, C. and Richards, B. (eds.), **Input and Interaction in Language Acquisition**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sadler, J. and Mogford-Bevan, K. (1997a) Teacher-talk with children with language disorders: four case studies 1, in **Child Language, Teaching and Therapy**, vol. 13(1) pp. 15-36.

Sadler, J. and Mogford-Bevan, K. (1997b) Teacher-talk with children with language disorders: four case studies 2, in **Child Language, Teaching and Therapy**, vol. 13(1), pp. 37 -58.

Swann, J. (1992) **Girls, Boys and Language**, Oxford: Blackwell.

Vernon-Feagans, L. (1996) **Children's Talk in Communities and Classrooms**, Massachusetts: Blackwell.

Wells, G. (1986) **The Meaning Makers: Children Language and Using Language to Learn**, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Wood, D., Wood, H., Griffiths, A. and Howarth, I. (1986) **Teaching and Talking with Deaf Children**, Chichester: John Wiley.

*See Appendices 1 and 2  
on pages 76 and 77)*

*Joy Jarvis is a teacher of the deaf and is currently responsible for training teachers of the deaf at the University of Hertfordshire. Her current research is about issues surrounding children's access to classroom language, particularly the language used by the teacher and areas of potential in relation to the needs of children with linguistic delay or difference. She is also an Associate Editor of New Era in Education*

Adult	Child
1     that will make a nice sandwich <i>(gives slice of bread to child A)</i>	Child A nods
2     is that more to your liking?	
3     and that will make a nice sandwich	<i>(gives slice of bread to child B)</i>
4     that's the brown one	
5     you have the brown one	
6     you have the white one	
7     now what are you going to do?	
8     what are you going to do?	Child A points to the butter
9     what is it?	
10    that's the butter	
11    well are you going to get your finger and put it on like that? <i>(teacher takes child A's finger and                  pretends to put it in the butter)</i>	
12    do it with your finger?	
13    do you?	Child A points to the knife
14    you don't	
15    well what do you use?	
16    have to use a knife <i>(teacher holds up a knife, pauses and makes          eye contact with child A)</i>	Child A vocalises
17    use a knife	
18    that's a knife	
19    like mummy has at home	Child A nods and child A vocalises
20    does mummy have a knife at home?	
21    what are you going to use? <i>(teacher looks at child B)</i>	
22    you going to use your finger? <i>(teacher takes child B's finger and pretends          to spread butter with it)</i>	
23    are you?	
24    what are you going to use?	
25    say I want a knife	Child B vocalises
26    yes I need a knife	
27    that's right	
28    there you are	
29    one for you and one for you <i>(teacher gives a knife to each child)</i>	

Adult	Child
1 write the letter to the zoo	
2 said please send me one animal	animal
3 got this one ( <i>points to picture</i> )	(child gets up to look for animal)
4 it's not there	
5 put it away	
6 what's this one?	vocalisation and gesture
7 yes it's an elephant	
8 yes is it good that one?	no and shakes head
9 is it good?	gestures big
10 yes its too ..... big	
11 don't want that one	
12 this one	vocalises
13 what is it?	vocalises
14 is it good?	no and gestures
15 too tall too long too big	
16 this one	vocalises
17 crocodile?	
18 no not crocodile	
19 what's that one?	
20 lion	
21 is that good?	no
22 no	
23 boy ( <i>mimes frightened</i> )	
24 don't like it ...	ah ah
25 ah ah	
26 i'm frightened	
27 don't like it	
28 what's this one?	gestures
29 camel	
30 grumpy camel	

## Paper Four

Jarvis, J (2000) Is bilingualism an obstacle to inclusion for deaf children? in Shah, S (ed) *Equality Issues for the New Millennium* Aldershot: Algate Press p121-129  
ISBN 0-7546-1251-1

# Equality Issues for the New Millennium

Edited by  
Sneh Shah

# Contents

	<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	<i>vii</i>
	<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>viii</i>
	<i>Foreword by Norman Thomas</i>	<i>xii</i>
1	Introduction: Where from? Where to? <i>Sneh Shah</i>	1
2	Single Issues to Coherent Campaign: Pitfalls and Possibilities <i>Robin Grinter</i>	13
3	Gender and Race: Maintaining and Crossing Boundaries <i>Sneh Shah</i>	24
4	Asian Women Undergraduates and their Attitudes to British Schooling: A Complex Issue <i>Harkirtan Singh-Raud</i>	33
5	Sins of Omission: Teacher Education and Race <i>Russell Jones</i>	46
6	The Reality of Isolation for Black Student Teachers <i>Sue Lewis</i>	62
7	Male Students on Primary Initial Teacher Education Courses <i>Mary Thornton</i>	73
8	A New Millennium for Disabled Students in Higher Education? <i>Lea Myers and Viv Parker</i>	89

vi *Equality Issues for the New Millennium*

9	Enhancing Opportunities for Disabled Students: Comparisons across the Atlantic <i>Miranda Preston and Jennie Gorbald</i>	103
10	The Role of the Student Counselling Service in the Promotion of Equal Opportunities in Education in the New Millennium <i>Ruth Caleb and Heidi Gilhooly</i>	111
11	Is Bilingualism an Obstacle to Inclusion for Deaf Children? <i>Joy Jarvis</i>	121
12	Responding Locally to Global Inequality <i>Peter Bloomfield</i>	131
13	Democracy and Education <i>Séan Stitt</i>	142
14	Conclusion <i>Sneh Shah</i>	157
	<i>Index</i>	<i>161</i>

# 11 Is Bilingualism an Obstacle to Inclusion for Deaf Children?

JOY JARVIS

## Abstract

Certain educationists will be very familiar with the term 'bilingualism', a key area of concern in the field of education and cultural diversity; others will be focusing on deaf children, but mainly in the area generally called 'special needs'. This chapter shows why considering these two areas, generally treated separately, is fundamental to the quality of education received by a certain group of children. It also indicates how it is possible, and necessary, to widen the category of bilingualism by logically including a new one.

The deaf community is now identified as a linguistic minority, which gives a new meaning to the word bilingualism. For deaf children the use of British Sign Language (BSL) and English makes them bilingual. There are a number of issues surrounding bilingualism in terms of signed and spoken languages, in the education of deaf children. This chapter elaborates on the significance of BSL and the need to examine the range of issues affecting deaf children, other children at school, parents and teachers.

Underlying the discussion in this chapter are questions such as the complex implications of equality; for instance, including the deaf children in the mainstream classroom may in one respect be regarded as treating them as equal to other children, but it could in fact deprive them of the maximum opportunities they need for learning. It also raises much more forcefully than in the past in debates around bilingualism, the broader responsibilities arising from integration of a group of bilingual children in a school community. Consideration of bilingual children in the context of cultural diversity had normally been confined to the overall educational achievement of the bilingual children only.

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to explore some issues surrounding bilingualism, in terms of signed and spoken languages, in the education of deaf children. What is the meaning of bilingualism when it is applied to deaf children? Is bilingualism incompatible with inclusion? What are the needs of deaf children in the context of their entitlement to good education? It could be argued that a bilingual policy is not possible in an inclusion model based on local placement. Real inclusion, involving equal opportunities for linguistic and educational growth, may need to take place in area resourced provision. This has implications for educational services and schools and for our understanding of inclusive education.

## **Deaf Children and Bilingualism**

Most children in the world, and some in Britain, grow up using more than one language. These languages will be used in different contexts and with different levels of facility. Their bilingualism will be generated by family and cultural situations and by where they are living at a particular time. For deaf children the situation is different. Bilingualism, involving the use of British Sign Language (BSL) and English, will be due to their hearing loss. Bouvet (1990) argues that deaf children are 'destined to become bilingual and bicultural', the argument being that children who are profoundly deaf will need, for ease of communication and for reasons of identity, to be part of the deaf community. This will involve the use of a signed language. In addition, in order to communicate with the hearing world, they will need to understand and use English in spoken and/or written form.

## **The Study of Sign Language**

Baker (1997) suggests that 'sign language is the language of all deaf children'. This is based on the assumption that for profoundly deaf children who can hear a little, even with the most powerful hearing aids, their sense of vision will be used to learn language. They will learn language by eye rather than by ear. Until fairly recently an argument for having a spoken and not a signed language as a first language was based on the assumption that signed languages were 'inferior'. They did not have sophisticated structure and vocabulary and could not,

therefore, be used by the child to develop cognitively as well as linguistically.

Research in the field of linguistics, however, has shown that signed languages have complex rule systems and have equal status in linguistic terms to spoke languages (Kyle and Woll, 1986). In addition, through the study of deaf children of deaf parents, it can be seen that these children go through the same processes of language acquisition in terms of learning communication skills, making over-generalizations and developing rule systems in signed language that hearing children do when acquiring spoken language. Deaf parents will also make similar adjustments to support their children's linguistic development as hearing parents will do by modifying and structuring the communicative context and their own input. Differences arise in relation to the modality rather than the approach. For example, while hearing parents may emphasize key words by intonation deaf parents may make signs slower or larger to support their child's learning (Harris, 1992).

### **Deaf Children and Deaf Parents**

The underlying principles of languages, whether spoken or signed, and the process of acquisition of these languages appear to be the same. Deaf children of deaf parents may show better emotional adjustment and thinking skills than deaf children of hearing parents and one reason for this may be their understanding and use of their first language at an age appropriate time. (Marcshark, 1993). Other factors could include deaf parents' better adjustment to the diagnosis of deafness in their child and their understanding of interaction needs from birth. For deaf children of deaf parents, therefore, the linguistic argument for the acceptance of sign language as an appropriate language for communicating and learning validates their decision to bring their children up in what may well be their own first language. It is the language of the family. It is also the language of the deaf community. Ladd (1988) notes 'The deaf community can now be identified as a linguistic minority', rather than as handicapped people. The role of language in culture and in the development of identity and self esteem in an individual is important. Lawson (1981, p. 23) confirms:

BSL is the native language of the deaf community in Britain and ... its usage is a powerful, cohesive bond resulting in unrestricted and relaxed exchanged of thought, ideas and feelings between members of the deaf community.

For deaf children of deaf parents, therefore, their development of one language at home and later meeting another language in the wider community and at school will be similar to the experiences of hearing children with a minority language as a first language.

### **Deaf Children and Hearing Parents**

However, for the majority of deaf children this is not the case. Most deaf children have hearing parents: parents who may well have never communicated with a deaf adult and who know nothing about sign language. How could bilingualism work for these children? An argument could be that due to their hearing loss they will have difficulty developing a spoken language. Their language will, therefore, be very delayed and this could have significant developmental and educational implications. A child entering school at five, understanding and using a handful of words will clearly be at a grave disadvantage. If they use BSL at home, however, they can develop this as their first language through vision and come to school with an intact language as a basis for moving towards the acquisition of a second, spoken, language.

However, for parents to bring up their child in a language they do not themselves use is no mean feat and almost inevitably the child will receive limited input. How much language input one needs in order to acquire a first language is unclear and it would seem that children can develop linguistic rules based on fairly limited input, although children who meet BSL after the pre-school years are likely to become less sophisticated users of the language (Gallaway and Woll, 1994). If parents know and use little sign language, but are aiming to communicate through this mode, then it is likely that their deaf children will have limited first language ability by the time they reach school age. Other children may meet BSL for the first time when they get to school. In either case the role of the school is very different from its role in relation to hearing bilingual pupils. Rather than helping children to build a new language on the basis of one that is already established its role may well be to support the development of their pupils' first language.

### **Sign Language at School**

Young deaf children, therefore, may need support in school to develop BSL as their first language. This implies that the school needs staff who are fluent BSL users and that BSL will be the mode of communication in

the classroom. Deaf children with good sign language skills will also need BSL in the classroom as due to lack of hearing they will be unable to access the curriculum through spoken language. The British Deaf Association (1996, p.7) argues that prerequisites for the bilingual education of deaf children are:

- (a) ... a bilingual environment where all staff recognize the importance of both languages and both cultures;
- (b) ongoing deaf awareness in the school and for all professionals and staff;
- (c) access to a deaf peer group;
- (d) curriculum delivery and assessment in the child's preferred language;
- (e) BSL and deaf studies curriculum;
- (f) English curriculum based on modern foreign language curriculum;
- (g) Interpreting support for deaf parents at meetings;
- (h) Information about the school, etc. in BSL on video.

If these are accepted as the criteria for bilingual education for deaf children, the question that has to be answered is whether they are incompatible with inclusive education.

### **Inclusive Education and Deaf Children**

The move towards inclusive education has been growing nationally and internationally during the past two decades. One example is the Green Paper (DfEE, 1997) which emphasizes the importance of including more children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. For many educationalists this means that all children should have the right to be placed in their local school with appropriate support. To do anything less is seen as a denial of human right. (Hall, 1997). The majority of deaf children are currently placed in mainstream schools and most of these will be educated orally. While many individuals will be successful, the overall picture is one of under-achievement in relation to hearing children (Powers, 1996). There are many arguments against placing individual deaf children in mainstream schools. They include problems with social integration due to communication difficulties between the deaf child and his/her hearing peers, problems with self-esteem when deaf children lack deaf role models, and lack of equal participation within the classroom and therefore limited access to the

curriculum (Stimson and Lang, 1994). Baldwin (1994, p.165) believes that

Full inclusion denies the deaf child access to an environment that addresses his/her unique social and emotional needs.

- Another argument against full inclusion could be a bilingual policy. Conditions necessary for a bilingual approach to the education of deaf children include a deaf peer group. This would not be possible if children were individually integrated. Pickersgill (1997, p.18) states:

individual deaf children in mainstream schools cannot be provided with sign bilingual support.

Bilingual education for deaf children and individual placement in mainstream schools would, therefore, appear to be incompatible. This does not mean that inclusion in a wider sense is not possible. As a minority group deaf children need the opportunity to be part of mainstream language and culture and to have opportunities of working and playing with hearing peers. However, if the educational provision is to be bilingual then clearly this inclusion will need to be inclusion in groups. Baldwin (1994, p.165) notes:

there is much to be said for a critical mass of deaf children being enrolled within a single educational programme.

Deaf children, however, have been in units attached to mainstream schools for many years. What would be the difference with a bilingual inclusive programme?

### **Models of Provision**

One approach from America is 'co-enrolment' (Kirchner, 1994). With this model co-enrolment classes were established at an elementary school. Deaf and hearing children were enrolled in these classes which had reduced numbers. Each class was taught by a team of a mainstream teacher and a teacher of the deaf (who may also have been deaf) and sign language and spoken English were both used as the languages of instruction. This gave the deaf pupils access to the curriculum, to deaf and hearing peers and opportunities to develop bilingually. Kirchner (1994, p.163) notes:

This strategy places deaf and hard of hearing students on an equal footing with their hearing peers instead of becoming merely 'foreign visitors' in the regular class.

Nearer to home, bilingual provision has been set up for deaf nursery aged children in Leeds (Knight 1997). The context is a nursery with 26 places for hearing children. Approximately 10 deaf children also attend the nursery. Staffing is enhanced by teachers of the deaf, deaf instructors and nursery nurses. The deaf children spend the morning together with specialist staff using both BSL and English. Lunch is taken together with staff who use the preferred language of the child to talk socially, while in the afternoon the deaf children are in the mainstream, many with support. Placement is flexible and can be mixed with placement for some of the time in the child's local nursery. Children are observed to see which language is emerging as their first language so that support can be given in that language. Plans are being made to provide two bases in the school, one using BSL and the other English so that children can move between the two as language preference emerges.

Pickersgill (1997) asserts that in a true bilingual model children may need access to a BSL dominant or an English dominant teaching approach but that all deaf children would be expected to use, to different extents, both languages. This mirrors hearing bilinguals' different uses and facility with their spoken languages. If this is to be the case then the use of a bilingual approach would lead to fewer individual placements of children in mainstream schools and more placements in groups with other deaf children.

## **Discussion**

Bilingual education for deaf children could, therefore, be seen as an obstacle to inclusion if this is narrowly defined as individual placement within the local school. It could, however, be seen as enhancing inclusion if this encourages the child's right to develop a strong first language, to access the curriculum through his/her first language and to develop a strong identity and confidence as a deaf person. Inclusion involves more than just the school, it involves society too. Deaf people need to have the opportunity to develop languages and to access education, and hearing people need the opportunity to see deaf people as different not deficient.

This model of bilingual education in under-resourced schools has major implications in terms of planning and provision. It requires

financial resources to provide appropriate training for teachers of the deaf and for enabling deaf people to train as teachers and instructors. It implies the placement of children in schools which may not be their local schools, with inevitable transport costs. In addition it implies the employment of a number of qualified staff to resource what is a small group of children in terms of the total number of children with special educational needs.

Issues of assessment in relation to the National Curriculum and public examinations need to be addressed. For instance, where all the testing is done on the basis of children having acquired their knowledge, skills and understanding in a particular framework and language, what changes have to be made so that the deaf children's real learning is assessed accurately? Proper study needs to be made into ascertaining the appropriate teaching methods involving developing a language based in one mode on the basis of a language learnt in another.

Additionally, inclusion must be seen as including families of deaf children and not just schools. Some deaf children will communicate better with their teachers than with their parents. Gregory's (1995) interviews with deaf adolescents indicate how many of them had limited communication at home or with other family members. A 19 year old BSL user explained, 'I talk to my mother, my father doesn't understand me'. A 22 year old who used BSL said (Gregory, 1995, p.41):

My mother helps me understand my grandparents. I feel funny about her explaining because it's my own grandparents. I should be able to communicate with them directly.

It is important, therefore, that the needs of families are provided for. Pickersgill (1997) argues that pre-school services need to give sustained support to families and involve deaf people in this support. Opportunities to develop signing skills need to be available to parents and these need to be realistic opportunities, not just evening classes available at a location which may or may not be near the parents' home.

It could be argued that these support services need to be available beyond the pre-school stage as parents will need continuing help to develop their communication skills. At the same time, families with children who have a late diagnosis or who enter the country during their school career will also need support. A bilingual policy which enables the child to communicate well at school but leaves them isolated at home is not appropriate.

For the millennium there appear to be exciting possibilities and challenges in the development of bilingual education for deaf children.

A national policy of inclusive education needs to be interpreted broadly if bilingual policies as outlined above are to be implemented. Bilingualism may be an obstacle to the individual placement of deaf children in mainstream schools. However, it could enhance real opportunities for the linguistic growth of deaf children. In addition, the proper entitlement of these children to adequate educational opportunities and social and emotional development can be secured. A real understanding of the needs of these children will lead to commitment to policies that will support the children's inclusion, as part of a minority group, in the hearing world.

### Bibliography

- Baker, C. (1997), 'Deaf Children: Educating for Bilingualism', in *Deafness and Education*, vol 21, no.3, pp. 3-9.
- Baldwin, S. (1994), 'Full Inclusion: Reality versus Idealism', in *American Annals of the Deaf*, vol.139, no.2, pp. 164-165.
- Bouvet, D. (1990), *The Path to Language: Bilingual Education for Deaf Children*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon.
- British Deaf Association (1996), *The Right to be Equal*, BDA, London.
- Department for Education and Employment (1997), *Excellence for All*, Green Paper, DfEE, London.
- Gallaway, C. and Woll, B. (1994), 'Interaction and Childhood Deafness', in Gallaway, C. and Richard, B., *Input and Interaction in Language Acquisition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Gregory, S. and Hartley, G. (eds) (1991), *Constructing Deafness*, London; Pinter Press in association with the Open University, UK.
- Gregory, S. (1995), *Deaf Young People and Their Families: Developing Understanding*, Cambridge University Press; Cambridge, UK.
- Hall, J. (1997), *Social Devaluation and Special Education*, Jessica Kingsley, UK.
- Harris, M. (1992), *Language Experience and Early Language Development*, Hove, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, USA.
- Kirchner, A.O (1994), 'Co-enrolment as an Inclusion Model', in *American Annals of the Deaf*, vol. 139, no. 2, pp.163-164.
- Knight, P. (1997), 'Bilingual Nursery Provision: A Challenging Start', in *Deafness and Education*, vol. 21, no.3, pp. 20-30.
- Kyle, J. and Woll, B. (1985), *Sign Language: The Study of Deaf People and Their Language*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Ladd, P. (1991), 'The Modern Deaf Community', pp. 35-39 in Gregory, S. and Hartley, G., *Constructing Deafness*, Pinter Press in association with the Open University, London.
- Lawson, L. (1991), 'The Role of Sign in the Structure of the Deaf Community', in Gregory, S. and Hartley, G., *Constructing Deafness*, Pinter Press in association with the Open University Press, London, pp. 31-34.
- Marshall, M. (1993), *Psychological Development of Deaf Children*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.
- Pickersgill, M. (1997), 'Towards a Model of Bilingual Education for Deaf Children', in *Deafness and Education*, vol.31, no. 3, pp. 10-19.

130 *Equality Issues for the New Millennium*

- Powers, S. (1996) , 'Deaf Pupils' Achievements in Ordinary Schools', in *The Journal of the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 111-123.
- Stimson, M. and Lang, H. (1994), 'Full Inclusion: A Path for Integration or Isolation', in *American Annals of the Deaf*, vol. 139, no. 2, pp. 156-159.
-

## Paper Five

Jarvis, J & Lamb, S (2001) Interaction and the Development of Communication in the Under Twos: Issues for Practitioners Working with Young Children in *Early Education* 21, 2 p 129-138  
ISSN 0957-5146

Volume 21

Number 2

June 2001

# Early Years

An International  
Journal of Research  
and Development

Training, Advancement and Co-operation  
in Teaching Young Children



ISSN 0957-5146



# Early Years

Volume 21 Number 2 June 2001

## Editorial

**Geva Blenkin, Rod Parker-Rees & Marian Whitehead** 77

Passion, Paradox and Professionalism in Early Years Education  
**Janet Moyles** 81

Learning from Interactive Story Readings  
**Robin Campbell** 97

Shaping Early Childhood through the Literacy Curriculum  
**Linda Miller** 107

Language Development at Home and at School: gains and losses in young bilinguals  
**Tim Parke & Rose Drury** 117

Interaction and the Development of Communication in the Under Twos: issues for practitioners working with young children in groups  
**Joy Jarvis & Sue Lamb** 129

"It is Floating 'Cause there is a Hole": a young child's experience of natural science  
**Niklas Pramling & Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson** 139

## Book Reviews

Home Pages. Literacy links for bilingual children, Charmian Kenner; Developing Writing for Different Purposes: teaching about genre in the early years, Jeni Riley & David Reedy  
**Marian Whitehead** 151

Young Children's Literacy and the Role of Televisual Texts, Naima Browne  
**Richard Eke** 152

Supporting Identity, Diversity and Language in the Early Years, Iram Siraj-Blatchford & Priscilla Clarke  
**Ron Holmes** 153

Supporting Science, Design and Technology in the Early Years, John Siraj-Blatchford & Iain MacLeod-Brudenell  
**Rod Parker-Rees** 154

Title-page, Volume Contents and Author Index 157



Scholarly Articles Research Alerting  
To receive contents pages by  
e-mail visit our Website at:  
<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals>



0957-5146(2001)21:2;1-N



## *Interaction and the Development of Communication in the Under Twos: issues for practitioners working with young children in groups*

JOY JARVIS, *University of Hertfordshire, Watford, UK*

SUE LAMB, *East and North Herts NHS Trust, UK*

**ABSTRACT** *This article considers the role of adult-child interaction in the communication development of children under two. It specifically investigates the situation of a family with twins, where it may be more difficult to undertake sustained, supportive interactions with two children at the same time. The study identifies strategies used by the family to support the children's language development and suggests that these could be used in care settings where early years practitioners may be working with under twos in small group contexts.*

**Keywords:** *communication, adult-child interaction, under twos, twins*

### **Introduction**

A child's development of communication skills in the first 2 years of life seems nothing short of miraculous. At birth the baby cries, moves and has the potential to communicate. Two years later the toddler is communicating intentionally, often very effectively, as s/he demands, comments and refuses using gestures, speech sounds, words and early utterances from the home language.

How this process happens is continually studied and debated. What seems certain, however, is that the growth of language and communication requires a partnership between the child and the environment and that the most significant part of that environment is the adult carer. Both child and adult work together to achieve mutual understanding, at first non-verbally and later through language. This is essential for the child's emotional development and well being (Goldschmied & Selleck, 1996).

This article considers the role of the child and the adult in the creation of communication. The particular focus is how the adult-child interaction may be changed as a result of an adult interacting with more than one child of the same age. This happens in the case of twins. Issues for families in relation to twin language development are explored by means of a case study of identical twin boys during their first 2 years. Implications from the findings of the study are then related to care contexts, where an adult may be responsible for two or three under twos. Strategies for supporting communication development in these contexts are suggested.

### **The Child's Role in Communication Development**

The child is born with characteristics which predispose him or her to be a successful language learner. Even before birth a child can hear. Characteristics of voices and rhythms can be identified and remembered. Babies can hear differences between individual speech sounds and gradually develop this skill in relation to the language or languages they hear around them (Pinker, 1994). Babies are interested in faces and in people. They use eye gaze and facial expression to interact with adults. Babies have good imitation skills and understand from a very early stage that they can copy actions, expressions and gestures. The earliest recorded copying of the 'sticking out your tongue' action was recorded by a linguist in a child who was 42 minutes old (Gopnick *et al.*, 1999).

In addition to being very sociable, babies are also effective and motivated learners. They learn from events and will practise and repeat actions thereby learning and developing skills. They quickly understand cause and effect in relation to what they can do and also in what they can get other people to do. The role of crying, pointing and later using words to get what you want is learnt rapidly. Babies actively engage with the world, making hypotheses, testing them and revising their thinking in the light of experience. A 1-year-old, for example, may call all animals 'doggie' but by two will have a more sophisticated classification (Harris, 1992).

### **The Role of the Adult in Communication Development**

The child will not learn the function of communication without a more experienced language user, usually an adult, to engage with. A baby who gets no response to facial expression or gestures will not learn that these can be effective tools for communicating. The role of the adult in supporting language learning has been well documented (Bruner, 1983; Gallaway & Richards, 1994). A key feature of the adult role appears to be responsiveness to the child. The child makes a movement or sound and the adult responds to this as if it were intentional. The adult assumes that the child is a communicator and by responding appropriately supports this development. A sound made by the baby waiting for food is interpreted as a request. "More?" the parent is likely to say, "You want more?" In this way the child comes to understand not only the function of communication but also the way this function is encoded in a specific language. The adult needs to be sensitive to the child's initiations and to be able to respond to them in terms of topic, pace and rhythm (Selleck & Griffin, 1996).

Repetition of routines and language, the adult following the child's lead and responding appropriately and the adult's use of simple, relevant language all seem vital in helping the child's communication development. These all require adult skill, and most adults and indeed older children, seem to undertake this role without being explicitly

aware of it. They also require time and this may be problematic in both home and day care settings. When there are a number of children and a lot of work to be undertaken the amount of time spent interacting with an individual baby or toddler may be limited. Children with fewer opportunities for interaction and for hearing and understanding words and phrases are likely to be delayed in their acquisition of language (Harris, 1992; Wells, 1986). The exact influence of the role of adult input in relation to subsequent child output has been hotly debated. The evidence seems clearer for some aspects of vocabulary and grammatical development than for others and the case for regarding a particular type of child-directed speech as essential has not been made (Snow, 1994). The purpose of this study is not to investigate the relationship between aspects of adult language and particular child skills but rather to identify whether or not it is more difficult to engage in effective communicative exchanges with more than one child at a time and, if so, are there ways of dealing with the situation.

The problem for adults engaging with more than one child at a time appears to be more acute when the children are the same age. If children are of different ages they will be requiring different forms of input and the adult is often able to juggle these demands successfully (Barton & Tomasello, 1994). Things become more problematic when an adult has more than one child of the same age. The children need the same level of interaction but have to share the time available with others. This is likely to be the case in care settings and also in a home setting where there are twins or other multiples.

### **Language Development in Twins**

Looking at language development in twins allows us to consider the effects of sharing adult time and energy in relation to language development in a home context where the adults know the children intimately. Studies suggest that the majority of twins will experience delay in their development of language, particularly in the first 5 years of life (Mogford-Bevan, 1999). While there are likely to be many factors involved, such as possible prematurity and low birth weight, the less facilitative communication environment appears to play a large part. Adults are less likely to be able to engage in sustained turn taking and communication exchanges when there are two babies to be fed, changed and comforted. They are less likely to be able to notice and respond to individual initiations, for example, when they are sharing a book with two toddlers at the same time. Adults tend to hold fewer and shorter conversations with individual twins and are likely to be less responsive and more directive (Barton & Tomasello, 1994). Limited responsiveness and an over controlling role in conversation is more likely when adults are conversing with more than one child. The management of the group situation leads to the adult taking a more dominant role and being less able to respond to individual needs. This means that the adult is less able to help the individual child express his/her own intentions and this leads to a poorer environment for communication development (Hughes & Westgate, 1997; Wells, 1986).

A case study of twin boys was undertaken. It was started in the first week after their birth and data has been collected for 24 months to date. Recording methods consisted of a diary kept by the mother detailing observations, and monthly visits from the researcher to observe the twins, the older siblings and the parents in communication contexts. Data were collected by written record and video recordings. The aim was to find out if there were problems in providing a good communication context in this case, but more particularly to look at strategies which the adults might develop to deal with this situation. One cannot change the fact that there are two children making the same



FIG. 1. Outdoor play was part of the daily routine.

demands on adult time and attention, but one can seek to develop ways in which the situation can be managed more effectively.

## The Case Study

### *The Context*

Ben and Jack were born prematurely at 33 weeks and stayed in the special care baby unit at their local hospital for two and a half weeks. They each weighed five pounds at birth and, once breast-feeding was established, they were allowed home. Although premature, the twins had no other health or developmental difficulties and progressed well once at home. There were two older siblings in the family, William aged 7 and Kirsty aged 6, who enjoyed interacting with their new family members. Following a blood test at 5 months of age the family was informed that the twins were identical.

Ben and Jack's parents were aware from the first days of the difficulties of engaging with two children at once. They felt that constant interruptions during everyday routines made it difficult to focus attention on the babies for any length of time. For example, nappy changing would be a very quick exercise as the other baby might need attention or an older sibling might need help with homework. In contrast, the mother remembers spending up to half an hour with her first born child during nappy changes, encouraging eye contact playing tickling games and babbling together. It was also difficult to sustain eye contact or develop early listening skills with either twin baby, as the adults were always moving on to another child requiring attention.

In addition to sharing attention, the twins also had to share toys and the family felt that Ben and Jack were constantly asked to take turns before they were developmentally ready to do so, leading to a lot of frustration during these first 2 years. The parents were also concerned that anyone outside the immediate family could not tell the difference between the babies and as a consequence did not refer to them by name. Names are important for individual identity and are used also for gaining and directing attention.

A typical day in each of the 2 years involved many changes of activity but also consistent routine (Fig. 1). Taking and fetching the older children from school and also morning and afternoon sleeps set a pattern to the day. Household activities were undertaken with the boys firstly watching and later 'helping'. Communication about these everyday activities formed part of the daily routine.

### *Communication Strategies*

Ben and Jack's parents quickly realised that the adult-child interaction with the two boys was very different from what had happened with their other children. They were aware that this could lead to language difficulties and this led them to develop strategies which they would implement whenever possible. These included:

- an adult or older sibling played with Ben or Jack for a short period on their own every day, for example they had separate story times sometimes or Kirsty would play with Jack in her bedroom whilst William played hide and seek with Ben;
- Ben and Jack were always referred to by their name before every interaction. The family dressed the boys in different clothes and encouraged others to use *their* names;
- to calm the babies during the first year, when they frequently suffered from minor illnesses, the family sang simple rhymes whilst cuddling them. This supported face-to-face contact and early listening to voices and sounds;
- the constant interruptions were turned into positive language experiences by drawing the other baby into the interaction as an observer, e.g. "Look Ben, Jack is washing his hands";
- activities were balanced so each child had the opportunity for equal contribution. The parents felt that they always had to play games twice, or allow extra time, so that Ben and Jack both had a turn;
- daily routines, such as preparing lunch, were used as opportunities to develop new language. Similar language patterns were repeated frequently until Ben and Jack began to predict the sequence. The parents talked about the current event all the time using simple vocabulary and short utterances;
- Ben and Jack were very active, inquisitive boys keen to explore the environment. At 16 months, for example, their favourite activity was walking across the kitchen table. The family had to use exaggerated intonation patterns in their voices to divert them to a more appropriate activity and this seemed to have the bonus of helping them to listen to language;
- as the parents were aware of the need for Ben and Jack to spend time with a competent language user, the older siblings were requested to help when the adults were busy (Figs 2 & 3);
- the twin situation was turned to an advantage as Ben and Jack listened to language input twice in activities as they each had a turn;
- Ben and Jack were allowed to make choices to encourage their own identity and to develop their language skills. For example, Kirsty would help each child in turn to look through all the socks in the morning to choose their favourite pair for that day.

### *Ben and Jack's Communication Development*

From birth Ben and Jack enjoyed making eye contact. They communicated with older family members and with each other by means of facial expression and physical contact.



FIG. 2. Playing with everyday objects.

They were aware of each other from an early stage and engaged in a great deal of reciprocal laughing. They enjoyed physical contact with each other, particularly rolling around together on the floor. They were aware of each other's emotions, one becoming anxious if the other was crying. As they moved into their second year they were aware that two items were always needed, for example if one boy wanted a drink he would take two beakers from the table and give one to his brother. Language, however, was always directed at an older sibling or adult and the boys did not use words with each other until just before their second birthday.

In relation to language development both boys babbled at 6 months, used simple gestures including waving and pointing at 10 months and understood a range of single words in context at a year. Language rapidly expanded from 16 months with two word phrases at 18 months and four to five word utterances by 2 years of age. A wide range of vocabulary was used by this stage, including nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions. Plurals, possessives and early pronouns were developing. For example, when playing a game of hide and seek with plastic animals Ben commented: "Polar bear under Kirsty's feet" while Jack commanded when sitting on his swing: "Mummy push you" (meaning "Mummy push me"). This indicates good language development in relation to children whose language has been studied in detail, for example Fletcher's (1985) study of Sophie at 2 years 4 months and Bloom's (1991) summary of studies of the language of 2 year olds.

Ben and Jack used their language to express a wide range of functions such as making comments, asking questions, giving commands, naming and requesting items. Most of their language was directed at their parents or older siblings and not at each other. Ben and Jack's use of speech sounds was advanced for their age and by two they were well understood in the home. The parents sometimes interpreted certain words and phrases to help communication with friends and less immediate family. Throughout their first 2 years, Ben and Jack's development of communication had been age appropriate and indeed at two they were more advanced, in terms of language development, than either

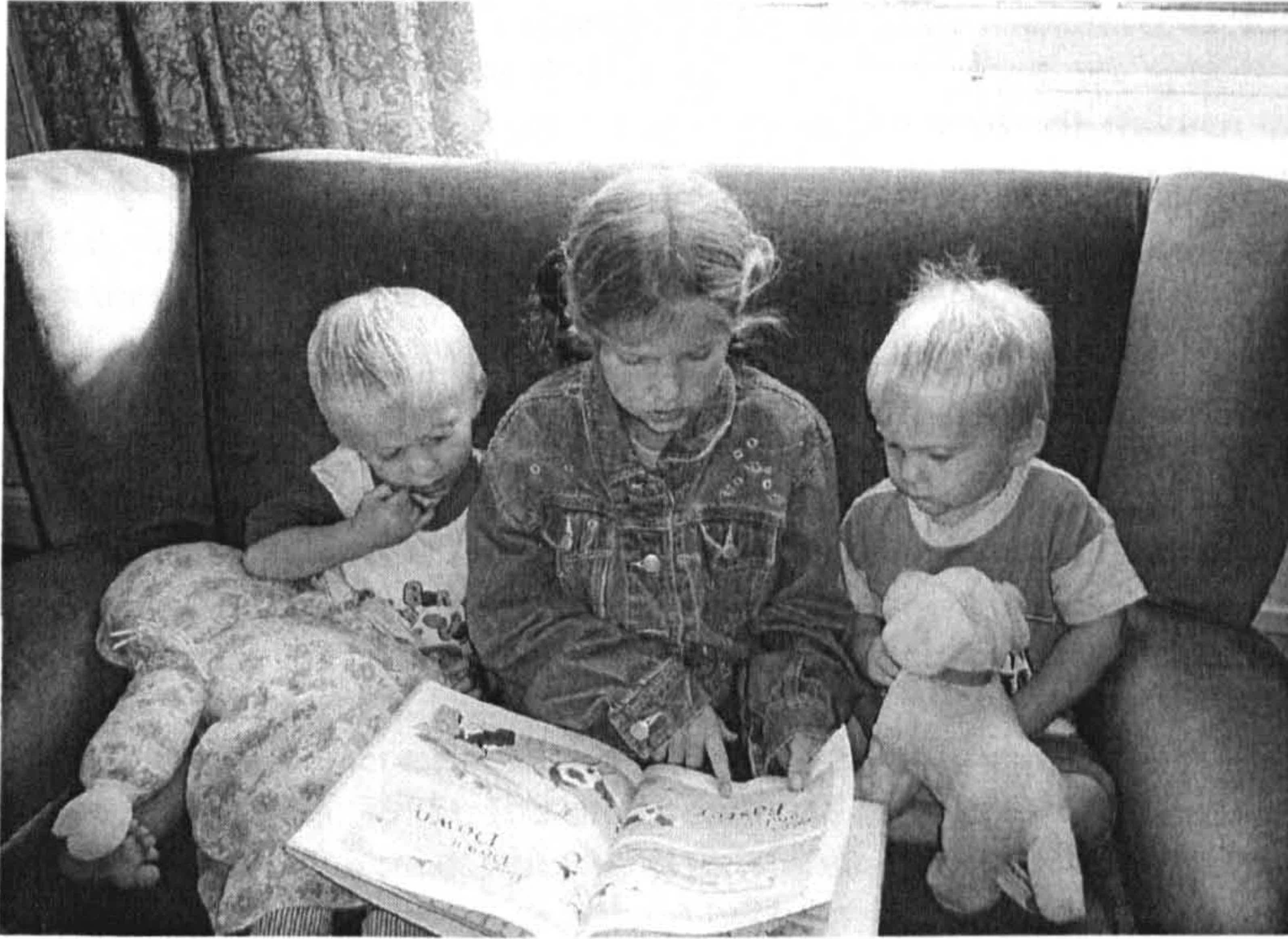


FIG. 3. Sharing a book.

of their two siblings had been at this stage. Clearly individual differences between children, their personalities, characteristics and abilities all play a part in development. However this case study shows how adults can use appropriate strategies to change a context to make it a more facilitative and a more positive situation for language learning. This has important implications for early years practitioners working with very young children.

### **Issues for Early Years Practitioners**

The Children Act (Department of Health, 1989) recommends a one to three adult–child ratio for under twos in care contexts and stresses the importance of babies being looked after by one carer during a single shift. The practice of having a key worker for each child allows adult and baby to get to know each other and for the adult to be able to be responsive to individual needs. As has been seen, this is important not just for care and for security but for interaction and the development of communication. The case study shows how difficult it can be to develop extended interactions where there is more than one baby or toddler in a setting. It is inevitable that in many care contexts adults will be dealing with a number of very young children. Practitioners need to be able to use strategies to exploit the language learning opportunities within their own context and to try to make the group context an advantage rather than a disadvantage. Important factors would seem to be:

- early years practitioners need to have a good understanding of the development of communication and the role of the adult in this process. They should be able to identify strategies which are useful and to monitor their own use of these strategies;
- practitioners need to have both the time and the skill to be responsive to the child and to follow the child's lead, rather than always taking the lead role themselves;
- repetition in routines needs to involve repetition with words and phrases so that language has meaning and familiarity;

- all of the children need opportunities for sustained interaction on a one-to-one basis with an adult who knows them well;
- in group games and activities time is needed to allow all children to participate;
- all children should have equal adult time even if they do not demand it.

All these factors have significance both for the individual practitioner and for the management of the care context. Communication development needs to have a high priority in terms of planning, the organisation of the day and people's time. Children's communication development needs to be observed, recorded and monitored and there should be close liaison with their families to ensure consistency of expectation and response. Practitioners should have the opportunity to observe and monitor each other's interaction skills so that they are aware of their own skills and of areas which could be developed further. This mutual observation is particularly important as it is suggested that adults are not always aware of how much their own response to a child depends upon the child's demands. A passive child may initiate little and therefore get fewer opportunities for interaction and the adult may be unaware that this is happening (Sadler & Mogford-Bevan, 1997). If Ben and Jack had been less demanding children they may well have had fewer opportunities to engage in language learning activities and consequently their language may have been less advanced.

The role of the child in eliciting responses from an adult is illustrated by an example from the case study when the two boys were 11 months old. Ben had learnt to wave to people and Jack had learnt to point. As yet neither had learnt the other skill and it was possible to tell them apart by their use of gesture. All adults reacted to Ben's waving by waving back and engaging in social language such as: "Hello" or "Hi Ben". Jack's pointing elicited name words such as: "that's the light" or "it's Jess". The two children were thus determining the type of language input they were given. Ben and Jack's mother commented that while she found it easy to make the individual response they demanded she had to make a conscious effort to undertake pointing with Ben and waving with Jack to encourage a range of skills. This raises the importance of early years practitioners being aware of why they are using particular language strategies. Adults are not usually conscious of the language they are using with children but early years practitioners need to be aware of their own language use and to be able to change it as necessary. Only by being reflective practitioners can they give a range of language learning opportunities to all their children.

### **The Day Care Setting**

In a day care setting, of course, the early years practitioners are not the children's parents. The close, intimate relationships that are necessary for supporting and developing communication skills and emotional stability are not so easily built. There are time and timetable constraints and issues with a number of adults being involved in a provision even if a key worker system is used. As Goldschmied and Jackson (1994) argue, having an appropriate number of adults available does not ensure that this interaction takes place "unless the organisation of the setting ensures regular occasions when concentrated attention is given by a particular caregiver to a particular child" (p. 11). However, as Elfer (1996) notes, developing a close relationship between an adult and a child in an early years setting can be difficult. The reasons for this could include practitioners not wanting to be seen as 'replacing' the parents in any way nor wanting to become too emotionally involved with a child who will be moving on to another provision at some stage.

Elfer (1996) argues that training and professional development within a provision needs to include the consideration of what is involved in becoming emotionally involved with the children, both in relation to its importance and to the emotional effect this may have on the adult. Early years practitioners may also have other pressures which may inhibit close, supportive relationships. These could include the perceived need to include 'education' within the context, which could lead to the adult adopting a more didactic communication style and to less adaptation of adult language to meet individual needs (Marinac *et al.*, 2000).

## Discussion

The growth of communication and language is a key part of development in the early years. Children who do not develop these skills appropriately are likely to have problems with social, emotional and cognitive development. There are many reasons why children may have problems learning language but it is vital that a poor linguistic environment is not one of them. Early years practitioners working with children under two have a difficult and complex job balancing the needs of care and safety with the demands of supporting individual development. Practitioners need to be aware of their own skills as facilitators of communication and to develop strategies to enable them to use these skills within their own context.

## REFERENCES

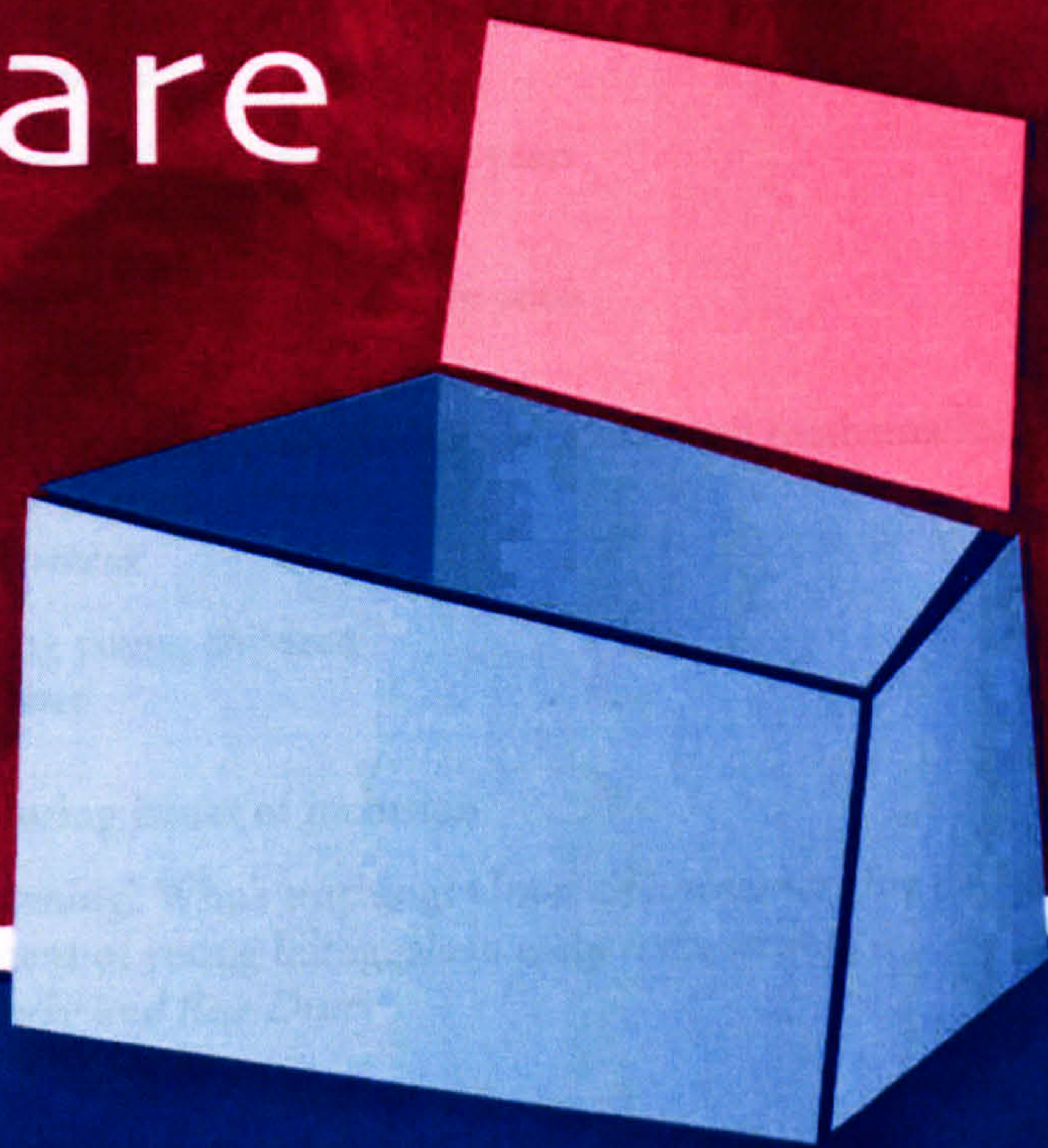
- Barton, M. & Tomasello, M. (1994) The rest of the family: the role of fathers and siblings in early language development, in: C. Gallaway & B. Richards (Eds) *Input and Interaction in Language Acquisition* (Cambridge, CUP).
- Bloom, L. (1991) *Language Development from Two to Three* (Cambridge, CUP).
- Bruner, J. (1983) *Child's Talk: learning to use language* (Oxford, OUP).
- Department of Health (1989) *The Children Act: guidance and regulations, volume 2. Family support, day care and educational provision for young children* (London, HMSO).
- Elfer, P. (1996) Building intimacy in relationships with young children in nurseries, *Early Years*, 16 (2), pp. 30–34.
- Fletcher, P. (1985) *A Child's Learning of English* (Oxford, Blackwell).
- Gallaway, C. & Richards, B. (Eds) (1994) *Input and Interaction in Language Acquisition* (Cambridge, CUP).
- Goldschmied, E. & Jackson, S. (1994) *People Under Three: young children in day care* (London, Routledge).
- Goldschmied, E. & Selleck, D. (1996) *Communication Between Babies in Their First Year* (London, National Children's Bureau).
- Gopnick, A., Meltzoff, A. & Kuhl, P. (1999) *How Babies Think* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson).
- Harris, M. (1992) *Language Experience and Early Language Development: from input to uptake* (Hove, LEA).
- Hughes, M. & Westgate, D. (1997) Teachers and other talk partners for pupils in nursery and reception classes, *Education 3 to 13*, 25 (1), pp. 3–7.
- Marinac, J., Ozanne, A. & Woodyatt, G. (2000) Adult language input in the early childhood educational setting, *Child Language, Teaching and Therapy*, 16 (2), pp. 181–200.
- Messer, D. (1995) *The Development of Communication: from social interaction to language* (Chichester, John Wiley and Sons).
- Mogford-Bevan, K. (1999) Twins and their language development, in: A. Sandbank (Ed.) *Twin and Triplet Psychology: a professional guide to working with multiples* (London, Routledge).
- Pinker, S. (1994) *The Language Instinct* (Harmondsworth, Penguin).
- Sadler, J. & Mogford-Bevan, K. (1997) Teacher talk with children with language disorders: four case studies parts 1 and 2, *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 13 (1), pp. 15–58.

- Selleck, D. & Griffin, S. (1996) Quality for the under threes, in: G. Pugh (Ed.) *Contemporary Issues in the Early Years: working collaboratively for children*, 2nd edition (Paul Chapman/National Children's Bureau).
- Snow, C. (1994) Beginning from baby talk: twenty years of research on input and interaction, in: C. Gallaway & B. Richards (Eds) *Input and Interaction in Child Language Acquisition* (Cambridge, CUP).
- Wells, G. (1986) *The Meaning Makers: children learning language and using language to learn* (London, Hodder and Stoughton).

## Paper Six

Jarvis, J (2002) Including a deaf child in an early years context: issues for practitioners Miller, L., Drury, R & Campbell, R (eds) *Exploring Early Years Education and Care* London: David Fulton p101-111  
ISBN 1-85346-848-7

# Exploring Early Years Education and Care



Edited by  
**Linda Miller, Rose Drury and Robin Campbell**

# Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	v
<i>Notes on the contributors</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
 <b>Part I Exploring curriculum issues</b>	
1. Exploring issues in early years education and care <i>Linda Miller, Rose Drury and Robin Campbell</i>	2
2. Literacy in early childhood settings in two countries: a comparison of policy into practice issues <i>Linda Miller, Janet Soler, Lyn Foote and John Smith</i>	8
3. Exploring key literacy learning: own name and alphabet <i>Robin Campbell</i>	19
4. The essence of history in the early years <i>Rosie Turner-Bisset</i>	28
5. Drawing as a language in the early years <i>Rosemary Allen</i>	40
6. Developing thinking skills through scientific and mathematical experiences in the early years <i>Jane Devereux</i>	52
7. Researching young children <i>John Oates</i>	62
 <b>Part II Exploring issues of inclusion</b>	
8. Who's listening? Who's teaching? Good circumstances for the language development of young bilinguals in early years settings <i>Tim Parke and Rose Drury</i>	78
9. Parent partnership and inclusion in the early years <i>Alice Paige-Smith</i>	90
10. Including a deaf child in an early years context: issues for practitioners <i>Joy Jarvis</i>	101
11. Health inequalities in early childhood <i>Angela Underdown</i>	112
12. Work, play and learning in the lives of young children <i>Martin Woodhead</i>	124
 <i>References</i>	135
<i>Index</i>	148

## CHAPTER 10

# Including a deaf child in an early years context: issues for practitioners

*Joy Jarvis*

Jessica, Manjit and Katy are four-year-olds in their local nursery school. It is 10 o'clock and they are playing at the water tray. They have plastic trays and some clothes pegs. They move the pegs on the trays and drop them in the water. There is a lot of splashing and laughing. About 10 minutes later a nursery nurse joins the group and brings some jugs, beakers and bottles. She stays with the group, talking and joining in the pouring activities. Suddenly she leaves the group to see to a child who has climbed on a table. She lifts the child down from the table and he starts to cry. The nursery nurse talks to the group which has gathered round. Jessica, Manjit and Katy watch what is happening before they return to their activities. A few minutes later they pull off their aprons. One of Jessica's hearing aids slips from behind her ear in the process but she puts it back and all three girls run out into the garden.

Jessica has a severe hearing loss and is the only deaf child in her local nursery school. Deaf children have been attending mainstream early years provisions for many years and indeed about 85 per cent of deaf children now attend mainstream schools (Lynas *et al.* 1997). For at least the last 30 years the move in the UK, as in much of the rest of the world, has been away from children with special needs attending special schools and towards their placement in mainstream contexts. This is emphasised by the Code of Practice: 'the special educational needs of children will normally be met in mainstream schools or settings' (DfES 2001: 7). Including all children in mainstream provisions aims to provide equality of opportunity and is often seen as a human rights issue, particularly in the United States where separation of schools along racial lines led to inequality of provision.

Deaf children were some of the first children with special needs to be 'integrated' and to be seen as benefiting from access to mainstream provision. Looking at the scenario above it may seem clear why this might be. Like the two hearing children, Jessica had no problem using the equipment available, she could concentrate on the tasks and follow the routine of the nursery. However, concern is being expressed that

deaf children are not achieving as well as their hearing peers academically (Powers *et al.* 1998) and may be more isolated and have lower self-esteem in mainstream than in special contexts (Musselman *et al.* 1996). In order to understand why this may be the case, we need to consider both the needs of the deaf child and the process of learning.

## Who is the deaf child?

### *Hearing loss*

The terms 'deaf' or 'hearing impaired' cover a range of hearing loss. Children with mild or moderate losses will hear sound at a reduced volume, will hear parts of words and will respond variably to sounds depending on the context. Those with severe or profound hearing loss will not hear speech without hearing aids and the speech that is heard will be distorted and in some cases minimal. These children will generally have either hearing aids, which are usually behind the ears with an earmould in the ear canal to channel the sound, or a cochlear implant, whereby electrodes have been inserted into the inner ear and the child has a receiver attached to his or her head by a magnet. These amplification devices do not restore normal hearing and speech will not be heard clearly. Background noise is also amplified and this can mask speech and also distress a child who may be sensitive to loud sounds. Often a child will also have a radio system for a context when he or she is in a group. In this case the speaker will have a microphone and the effect is that of the speech signal being close to the child's ear. This is important as the further away the child is from the sound, the more difficult (or impossible) it becomes to hear it and the more sound in the environment will mask speech (Tate Maltby and Knight 2000).

### *Language*

Deaf children do not have a language problem as such, rather, they have a problem accessing enough spoken language in order to use their processing abilities to create language for themselves. They do not have a complete model of the language because they will hear a partial, distorted version of English and see, on the speaker's lips, ambiguous information (the sounds p/b/m, for example, all look the same). This will result in imperfect understanding and the production of speech which may be unclear or unintelligible, particularly in the early years when speech and language are developing. A deaf child in an early years context is likely to have comprehension and use of English that is very much delayed in relation to others of the same age.

Because for some children accessing language by ear is so difficult they will learn it by eye through British Sign Language (BSL). BSL is a complete, grammatical language so children who have access to adult models, such as deaf parents who use BSL, can learn the language at the same rate as hearing children learn a spoken language. However, the vast majority of deaf children are born to hearing parents who,

if they decide to use sign language, will be learning it themselves. In this case their children will have access to an immature language or to signs in English word order (Sign Supported English). These children's communication in both sign and speech is therefore likely to be delayed when they enter early years provisions (Powers *et al.* 1998).

### Issues for learning in an early years setting

The consequences of linguistic delay or difference are significant in an early years setting in which spoken language is a primary means of learning. The importance of language for children's learning in all early years contexts may not seem immediately evident. In the water tray activity described earlier, for example, the three children appeared to be undertaking the same activities and therefore could be seen as having the same learning experiences. A closer observation would show that this is not the case.

Jessica, Manjit and Katy are at the water tray. Manjit suggests that the pegs are a family; she gives them all names. The trays are boats at the seaside. She talks about her last holiday when she went on a boat. Katy says that the peg people are on the boat. She splashes the water to make the sea rough and says that the people are frightened. She drops a peg in the water saying that the baby has fallen in the sea and might drown. The other pegs are dropped in to perform a rescue. The splashing and the storm get worse.

Jessica doesn't hear what the other girls are saying. Their speech is quick and quiet, drowned out by the noise of the water and the brick play going on behind them. She drops pegs in the water and splashes.

When the nursery nurse joins the group she talks to the children about their pouring activities, she uses a range of related vocabulary: full, empty, more, less, how many, not enough. Jessica joins in the pouring activities. She looks carefully at what she is doing but she cannot look at the activity and watch the adult's face to try to lipread what is being said.

The nursery nurse goes to the boy on the table. Manjit and Katy hear her explain the dangers of walking on the table and the likely consequences. Jessica sees that the boy is crying and that the nursery nurse has a cross expression on her face.

It is clear from this closer observation of the activity that Jessica's experience is very different from the other two girls. She did not understand the representational nature of the first activity, the idea of 'pretending' something, nor how the activity in the water tray could be related to past experiences at the seaside. While the other two girls were engaged in sharing past experiences and inventing imaginary stories, Jessica was engaged in the physical experiences of dropping pegs and splashing water. To make sense of the present in the light of experience is crucial to learning

and is most easily done through language. To imagine future events and to hypothesise, as well as to revisit previous experience, one needs some form of symbolism and again language is the most effective. Kary and Manjit were developing their narrative skills, supported by each other's contributions, skills that will help them to understand and express their knowledge of the world. They were also exploring the world of feelings: how would you feel if you were on a boat in a storm? Deaf children can have difficulties with the language of emotion, often being unable to express or understand what they or others are feeling as they have not had the range of opportunities to explore these (Marcschark 1993).

With the pouring activities, the two hearing girls are laying the foundations of early mathematical knowledge and language. Through language the nursery nurse was pointing out and labelling significant aspects of the activity. Through repeated, supported experiences the hearing children will come to understand concepts of conservation, comparison and quantity. Jessica will come to understand these concepts too, but later than the other children, because she lacks access to the linguistic support given by adults and peers (Wood *et al.* 1986).

When the nursery nurse was explaining the dangers inherent in table climbing Jessica was not understanding the explanation, she was only seeing the activity. Reasons, causes and explanations support children's emotional, moral and social development. While young children are often not clear why two events e.g. two broken windows can be seen quite differently (one was the result of an accident and one was deliberate) they come, through explanation and discussion, to understand motivation and moral reasoning. Without access to linguistic explanation deaf children's development may be delayed in this area (Marcschark 1993). The three girls at the water tray were not involved in the table walking situation but two of them could overhear what was happening. Gregory *et al.* (1995) argue that because deaf children are often only able to understand what is said directly to them, and are unable to overhear conversations, they miss a large proportion of the information hearing people use to learn about the world. Their knowledge of the world takes longer to acquire.

Inclusion of deaf children is more complex than it first appears. Language is central to the learning process. Adults and peers use language to scaffold and support learning and the child uses language as a tool for thinking (Bruner, 1975; Donaldson 1978; Gopnik *et al.* 1999). Any child with insufficient mastery of the language used in an early years setting will be at a disadvantage in relation to most aspects of development. Studies of deaf young children in nurseries and schools suggest that in many cases they did not have access to the curriculum or to social interaction to the same extent as their hearing peers. (Gregory and Bishop 1989; Hopwood and Gallaway 1999). One observational study of three deaf children individually included in their local nursery classes concluded: 'They had neither full access to information, nor interpersonal interactions on an equal basis' (Monkman 1995: 98). Concern has been expressed that some deaf children individually included in mainstream settings may have difficulties with social relationships and

with their development of identity and self-esteem (Marcschark 2000; Nunes *et al.* 2001). Retrospective interviews with deaf young people and adults point, at times, to feelings of isolation, rejection and frustration (Gregory *et al.* 1995; Sheridan 2000).

Early years practitioners welcoming deaf children into their settings need to be aware of these issues in order to ensure that inclusion is an active not a passive process. Including a deaf child is not to do with placing a child in a particular location but with practitioners working with families and with other professionals, such as teachers of the deaf, to address issues and to seek solutions. These solutions will involve analysing learning in the particular setting in relation to the individual child. They will involve observing learning and providing appropriate support. They must involve having high expectations of what deaf children can achieve or limited achievement will be seen as acceptable (Powers *et al.* 1998).

### **Implications for practice: active inclusion**

Active inclusion involves working with families and professionals to develop and monitor strategies. These will involve adapting the environment and the curriculum and using additional support appropriately.

#### ***Liaison with family and professionals***

All early years practitioners aim to have positive relationships with the families of children in their care. Parents with children with special needs are particularly vulnerable when their child first goes to an early years context as the procedure is not as straightforward as for other children. They may feel that their child is being rejected and that this is a foretaste of what will happen in society for the rest of the child's life (Carpenter 1997). It is important that early years practitioners appreciate the emotional aspects of this transition and that parents may need additional support and understanding. Welcoming the child and identifying his or her strengths are an encouraging start.

All children need adequate preparation for entry into an early years context. Deaf children will need the same good quality preparation as other children, including visits to the child's home by practitioners. As Willey (2000) notes, this provides for developing shared knowledge and understanding of individual and family needs. Continued sharing of information can be supported by a book in which practitioners and parents can write or draw significant events. This can support the child's communication with others about what has happened. One picture of a slug in the lettuce on Daddy's plate, for example, excited tremendous interest in a group of four-year-olds when a deaf child used it to explain an event the evening before! Families of deaf children will have been visited, usually on a regular basis, by a teacher of the deaf. This teacher will liaise with the practitioners in the early years setting. Practitioners need to know what continuing support is being given to the child and if any other early years contexts are involved. Deaf children may attend

small group sessions with other deaf children, for example. Ongoing liaison with the teacher of the deaf, whereby the needs of the child are identified and met, needs to be undertaken (RNID 2001).

### ***The social/emotional environment***

Deaf children need to feel part of the early years group. Many older deaf children and adults recall feeling isolated and different from other children when they entered educational contexts. Often this was because they could not see other children who used hearing aids or communicated using sign language (Sheridan 2000). They did not see themselves represented in the settings. Early years practitioners are aware of the need to show images of different racial groups and to have a range of culturally appropriate materials, regardless of whether children from different groups attend the setting. It is equally important to have positive images of children and adults with special needs, such as books with children in wheelchairs or using hearing aids as part of everyday life. It is essential for all children that differences are celebrated and not ignored. Children are aware that we are not 'all the same' and to pretend otherwise can damage the self-esteem of the deaf child who may feel that he or she is a failure in relation to hearing children (Ladd 1991).

Some deaf children will assume that they will not need hearing aids when they grow up as they do not see adults with hearing aids around them. If older deaf children and adults can spend time in the setting, this will enhance the deaf child's developing self-image. One deaf five-year-old had a visit to Father Christmas with his reception class. His excitement in discovering that Father Christmas had hearing aids was only matched by his annoyance that no one had told him this important fact before! It is important for all children, not just deaf children, to have their attention drawn to hearing aid users, in order to raise the status of this population.

### ***The listening environment***

The communication environment for the deaf child is enhanced if noise levels can be reduced. Carpet tiles, less noisy containers for equipment and blinds for windows can all help. Practitioners need to ensure that the child's hearing equipment is 'in, on and working' and parents and the teacher of the deaf can demonstrate replacing hearing aids that have fallen out of ears, or changing batteries. Other children will be interested in the equipment and it is important for the deaf child's self-esteem and acceptance that this is acknowledged and dealt with in a matter of fact way. For hearing children to be told that they are 'lucky' that they don't have to use the equipment or that 'poor Suzy' can't hear properly will not enhance the deaf child's status within the group or their own acceptance of their deafness. The aim should be to concentrate on what the child can do. One deaf parent brought a flashing light baby alarm and a vibrating alarm clock to his child's nursery class, much to the delight and admiration of all the children.

### ***The communication environment***

Communication is likely to be the biggest concern that the practitioner may have initially. Will the child understand the adults and children in the setting and will they understand the child? Getting to the child's level physically, so that the face can be seen, will help. Smiling and using a range of facial expressions and body language will aid communication as will use of gesture and visual support such as objects and pictures. Deaf children are often very skilled at getting their meaning across, even if they have very limited vocabulary, provided the environment is supportive and encouraging.

If the child has sign language as a first language it is as unrealistic for practitioners to learn BSL, as it would be for them to learn Somali or French if they had children who spoke those first languages. Learning a few important signs would be helpful, however, and the ability to understand key signs used by the child would ease frustration. It would be anticipated that a child using BSL would have a deaf, or fluent sign language user present in a supporting role but the child's teacher or key worker would also want to communicate directly with the child as much as possible. Some practitioners may have used Makaton, which is a collection of signs used to support English. It is not a sign language but may aid communication between the adult and child.

Deaf and hearing children in early years contexts may develop means of communication between themselves. It is important, however, that this is not just left to happen, as deaf children often lack experience of effective communication, including non-verbal skills. Pair and small group activities with adult support, particularly in the activities where the deaf child shows strengths, can encourage interaction. Hearing adults and children will need to appreciate that deaf children, particularly those from deaf families, will use touch for interaction more than hearing children and it is important that this is not misinterpreted as roughness. Children with limited linguistic skills may be more physical in their communication and this needs to be handled sensitively.

For children to be confident in a setting, they need to understand the routine. Visual means of explaining the sequence of the day, and of the week, as children get older, need to be used. Picture calendars showing the sequence of the day are important. So too are clear visual explanations of rules such as 'only 4 children in the play house' or when it will be the deaf child's turn to go on a bike. A hearing child will be given a verbal explanation but the deaf child may well not understand, will become frustrated and either withdraw from activities or take what they want.

### ***The learning environment***

#### ***Language development***

Deaf children may be placed in early years contexts with the aim of developing their delayed language. However, group situations may not be the best contexts for this. As Tizard and Hughes (1984), Wells (1986) and others found the quality of adults'

interactions with children at home is almost inevitably better than in contexts with a higher child–adult ratio and a different agenda. Even in care contexts for very young children, adults may feel constrained to use their language more for management than for supporting linguistic development (Jarvis and Lamb 2001). Following the child's interest, providing contingent utterances related to an individual's activities and modelling appropriate language may not be evident in all early years settings but are important for all children at an early stage in learning language (Wells 1986). For deaf children the situation is even more complex as the noise level in a group setting is likely to be such that it masks speech. A quiet setting for small group and individual activities, where appropriate language can be used, would be better. Interaction can include developing vocabulary for objects and activities in the setting which can be shared with the parents for generalisation at home. If the child is developing BSL, then a fluent signer would need to undertake the same activities, adapting and modifying signing input in relation to the signing abilities of the child (Harris 1992).

### *Group time*

In most care or education contexts there will be time when the children are in a large or small group with an adult for a story, discussion or other activity. These are often fairly quiet times, when the children are focused on one adult and where there is usually an expectation that people will speak one at a time. If the deaf child can see the adult clearly this will increase the chance of understanding what is said. If the adult repeats or summarises children's contributions then the deaf child will have some access to these. Spoken language will need to be supported by pictures or other visual aids. Stories told with props are more easily understood. It is important that time is allowed for looking at the props as the child cannot look at these and lipread at the same time. Due to different language levels it is unlikely that a story read to the group will be understood by the deaf child. A supporting adult will be able to sign the story for a child using BSL but the child cannot look at the interpreter and at pictures at the same time, so the pace needs to be appropriate. If a child has shared the group book with an adult on an individual basis in the setting or at home, then the child will be able to understand and contribute more easily in the group.

Video-taped stories can be impossible to understand without access to the sound track. Often only some events are portrayed visually and reasons and explanations are given orally. The deaf child sees a number of apparently unconnected events and has no access to the reasoning behind what has happened. Again, the learning context for the deaf child is limited, leading to potential problems understanding cause and effect except at a very basic level. Some cartoons can be understood visually and are often thoroughly enjoyed by deaf children. If the deaf child is a BSL user, then taped signed stories can be shown to the group in much the same way as one would share a book with a written script from another language. This again supports the child's feeling of being accepted and belonging in the group.

### *Developing areas of strength*

As with all children, it is important to develop deaf children's strengths. These will be individual but may include strong visual skills, an awareness of pattern and shape, the ability to complete picture puzzles quickly and an awareness of print in the environment. Deaf children may be interested in maps and plans and indeed may be skilled at identifying routes by visual cues. They may notice and be interested in numbers and may start to use these in pictures. Labels on photographs and objects may help a deaf child locate materials and matching the printed names with photographs of children in the group can help him or her to learn friends' names. Deaf children may begin developmental writing at much the same age as hearing children if others in the environment are writing and it is important that adults demonstrate the purpose and function of writing by, for example, giving instructions in print. Understanding that speech or signed communication can be written down can be helped by using speech bubbles in activities and stories.

Books for young children to read usually contain natural language so that the link can be made between spoken and written language. For deaf children, their language is likely to be different from that found in texts. Sentences in books will be longer than those the children are using and words such as 'it', 'the' and 'to' which do not appear in early speech and which are difficult to lipread will be present in print. If the deaf child is to make sense of what reading is about, then the child needs to read text at his or her own linguistic level. This may mean starting with home-made books with photos and pictures and basic texts generated by the practitioner on the computer such as 'Barbara jumping', 'John swinging', 'Peter's cup', 'big shoe', 'my drink', and so on. The teacher of the deaf would be able to identify the appropriate language level for an individual child. The appropriate choice of printed books to read is vital if deaf children are to learn that what they read can make sense. Books need to have limited and repeated vocabulary and sentence structures if they are to be understood. Again, advice would need to be sought from a teacher of the deaf.

### *The role of additional adult support*

An education or care context may be given funding for some hours of additional adult support. For a child with BSL as his or her first language, this would usually be a fluent sign language user. For a child developing English as a first language the adult would need good communication skills, including clear speech and lip patterns. In either case the child would need sensitive support; too much could lead to the child being isolated from peers, too little would mean that the child is not gaining enough linguistic input and interaction. Monkman's (1995) detailed observation of three deaf children attending their local nursery classes found that each child interacted with their supporting adult most of the time and had minimal interaction with other adults or with other children in the setting. Practitioners need to ensure that the child is not 'swamped' by too much support and thereby not allowed to develop independence and relationships with other children; however,

the child needs as far as possible to have access to the same information and language input as the other children. This balance is difficult to achieve and requires continual monitoring. In the water play scenario described earlier, Jessica's supporting adult, Pam, could have aided her understanding of what was going on without being intrusive. Pam has worked in the nursery class for four years and has undertaken a teaching assistants course. She has been involved in planning with the nursery teacher and nursery nurse in the provision. Together with the advisory teacher for the deaf, the early years team has been developing appropriate strategies for communication and supporting learning. The team is continually reflecting on practice and considering priorities for support.

Pam observes the three girls choosing their aprons for water play. They are arguing over who will have the red apron but she does not intervene. She helps another group of children organise themselves for painting. When the girls are settled at the water tray Pam observes the play until she sees that Jessica does not understand its representational nature. She joins the group and asks the girls about the pegs. She names Mummy, baby and the other pegs so that Jessica is clear that these are pretend people. Then she leaves them to carry on the game.

Pam notices the activity undertaken by the nursery nurse and notes in the home-link book the key words used. She writes these round a picture of the water tray so that Jessica can explain the activity to her parents and they can reinforce the vocabulary. She also records in Jessica's record book that this activity will need to be undertaken on an individual basis and which vocabulary needs to be used. When she has individual time with Jessica, Pam will use water play as a basis for interaction and will also use opportunities in other play activities to use the related vocabulary. At snack time she could talk about full/empty glasses, more fruit, another piece. The skill of a supporting adult is to identify the language and concepts that need to be developed and to bring them into everyday activities.

Pam sees that Jessica is watching the incident with the nursery nurse and the boy on the table. She explains to her, using mime as well as language, why the activity was dangerous and what might have happened. When the girls run out into the garden she watches from a distance but does not become involved in their chasing game. She takes a photo of the game using the new digital camera and will use this later in the day as a focus for discussion. Before Jessica goes home the photograph will be stuck in her home link book so that it can be discussed with her family.

## Discussion

There is a tradition of early years practitioners welcoming all children and including them in their settings. Current legislation and guidance expect this and provide structures, such as the Code of Practice and the development of the role of Special Needs Co-ordinators, to support this practice. Inclusion of children with special

needs in education and care contexts is part of a wider national agenda of developing a more inclusive, equitable society (Thomas 1997). For early years practitioners issues arise in relation to practice – what is the best way of including a particular child? This chapter suggests that practitioners need to work with families, and with professionals who have specific areas of expertise, in order to identify needs and develop appropriate strategies. Additionally, early years practitioners need to use their skills in observation to understand the process of learning in their setting and to identify when and how learning needs to be supported. The early years team in Jessica's nursery school observed and reflected on their practice and actively supported her inclusion. They also appreciated the extent to which her learning was affected by her language delay. As the nursery teacher noted: 'The trouble is, she looks the same as everyone else and you think she's learning the same as the others, but she's not.' Many included deaf children are 'invisible' in their education or care context and do not receive the support necessary to flourish. Only through an active process of observation, reflection and action can practitioners ensure that deaf children receive the quality care and education they deserve.

### **Useful source of information**

The Forest Bookshop, Unit 2, The New Building, Ellwood Rd, Milkwall, Coleford,  
Glos. GL16 7LE 01594 833858 [www.ForestBooks.com](http://www.ForestBooks.com)

This bookshop provides books on deafness, children's books and videos.

## Paper Seven

Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Tyler, D and Hamilton, P (2003)  
Parenting classes and personal development: issues for  
young offender institutions *Prison Service Journal* 145  
p19-21 ISSN 0300-3558

# PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

JANUARY 2003 NO 145



# PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

JANUARY 2003 NO. 145

## Contents

## Editorial Board

William Payne (*Editor*)  
NPD

Chris Barnett-Page  
HMP Wandsworth

Jamie Bennett  
HMP Whitemoor

Simon Boddis  
Thames Valley Area

Alan Constable  
HMP Winchester

The Reverend Alan Duck  
HMP Lincoln

John Evans  
HMP Leyhill

Jenny Fry (*PSJ Secretary*)  
HMP Leyhill

Carmel George  
SE Govt Office

Nigel Hancock  
Safer Custody Group

Peter J Leonard  
Northern Ireland Prison

Alan Longwell  
HMP Maghaberry

Roger Outlaw  
HMP Winchester

Dr Alison Rose-Quirie  
Group 4 HQ

Claudia Sturt  
HMP Erlestoke

Bronwen Thompson  
Security Group

John Tyror  
HMP Leyhill

Editorial Comment		1
Winston Churchill — Prison Reformer?	Jamie Bennett	2
Correctional Services: not waving but drowning	Rod Morgan	6
Investigating Performance and Change: a study of the Psychological Contract between the Prison Service and members of the Fast Track Manager Scheme.	Helga Swidenbank	9
Parenting Classes and Personal Development Issues for Young Offender Institutions	Joy Jarvis, Sally Graham, Dena Tyler and Penny Hamilton	19
The Restorative Role of Boards of Visitors	Tim Newell	21
Doing Hard Time: Older Women in Prison	Dr Azrini Wahidin	25
OASIS: A Restorative Justice Programme	James Jones	30
Blood, Sweat and Tears of Joy!	Bob Gibson	32
The Resettlement Pathfinders: a joint Prison/Probation project	Steve Pitts and Martin Kettle	34
Pain, Justice and the Hope of Redemption	Dr Chris Marshall	37
<b>Book Reviews</b>		43
Prison Sex: Practice and Policy <i>Edited by Christopher Hensley</i>	Steve Taylor	43
Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorder <i>by Len Bowers</i>	Jamie Bennett	45
No Truth No Justice <i>by Audrey Edwards</i>	Tim Newell	46
Vulnerable Inside: Children in Secure and Penal Settings <i>by Barry Goldson</i>	Steve Taylor	47
<b>Speech</b>		
Achieving Criminal Justice (the 2002 Rose Lecture)	Lord Woolf	48

The editorial board wishes to make clear that the views expressed by contributors are their own and need not reflect the official views or policies of the Prison Service.

Printed at HMP Leyhill on Challenger Velvet

Circulation approx 6,500

ISSN 0300-3558

© Crown Copyright 2003



### Critical Reflections

This project was generated by an existing piece of work. As Project Manager of the Fast Track Review, I was aware of the need to explore Scheme members' expectations. The Psychological Contract seemed the most useful vehicle for doing so. I considered Change Management as a second perspective. It appeared to fit with the direction of the Review and likely recommendations. However, I chose Marketing, as I was conscious of a need to ensure that the organisation presents itself honestly, without making promises to potential employees that it is unable to keep. If the project was a little light on the Marketing perspective, it is

because it was difficult to find suitable models to complement the Psychological Contract.

The questionnaire was a challenge. I drew on other research, notably Guest and Conway, 'The Psychological Contract in the Public Sector'. Whilst with hindsight, there appear to be some flaws in the questionnaire — perhaps too many prompts and too few questions about the marketing perspective — the response rate and data generated were satisfactory. The perceptions of personnel practice were no surprise. Other trends — for example, Scheme members' feelings of loyalty and commitment towards the Service, despite their perceptions of it as unethical — were. It would be interesting to explore these further.

# Parenting Classes and Personal Development

Issues for young offender institutions

*Joy Jarvis and Sally Graham of Hertfordshire University, and Dena Tyler and Penny Hamilton of the Education Department, HM YOI Aylesbury*

*'When I learnt that I was going to be a dad I was scared because I felt how could I teach someone else about life if I wasn't sure about it myself?'*  
Sam aged 19

This statement, made by a young man on a parenting course in a Young Offender Institution (YOI), illustrates both the problems and the potential involved in running these courses in this context. Sam was just starting his second custodial sentence. His son was two months old. As a way of trying to find out more about his new role Sam was participating in a 16 week 'Parentcraft' course open to all young offenders at HM YOI Aylesbury, except those precluded from attending due to the nature of their offence. The fact that he was attending this class was positive and suggests that he was reflecting on his life and was also prepared to take positive action to change. Becoming a parent can lead to reflection and change, and parenting classes are well placed

to take advantage of this potential growth point in a young man's life.

The provision of parenting classes in prisons and YOIs has expanded recently reflecting an awareness (i) of the needs of prisoners as parents for greater knowledge and skills in relation to their role; and, (ii) of the needs of the children involved for supportive parenting (Boswell and Wedge 2002). Courses have been developed to meet the needs of parents in custody and there has been increased emphasis on work with fathers. Parenting courses for young men in YOIs need to address a number of key issues:

- ☐ many will have had poor models of parenting and often limited involvement of fathers in their upbringing;

- ❑ several will have young children of their own, often babies, of whom they will have little knowledge and with whom they will have limited contact; and, perhaps most significantly,
- ❑ these young men are themselves still adolescents with immature cognitive, social and emotional skills and who are still developing their own identities.

Parenting courses can therefore support personal development as well as understanding and skills related to children and the role of parents.

Developing a sense of self and one's place in the world is a focus of adolescence. This can be both a problem for parenting classes, when one is attempting to focus on the needs of others, particularly partners and children, but it can also give opportunities for self-development. Developing an understanding of the perspectives of others is a vital social skill but difficult for young people who can be very much centred on themselves and their own needs. Young men on the Aylesbury course, for example, were able to articulate how it would be for them when they left prison and went home, but many found it difficult to view the scenario from the perspective of their young child. Talking about this, using case studies, can help these young men to begin to understand their child's perspective and can also lead to more reflection on the needs of other people in general.

Successful parenting requires a level of social and emotional maturity which many young men have not yet achieved. Self-esteem can be low and opportunities to think about the emotional needs of a child and how to develop his/her self-esteem can help a young man to focus on positive aspects of himself. This can be modelled by staff teaching the course and is also helped by the development of communication skills.

Communication is a key focus on the parenting course at Aylesbury. This includes looking at early facial and gestural communication by babies and toddlers, which can also support an understanding of the role of non-verbal communication in general. Knowing the importance of body language, for example, can lead to an increased awareness of one's own communication in different contexts. Activities on the course include looking at different responses to situations and identifying positive and negative approaches. Identifying possible consequences as a result of saying something positive or negative about a child's attempt to make a car out of bricks, for example, can lead to a more general understanding of the effect of communication. Young men on the course also practise the skills involved: they will

be expected, for example, to make at least one positive statement about another student's piece of work during a feedback session.

Developing one's identity in adolescence includes the issue of gender. In an attempt to emphasise maleness, young men may reject anything that appears feminine and this is likely to include relating to babies and young children. This emphasis on masculine attributes and opinions is likely to be exacerbated in a YOI. Young men on the Aylesbury course often express stereotypical views of gender roles and say that they do not want to talk about 'love and all that crap.' The opportunity to talk about this very topic, in the 'safe' environment of a parenting course can be supportive of their own personal development and can provide a setting where a range of otherwise 'taboo' topics related to personal relationships can be discussed.

Young men in general often find it easier to relate to older children rather than to babies and toddlers. As the fathers in a YOI will have young children, time is devoted to looking at video examples of adult-child interaction and discussing these. The quality of attention paid to these examples and the level of subsequent discussion, suggests that the emotional nature of the relationships shown is appreciated. Appropriate ways of showing affection can be identified, an area which may confuse some young men. It is often easier for them to identify ways of relating to sons rather than daughters, and again this mirrors issues found in the general population of young fathers (Marsiglio and Cohan 1997).

The parenting course can help young fathers explore the needs of all young children and the similar and different needs of boys and girls and how and why these arise. It can also help young men see the importance of different influences on children and how this affects their development. In turn this will help some of them to reflect on themselves and the influences on their lives. One young man on the Aylesbury course asked staff: 'Can a child be born evil?' Many will have been given, and accepted, negative labels and the notion that this status is not predetermined and irrevocable can help young men to accept the possibility of change in their behaviour. Showing the young men that the parent needs to say; 'That behaviour is bad,' not 'You're bad,' can help them to see the difference in relation to their own conduct.

Young men developing their identities may come to include the role of 'father' as part of this. The higher profile of fathers in the media currently may help with this process, particularly role models

who are sporting heroes such as David Beckham. The knowledge that they have a parental role can encourage young men in YOIs to plan more positively for the future and to decide to make changes in their lives. Research conducted for The Prince's Trust (2001) suggested that often disadvantaged young people are too depressed to think about the future and tend to live a day at a time. Accepting a parenting role can help a young man to plan for the future.

Parenting courses in YOIs have been evaluated positively in terms of outcomes related to the retention of knowledge and the expression of changes in attitudes to such things as managing children's behaviour by participants (Dennison and Lyon 2001). Many young men participate enthusiastically and at Aylesbury two courses are run in parallel to cope with the demand. A positive experience on a course like this may encourage a young man to enroll on other education courses. Developing confidence in handling books on a

parenting course and the perception of the need to develop skills such as literacy to help his child may also lead to a greater interest in education. Perhaps as well as looking at outcomes in relation to the development of fatherhood skills, parenting courses also need to be evaluated in relation to their contribution to the personal development of the young men involved at a crucial point in their lives.

### References

- Boswell, G. and Wedge, P. (2002) *Imprisoned Fathers and their Children*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Dennison, C. and Lyon, J. (2001) *Young Offenders, Fatherhood and the Impact of Parenting Training*. Brighton: Trust for the Study of Adolescence.
- Marsiglio, W. and Cohan, M. (1997) *Young Fathers and Child Development* in Lamb, M. *The Role of the Father in Child Development*. 3rd Edition. New York: John Wiley.
- The Prince's Trust (2001) *It's Like That: the views and hopes of disadvantaged young people*. London: The Prince's Trust.

# The Restorative Role of Boards of Visitors

*Tim Newell, former Governor of Winchester and Grendon & Spring Hill prisons, now working for the Butler Trust and in support of a number of restorative justice initiatives.*

**The role of the Board of Visitors as representatives of the community gives them a unique opportunity to inform and influence the way a prison thinks about its work in relation to those it serves – prisoners, their families, victims of crime, their communities of care, headquarters and Ministers. The paradigm shift involved in prisons thinking of their role and their impact on crime in restorative ways is unlikely to come from within the Service. The current mind set of prisons is naturally offender- and staff-centred, and driven by current managerial imperatives that bear little relation to the real needs of those most directly affected by crime – victims, offenders and their communities. Boards of Visitors stand apart from these assumptions and think wider about the context of the work of the prison and the context of the behaviour that brings people into custody.**

Restorative Justice stresses that we take crime seriously because one person has been harmed by the wrongful acts of another. It is the concrete damage which crime causes that is the problem, partly material but mainly psychological and relational. Being a victim of crime is a deeply traumatic occurrence because it damages the person's sense of autonomy, order and relatedness. There is thus a need for justice to repair this psychological and relational damage.

All crimes are experienced as attacks on the person. They challenge our belief that the world is an orderly, meaningful place and our belief and confidence in personal autonomy. Restorative approaches takes this context as being the prime focus for justice's attention and includes victim, offender and their communities of care in seeking to reach agreements about what should happen as a result of the harm brought about by crime. The emphasis is upon bringing about and sustaining

## Paper Eight

Jarvis, J (2003) 'It's more peaceful without any support': what do deaf pupils think about the support they receive in mainstream schools? *Support for Learning* 18, 4 p162-169 ISSN 0268 2141

# Support for Learning

## British Journal of Learning Support

### Special issue

Support staff in mainstream schools

### Also in this issue

Chronic renal failure

Asylum seekers in school

Autistic spectrum conditions

Changing Horizons: 9

### REVIEWS

VOLUME 18  
NUMBER 4  
NOVEMBER 2003

# Support for Learning

British Journal of  
Learning Support

*Editor*

**Dr Caroline Roaf**

Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford  
Brookes University, Oxford OX2 9AT  
(to whom all articles for publication  
should be submitted).

*Reviews Editor*

**Chris Marshall**

PO Box 7283, Nottingham NG8 2WH.

*Chair of Editorial Board*

**Dr Christina Tilstone**

*Editorial Board*

M. Buultjens

T. Cole

P. Cunningham

A. Donnelly

R. Gerrish

J. Holford

M. Meredith-Jones

T. Muldowney

S. Pearson

F. Quinn

A. Williams

## IN THIS ISSUE

*Editorial* 146

*Articles*

*Andrew Howes*

Teaching reforms and the impact of paid adult support on  
participation and learning in mainstream schools 147

*Hilary Cremin, Gary Thomas and Karen Vincett*

Learning zones: an evaluation of three models for improving  
learning through teacher/teaching assistant teamwork 154

*Joy Jarvis*

'It's more peaceful without any support': what do deaf pupils  
think about the support they receive in mainstream schools? 162

*Konstantina Poursanidou, Philip Garner, Alan Watson  
and Roger Stephenson*

Difficulties and support at school for children following  
renal transplantation: a case study 170

*Lucy Clarke*

Supporting asylum seekers in school 177

*Tricia Clark*

Post-16 provision for those with autistic spectrum conditions:  
some implications of the Special Educational Needs and  
Disability Act 2001 and the Special Educational Needs  
Code of Practice for Schools 184

*Changing Horizons: No. 9*

*Mike Gordon*

Inclusion: on the move? 190

*Notes on contributors*

193

*REVIEWS*

194

## 'It's more peaceful without any support': what do deaf pupils think about the support they receive in mainstream schools?

JOY JARVIS

---

Our third article turns its attention to the views of young people on the support they receive in school, with deaf education supplying a particularly useful context to explore this issue. Here Joy Jarvis describes a research project carried out to establish what the pupils saw as facilitating or inhibiting their inclusion in a mainstream context. She concludes that in addition to the benefits of specialist teaching and sensitive support in class, more attention should be paid to the development of peer support.

---

### The context

In the UK the majority of pupils with a hearing loss (here described as 'deaf') are educated in mainstream schools (Eatough, 2000). Their special educational needs in this context are related to communication. These include potential difficulties in understanding the spoken language of teachers and peers and being understood by others. Additionally, if their development of English is delayed, there will be problems understanding and producing written texts. Clearly this can lead to significant issues for pupils' social and academic inclusion. The potential for deaf pupils in mainstream contexts to experience low self-esteem and social isolation has been well documented (Ladd, 1991; Stinson and Lang, 1994; Gregory, Bishop and Sheldon, 1995). Academically, deaf children achieve less well on average than their hearing peers, although there are examples of high achieving deaf pupils (Powers, Gregory and Thoutenhoofd, 1998). A recent review of good practice in deaf education (Powers et al, 1999) identified high quality support as an important factor in the successful inclusion of deaf pupils into mainstream schools. A range of professionals, in addition to mainstream teachers and

special educational needs coordinators, can potentially be involved in a deaf pupil's support. This would normally include a teacher of the deaf who has undertaken training to achieve the mandatory qualification for teaching deaf pupils. Additionally, there is likely to be the involvement of one or more teaching assistants or communication support workers, the latter using some form of sign communication, usually British Sign Language or Sign Supported English.

### Support for deaf pupils

Studies looking at support for deaf pupils show a range of ways in which this is undertaken. As Lynas (1999) suggests, there is no one right way, but rather different ways to provide support taking into account individual needs, communication methods and school contexts. 'Indirect' support is often given by teachers of the deaf. This can include raising the profile of deafness within the school, giving advice and training to teachers and assistants, undertaking deaf awareness sessions for hearing pupils, liaising with external professionals and with parents, checking and monitoring the use of specialist hearing equipment such as radio aids, planning with teachers and assistants and identifying appropriate strategies and resources for use within the classroom. More 'direct' support can include supporting a pupil's access to a lesson by pre- or post-tutoring, working with the pupil within the classroom, or withdrawing individuals or small groups of deaf, or deaf and hearing pupils, into another room for part or the whole of a lesson. Direct support for deaf pupils can also involve discussing social or emotional issues and explaining aspects of hearing loss and its effects.

Teaching assistants are most likely to spend the majority of their time undertaking direct in-class support for the pupils, including clarifying information and note taking, although they may also be involved in checking equipment,

preparing resources and also working on preparatory and follow-up activities for lessons or teaching additional aspects of work. Communication support workers will undertake similar work to that of teaching assistants but will specifically translate the spoken language used by the teacher and pupils into British Sign Language and voice-over the deaf pupil's signed contribution to the lesson.

## The research project

The amount and type of support deaf pupils receive varies greatly depending on individual needs, availability of resources and school and LEA policy (Powers et al., 1999). Issues arising include those that have been identified as problematic when supporting other groups of children with special needs, such as the danger of over-supporting pupils, and achieving the balance between support to access the curriculum and support to meet the child's individual learning needs (Jerwood, 1999; Rose, 2000). The training of assistants and the collaboration between staff have also been identified as issues (Monkman and Baskind, 1998). What, however, do pupils think of the support they receive in school? The views of pupils with special educational needs are being more actively sought, in line with guidance from the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) and with the increased profile of children's rights (Sinclair Taylor, 2000). Projects undertaken to obtain the views of pupils suggest that teachers and others can gain a great deal from these insights and that they can be used to inform practice in both primary and secondary school contexts (Bearne, 2002; Hamill and Boyd, 2002; NDCS, 1990; 2001). In 2001 a research team from the University of Hertfordshire was commissioned by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) to undertake a Department for Education and Skills (DfES) funded project to ascertain the views of deaf pupils on their inclusion in mainstream schools. The aim was to document what the pupils saw as facilitating or inhibiting their inclusion in a mainstream context. All educational authorities in England were asked if they would like to participate in the project. From those who responded positively a sample of pupils was chosen to represent different communication modes and levels of deafness. Sixty-one deaf pupils and 22 hearing pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 in 25 schools in different geographical locations in England were interviewed (see figure 1). This age group was chosen because pupils could reflect on at least two school contexts: primary and secondary. They were also closer to their primary experience than older secondary pupils would be and therefore, perhaps, more able to identify similarities and contrasts in their experiences in different schools.

The type of provision in the schools visited varied: 15 schools had specialist provision for deaf pupils such as hearing impaired units; three schools had special educational needs bases but no dedicated provision for deaf pupils; and seven schools had no specialist provision on site but were visited by peripatetic teachers of the deaf. The deaf pupils

had a range of hearing loss from moderate to profound. During the interviews 34 deaf pupils chose to communicate orally and 27 used signing (see figure 2). All interviews were video and audio taped and both deaf and hearing researchers were involved in the process of data collection.

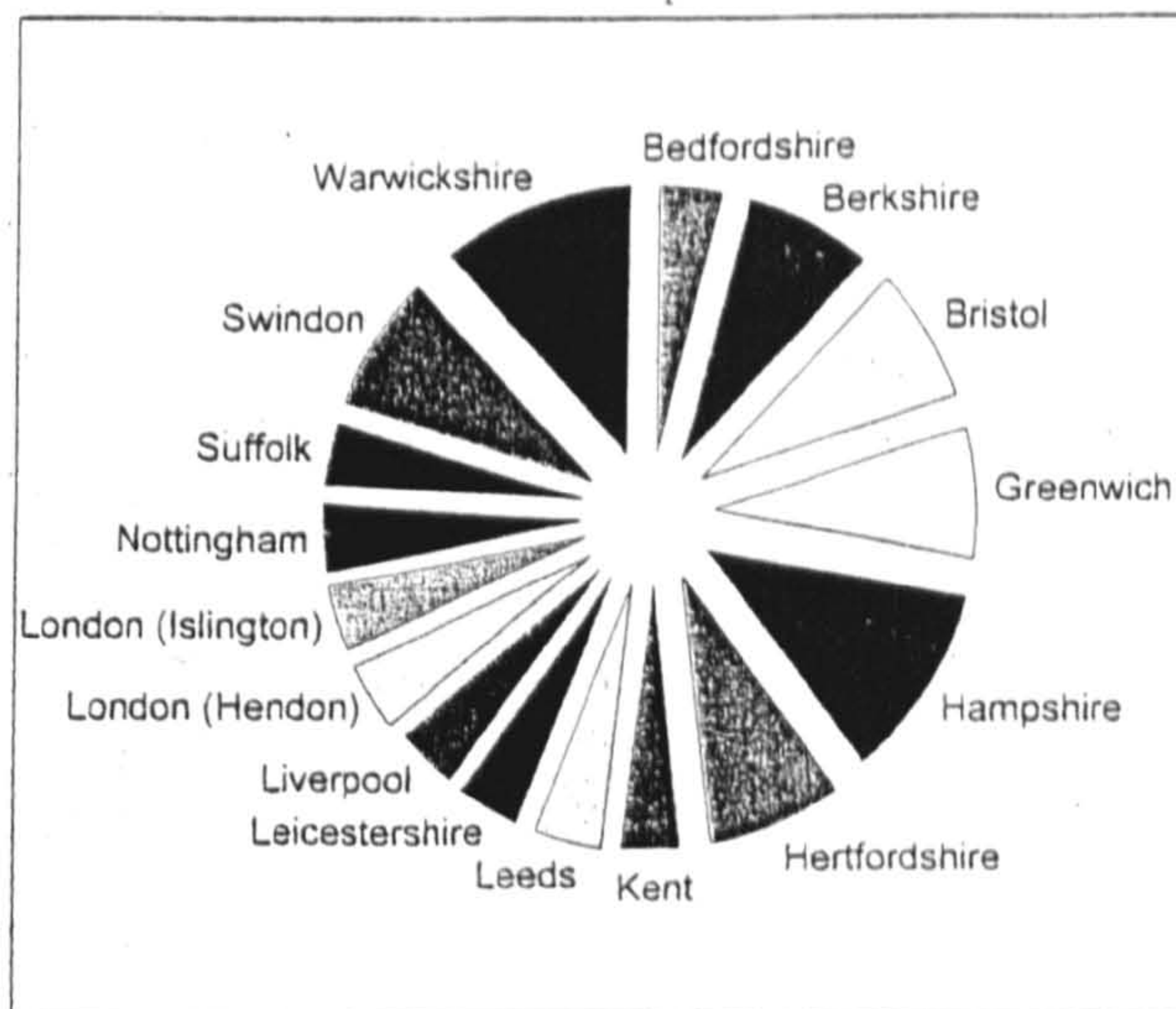


Figure 1. Geographical distribution of schools

Year group			Gender		Level of hearing/deafness					Communication mode	
7	8	9	M	F	Hearing	Moderate	Severe	Profound	Cochlear Implant	Signing	Oral
29	32	22	39	44	22	19	17	21	4	27	34

Figure 2. Pupils' profile

Both individual and focus group discussions were undertaken. This was in order to include as many children as possible and to obtain as high quality data as possible. Some pupils will be more confident in a group situation while others may prefer to discuss sensitive issues on an individual basis. Using both approaches can lead to a range of data being obtained (Hill, Laybourn and Borland, 1996). Thirty-nine deaf pupils took part in one-to-one interviews, and 22 deaf and 22 hearing pupils were involved in focus group discussions over a period of six months. Both individual interviews and focus group discussions were carried out within a constructivist framework and the research team used a variety of tools both to maintain interest and to allow pupils to express themselves in the manner that suited them best. These included the use of mind-maps, repertory grids, question and answer scenarios, discussion about pictures, role play with puppets and the exploration of metaphors. This produced a rich database that was analysed using computer software to identify key themes. The resulting report, *Inclusion: what deaf pupils think*, was published in 2002 (UH/RNID, 2002). The aim was for the voice of the pupil to be heard and for emerging themes to arise from the data, rather than being identified beforehand. One of the aspects of provision that the pupils commented upon in some detail was the support they received, and it is their views on this aspect of their provision that will be discussed.

## Deaf pupils' views on their support

### Support from teachers of the deaf

Indirect support provided by teachers of the deaf to colleagues and others was generally not commented upon by the pupils involved in the study and it is unclear whether they were aware of the extent of this work. A few pupils did comment on aspects such as the provision of an environment where deaf pupils were given extra consideration. One pupil talked about the arrangements for the interview with the research team and generalised to the idea that the deaf pupils were acknowledged as needing positive discrimination (page numbers noted are from the UH/RNID 2002 report):

*I like the way they can arrange stuff like this to happen so, like, they don't just treat me like, oh I'm another person. They don't just say 'oh you're deaf, whatever, you can carry on'. They actually say you can come up here and you can talk to someone about it. I'm treated a bit more than other people are, which I don't think is very fair but it's still quite good for me. They're not just acknowledging me like another person, they get to arrange other things for me and stuff. Good special needs arrangements.*

Year 7 female pupil, moderate hearing loss, oral (p. 41)

This acknowledgement of difference in a positive manner leading to additional provision can contribute to an inclusive school ethos, which is vital for successful inclusion (Powers et al., 1999). Another means of developing a positive ethos in the school is for the teacher of the deaf to raise deaf awareness amongst hearing pupils. A few deaf pupils commented on this:

*In Year 7, in PSE, we do this special hearing thing where they [the hearing pupils] get taught about it and they do things like try out radio aids in the science lesson so they understand about it.*

Year 8 female pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 42)

*I remember once, the unit teacher invited everybody, well not everybody but some classes and we had a discussion, well, she talked to hearing people about deafness. I do think that helps and some people came up and said hello after that lesson.*

Year 8 male pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 43)

Raising awareness of deafness has to be done with sensitivity. One pupil felt that information given in this way could be used against deaf pupils, whilst another was happy to have general information given to other pupils but would not want herself to be identified in any way. A third found personal involvement in the deaf awareness process embarrassing. This indicates that deaf pupils should be consulted about deaf awareness activities being undertaken with hearing pupils and about their own involvement in these.

*Sometimes it's bad [to give information to hearing pupils] because, for example, they say, 'Make sure you move your mouth' and that. Then some people would probably go round not moving their mouths when trying to speak about us.*

Year 7 female pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 48)

*It would ruin everything, it would just ruin everything ... Everyone would know and then they would talk about you and it just wouldn't feel right. You would like to have your friends, who you'd speak to every day at school and that and let them know what it's all about but you wouldn't want the whole school knowing 'cause it's just no point really, 'cause you're not going to speak to the whole school every day are you? I think they should know about hearing loss and stuff but, personally, I wouldn't really like one of them to know everything about me.*

Year 8 female pupil, moderate hearing loss, oral (p. 48)

*Once, in Year 7, we had to tell them [hearing pupils] all about our hearing aids and everything and I felt so humiliated. I felt so embarrassed about it.*

Year 8 female pupil, moderate hearing loss, oral (p. 78)

A key aspect of indirect support for deaf pupils is planning for how they should be supported. Discussions are usually undertaken with support staff and mainstream teachers in order to identify contexts where support is needed. In some provisions the deaf pupils are fully involved in the decision making, whereas in others they are not.

*They [teacher of the deaf and support staff] decide what's best. Because there are so many people in the unit, they split up the time about what lesson they go to.*

Year 8 male pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 53)

*The lady, the teacher of the deaf, picks them [classes to have support in] and I've a timetable.*

Year 8 male pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 53)

Twelve of the pupils interviewed said that they had been involved in discussions with teachers of the deaf about the level of support they would like and in which lessons they did and didn't require help. The other pupils appeared not to have been involved in the planning process. In some instances pupils reported having help in lessons where they didn't feel it was needed, while requiring more help elsewhere. At the very least pupil involvement in planning for support will aid the decision-making process. It should also help pupils take more responsibility for using support effectively, which will be increasingly important as they get older. An opportunity for pupils to talk with teachers of the deaf, regularly and confidentially, about their support would also seem to be necessary. Deaf pupils may have to rely extensively on one or two people and if problems arise they need an identified way in which to raise issues.

*I have been with this [support] teacher for a long time and I have had enough of her. Sometimes I like her but sometimes I don't. I want to tell [the teacher of the deaf] but I'm scared that she would tell her. I don't know what to do.*

Year 8 male pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 66)

In relation to direct work with deaf pupils, teachers of the deaf were identified as being easier to communicate with than mainstream teachers and were often seen as the person who could sort out problems and offer emotional as well as academic support:

*Sometimes we go with Miss, it's a bit like a therapy thingy, where you start discussing your feelings and that.*

Year 7 male pupil, moderate hearing loss, oral (p. 42)

*I've had some problems with my friends and Miss is just a shoulder there. They're just like a teacher should be.*

Year 8 female pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 62)

*She helps me if I have some problems, if I have a problem we talk.*

Year 8 male pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 62)

In relation to academic support pupils reported that teachers of the deaf, both those based in a unit and those who visited the school on a peripatetic basis, helped them with work they found difficult and with revision for exams. Sometimes this support was given when the need arose, while for other pupils there were timetabled teaching sessions from the teacher of the deaf. A quarter of the deaf pupils interviewed had some classes taught on a withdrawal basis, often in a unit classroom. Pupils perceived that this was because the work was harder in the mainstream and that they needed help in order to achieve an appropriate standard for full classroom inclusion. They tended to see this as a temporary measure until they were able to be fully included.

*If I'm really stuck on something, like French or something, I do go there [the unit] and Miss [teacher of the deaf] helps me and then I get back to class...*

Year 8 female pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 51)

*I don't go to mainstream classes because I am not very good with English. As soon as I am I will go to mainstream classes.*

Year 7 male pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 51)

The issue of whether or not pupils should undertake some work in separate contexts has been discussed in relation to both deaf pupils and others with special needs (Powers et al., 1999). Some practitioners argue that the practice isolates pupils with special needs from the rest of the class while others suggest that it allows for more appropriate teaching. In relation to deaf pupils, discrete provision for periods of time can allow for work on the

development of English and, for some pupils, British Sign Language. It can give pupils the opportunity of working in an acoustically appropriate environment and of preparing work, which can enable them to work more effectively in mainstream classes (Bennett and Lynas, 2001). *A Review of Good Practice in Deaf Education* (Powers et al., 1999) argues that: 'The goal of inclusion is supported, not undermined, by a component of separate, discrete specialist provision for deaf pupils' (p. 4).

#### Support from mainstream teachers

The deaf pupils interviewed talked more about mainstream teachers than teachers of the deaf, perhaps because they were in mainstream classes most of the time or because, in some instances, interactions with them were problematic. The pupils reported a number of instances where they perceived mainstream teachers as not understanding their needs, including examples of teachers asking them to remove radio hearing aids on the assumption that they were music systems. The pupils also reported the many ways in which mainstream teachers supported them during lessons. These support strategies were very simple but clearly effective and were seen by the pupils involved as worth reporting. These were:

- speaking clearly and repeating what's been said
- not talking for too long
- making sure the speaker's face is visible for lip-reading
- checking comprehension
- using visual support for language, such as pictures
- using practical activities in lessons
- using a microphone appropriately (not shouting into it, turning it off or leaving it on the desk)
- keeping the noise level in the classroom low
- monitoring other pupils' behaviour so that the deaf child is not teased and is included in activities
- demonstrating that the deaf child's needs are understood.

It is interesting that the majority of these strategies would be important for the hearing children in the class too.

*When you're stuck on work, they come over and help you out.*

Year 8 male pupil, moderate hearing loss, oral (p. 59)

*I like the way teachers always make sure that you've understood things.*

Year 7 male pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 59)

*My favourite teacher is Science. She's good at showing me books and pictures to help me understand.*

Year 9 female pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 59)

*He [one of the pupil's favourite mainstream teachers] takes off the mike if he's shouting at someone.*

Year 7 male pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 46)

*... if I sit there and something is in the way and I can't see what she is saying, she always moves to let me see her.*

Year 9 male pupil, profound hearing loss, oral (p. 47)

While pupils see particular strategies as important and appreciate teachers who use them, they also like these strategies to be used unobtrusively. As one girl noted 'in secondary school, it's a lot about image.' Pupils do not want to be singled out in front of their peers, nor do they want their different treatment highlighted. For teachers it is important to use supportive strategies but not to be seen to be using them too overtly.

*When we were sitting in a circle [during a mainstream class] we were all talking, including myself, and she [the teacher] told everyone to be quiet. She started saying, 'You need to be quiet because we've got a deaf person.' After she'd finished, you get them all looking at you and you're like, erm.*

Year 8 female pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 78)

*Sometimes they're good, they look at you when they're explaining things. Sometimes they just look at you but then sometimes they really just look at you for ages. And then you want them to look at someone else and then you won't feel a bit uncomfortable. They do it because they think, 'Oh, she's got to lip-read me, 'cause she can't hear me' and stuff like that.*

Year 8 female pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 81)

Deaf pupils need particular consideration and support from mainstream teachers and the reasons for this need to be clear to all involved and for this to be seen by hearing pupils as fair. In relation to behaviour, a key aspect of management noted in the *RNID Review of Good Practice in Deaf Education* (Powers et al., 1999) was that the same standards applied to everyone. Some deaf pupils in this study felt that they were 'picked on' by teachers who didn't appreciate that they may have misunderstood or not heard instructions. In other instances hearing pupils felt that deaf peers sometimes 'got away with things' because they were deaf.

*Yeah, it just makes you feel very envious, jealous, when he gets into trouble, he can just get out of it by fiddling with his hearing aid!*

Two Year 8 male pupils, hearing (p. 38)

None of the hearing pupils expressed envy with regard to deaf pupils' additional support, whether from mainstream teachers or others. On the contrary they felt sympathetic that this was seen to be necessary:

*I think, if they already know what they're doing, then they get it explained again, they just want to get on with it.*

Year 8 female pupil, hearing (p. 89)

In-class support from teachers, teaching assistants, communication support workers

The majority of deaf pupils interviewed had some in-class support. Five pupils reported that they had no in-class support. They had received some in Year 7 but were seen as no longer needing it. Most pupils did not have support all the time, for example in practical lessons such as PE, art and drama support was often not given. Those pupils needing signing communication tended to have a higher level of support. Strong opinions were expressed by deaf pupils about their in-class support. They were not always clear about the status of the people involved, whether they were teachers, teaching assistants (sometimes referred to as learning support assistants) or communication support workers, but they were clear about what they found helpful or unhelpful about the support they gave.

Pupils generally reported that they did need support some of the time and some noted that they found it difficult to access some lessons without support:

*I don't really like French, I don't understand it. I have no communicators with me. It's quite hard. I get communicators twice a week and they help me a lot.*

Year 9 female pupil, moderate hearing loss, signing (p. 79)

*I do go to mainstream lessons. It's difficult because I can't follow all the time. I would prefer to go with an interpreter.*

Year 7 female pupil, severe hearing loss, signing (p. 80)

The role of the person giving support in helping pupils to understand what the teacher was saying in the lesson, or to follow other input such as video or audio tapes, was clearly important. Sometimes this would involve repeating what had been said, in speech or sign, or taking notes:

*A lady comes with me and the teacher talks and if I missed it she writes it down and then she helps me with the work.*

Year 8 male pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 63)

*If we have an exercise where we have to listen to a recorder and stuff, I can't hear that well and I can't understand what they're saying. I need help to figure out what they're saying...*

Year 8 male pupil, moderate hearing loss, oral (p. 63)

In addition to helping with interpretation pupils reported that those providing in-class support helped them to understand the work and assisted if they were having difficulties with undertaking writing or other activities:

*They make sure I've understood and they help me with my work.*

Year 7 male pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 65)

Pupils also saw those providing in-class support as keeping them on task and ensuring that they worked hard, which perhaps led to the comment by a Year 9 pupil that: 'it's more peaceful without any support'(p. 66).

The issue of independence and how pupils with special educational needs can make decisions about how much support they need arises at the planning stage and again within the classroom. Some of the pupils were quite clear that they were the ones who asked for support when they felt it was needed and saw themselves as taking the initiative in asking for help.

*I have an interpreter in English classes but she only interprets when I'm stuck.*

Year 9 female pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 66)

Other pupils certainly felt that they were over-supported at times. The suggested reasons pupils gave for this practice included support assistants feeling that they had to ensure that the pupils were doing the right thing at all times as that was their job and even that they would intervene to help pupils because otherwise they would 'get bored'.

*At school, helpers in lessons keep prodding me and asking me if I'm alright, that sort of thing, they try to do my work for me! I mean, I think if the LSAs get bored, they just try to help me; they don't like sitting there with nothing to do. The teachers, they've got a whole class so they tend to leave me alone but the LSAs are trying to help just me so I don't get a lot of peace.*

Year 9 female pupil, profound hearing loss, oral (p. 64)

*Some of them always help me so they can annoy you because you don't want them to help you a lot.*

Year 8 male pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 64)

*I know this is a really rude thing to say but I've got to be totally honest, sometimes the support teacher can be really annoying, really annoying. You just want to be like everyone else, don't you? But, and do your work as well, then they, like, you've got some support teacher nagging you ... they just sit next to you and they just talk to you, and asking you questions all the time and just get so fed up of it all.*

Year 8 female pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 64)

*The communicator tends to forget that we are not children! She would take our work and check them to see if they are good. Sometimes she feels the need to explain everything when I understood before. Sometimes when I stop writing, realising that I have made a mistake, she would leap to the rescue, asking if I wanted any help. Often I said no but she would push me aside and take my work to check. I wish I could conjure something that would freeze her at least for a few minutes.*

Year 8 male pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 66)

It is salutary to hear pupils speak so eloquently about their feelings of being over-supported at times. The support role is extremely difficult and requires an awareness of the pupils' need for a level of autonomy and an understanding that making mistakes is part of the learning process. It also requires a whole-school approach to identifying the role of support personnel and strategies for involving them in planning, the preparation of resources and support for the teacher and for the lesson as a whole, as well as for the individual pupil. The need for clear policies, and time for the teacher of the deaf or special needs coordinator to monitor the process of support, cannot be overemphasised. Nor too can the importance of obtaining pupils' views on their support. It is unlikely that these pupils had expressed the views presented here to staff in their schools.

One activity undertaken during the focus group discussions was for deaf pupils to write individually in a speech bubble something they would like to say to, or ask, their hearing peers. Hearing pupils were asked to do the same for deaf peers. The speech bubbles were put into a group envelope so that they were anonymous. One hearing boy wrote: 'Do you get annoyed with having teachers around you most of the time?' Young teenagers in general do not appreciate having adults with them all the time and one problem identified with in-class support was that the adults involved could interfere with peer group relationships. This can be the case particularly in a signing context as conversations can be observed from a distance.

*The communication support teacher often watches me talking with my classmate and I can't tell her not to look otherwise I will upset her. She sometimes joins in by asking questions about whatever we talk about, which I don't like. I want her to look away.*

Year 9 female pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 47)

#### Support from peers

The pupils involved in this research project made more comments about friends than about any other topic. Friendship was a key aspect of their lives and they also identified the support they received from friends:

*It's my mates that make me go through school. If I'm having a bad day, it's friends who talk to me about what I can do. Friends are the best thing.*

Year 8 male pupil, moderate hearing loss, oral (p. 94)

The majority of deaf pupils stated that they had both deaf and hearing friends and that they liked this mix. With deaf friends they could communicate more easily and felt they were with peers who understood their needs and situation. Having hearing friends opened up the possibility of having a wider circle of friends with a range of interests. As well as providing support for social inclusion, pupils identified help they received from peers in lessons. This could include additional explanations from peers or in group work, where ideas could be shared and developed.

*Sometimes my friends tell me [what the teacher is saying] and they explain it as well.*

Year 8 male pupil, moderate hearing loss, oral (p. 87)

*You're basically working and then you know what people are doing, their ideas and that. I find it easier in a group than working on my own.*

Year 7 female pupil, moderate hearing loss, oral (p. 87)

*I like the way we do reading all together rather than doing it separately, so that we can do some work on it all together afterwards.*

Year 7 male pupil, severe hearing loss, oral (p. 85)

Sometimes teachers can make decisions about seating and grouping pupils that individuals see as not helping their work or the development of their friendships. While these decisions are made for a variety of reasons it is important that deaf pupils do have opportunities to socialise, to be off task and to work with those with whom they can communicate easily, in the interest of both academic and social inclusion.

*It's easier to work with people who sign.*

Year 8 male pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 87)

*They [teachers] give you seating plans, which is bad because you can't sit with your friends.*

Year 7 female pupil, severe hearing loss, signing (p. 87)

*Hearing classmates are not nice and I don't feel right. It would be better if I had my deaf friend with me. The teacher said she had to separate us. I was angry inside. She said she preferred if she separated us but I didn't like it.*

Year 9 female pupil, profound hearing loss, signing (p. 87)

Hearing pupils also reported that their deaf friends could help them with particular subjects – one Year 9 pupil reporting that his deaf friend was better than he was in some subjects. If they are to provide mutual support then deaf and hearing pupils need to develop strategies for understanding each other. Communication with deaf people requires the use of a range of strategies that the hearing pupils who had deaf friends could identify, but which they had tended to develop through trial and error. Perhaps other pupils had tried but had not achieved effective communication. One could argue that deaf awareness sessions for all hearing pupils should be an essential foundation if deaf pupils are to be included in mainstream classes. Deaf pupils, too, need specific sessions on dealing with interaction in mainstream contexts and how to manage communication breakdowns.

## Conclusion

Support for deaf pupils in mainstream schools involves a range of activities undertaken by a number of different people. Work undertaken by specialist teachers to raise the

profile of deafness and to develop an inclusive school ethos is likely to have significant impact on the inclusion of deaf children. Practical strategies used consistently but unobtrusively by mainstream teachers can enable deaf pupils to access lessons more effectively. Specialist teaching and sensitive in-class support can enable increased academic inclusion. Planning for this support needs to involve pupils in order to be most effective and to support their developing independence. This support needs to be monitored and opportunities need to be given for pupils to have input into this monitoring.

The importance of peers, for both social and academic inclusion, mirrors findings in other projects (Bearne, 2002) and suggests that a higher profile needs to be given to peer support and how this can be facilitated. Peer support can be given by other deaf pupils in the school while, for those who are individually included in their local school, opportunities for meeting with other deaf pupils need to be provided (Moore, Dash and Bristow, 1999). Hearing pupils need guidance on ways in which to communicate with deaf pupils, while deaf pupils need help to develop ways to manage communication breakdowns (Lloyd, 1999).

While this study is a small research project in one particular field of special needs it may be relevant to practitioners giving support to children with other needs and in other contexts. It highlights the importance of staff and pupils having the opportunity to develop their understanding of the needs of individuals and how these can be met and that this must include listening to the views of the pupils with special needs.

## Acknowledgements

The author acknowledges the role of the other members of the research team, Alessandra Iantaffi, Indra Sinka and Darren Saunders, the support of the schools and services involved in the data collection and the enthusiastic participation of the pupils.

## References

- BEARNE, E. (2002) A good listening to: Year 3 pupils talk about learning. *Support for Learning*, 17, 3, 122–127.
- BENNETT, E. and LYNAS, W. (2001) The provision of local mainstream education for young pupils who have cochlear implants. *Deafness and Education International*, 3, 1, 1–14.
- DfES (2001) *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice*. London: DfES.
- EATOUGH, M. (2000) Raw data from the BATOD survey. England, January 1998. *British Association of Teachers of the Deaf Magazine*, May, 1–8.
- GREGORY, S., BISHOP, J. and SHELDON, L. (1995) *Deaf Young People and Their Families*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- HAMMILL, P. and BOYD, B. (2002) Equality, fairness and rights – the young person's voice. *British Journal of Special Education*, 29, 3, 111–117.
- HILL, M., LAYBOURN, A. and BORLAND, M. (1996) Engaging with primary aged children about their emotions and well-being. *Children and Society*, 10, 2, 129–144.
- JERWOOD, L. (1999) Using special needs assistants effectively. *British Journal of Special Education*, 26, 3, 127–129.

- LADD, P. (1991) Making plans for Nigel: the erosion of identity by mainstreaming. In G. Taylor and J. Bishop (eds), *Being Deaf: The Experience of Deafness*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- LLOYD, J. (1999) Hearing-impaired children's strategies for managing communication breakdown. *Deafness and Education International*, 1, 3, 188-199.
- LYNAS, W. (1999) Supporting the deaf child in the mainstream school: is there a best way? *Support for Learning*, 14,3, 113-121.
- MONKMAN, H. and BASKIND, S. (1998) Are assistants effectively supporting hearing-impaired children in mainstream schools? *Deafness and Education*, 22, 1, 15-22.
- MOORE, M., DASH, J. and BRISTOW, L. (1999) A social skills programme with primary isolated hearing aid users. *Deafness and Education International*, 1, 1, 10-24.
- NATIONAL DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY (1990) *Young Deaf People's Views on Integration: a survey report*. London: NDCS.
- NATIONAL DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY (2001) *My School in Scotland*. Glasgow: NDCS.
- POWERS, S., GREGORY, S. and THOUTENHOOFD, E. (1998) *The Educational Achievements of Deaf Children*. London: DfEE.
- POWERS, S., GREGORY, S., LYNAS, W., MCCracken, W., WATSON, L., BOULTON, A. and HARRIS, D. (1999) *A Review of Good Practice in Deaf Education*. London: RNID.
- ROSE, R. (2000) Using support in a primary school: a single school case study. *British Journal of Special Education*, 4, 4, 191-196.
- SINCLAIR TAYLOR, A. (2000) The UN convention on the rights of the child: giving children a voice. In A. Lewis and G. Lindsay (eds), *Researching Children's Perspectives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- STINSON, M. and LANG, H. (1994) Full inclusion: a path for integration or isolation? *American Annals of the Deaf*, 139, 2, 158-158.
- UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE/ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DEAF PEOPLE (2002) *Inclusion: what deaf pupils think*. London: RNID.

#### Correspondence

Joy Jarvis  
Education Department  
University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
Herts  
AL10 9AB  
Email: j.jarvis@herts.ac.uk

## INCLUSION CONFERENCES and TRAINING

### INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN MAINSTREAM SETTINGS

January 22nd & 23rd 2004

Venue: The Docklands Hilton, Rotherhithe, South East London

### ALTERNATIVE AND AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION

8th December 2003

### CREATING THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

12th January 2004

### TOOLS FOR PERSON CENTRED PLANNING

9th February 2004

### FRESH APPROACHES TO MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

20th November 2003

Venue: South East London

### CIRCLES OF ADULTS

8 Monthly sessions from December 2003 to July 2004 - 4.15pm - 6.30pm

Venue: Bigwood Comprehensive School, Nottingham

Facilitated by:

Derek Wilson, Colin Newton and Jackie Dearden  
Educational Psychologists from 'Inclusive Solutions'

**Making Inclusion Happen!**

Contact: Emma Pyatt for full fliers, costs and further details:

DBH House, Carlton Square, Nottingham NG4 3BP

Telephone: 0115 9408550

Email: nottingham@dbhservicedoffices.com

or visit: [www.inclusive-solutions.com](http://www.inclusive-solutions.com)

## Paper Nine

Jarvis, J Montgomery, L & Storey, M (2003) Storying  
and Deaf Children *British Association of Teachers of  
the Deaf Magazine* November p19-20  
ISSN 1366-0799

From your editor

# MAGAZINE

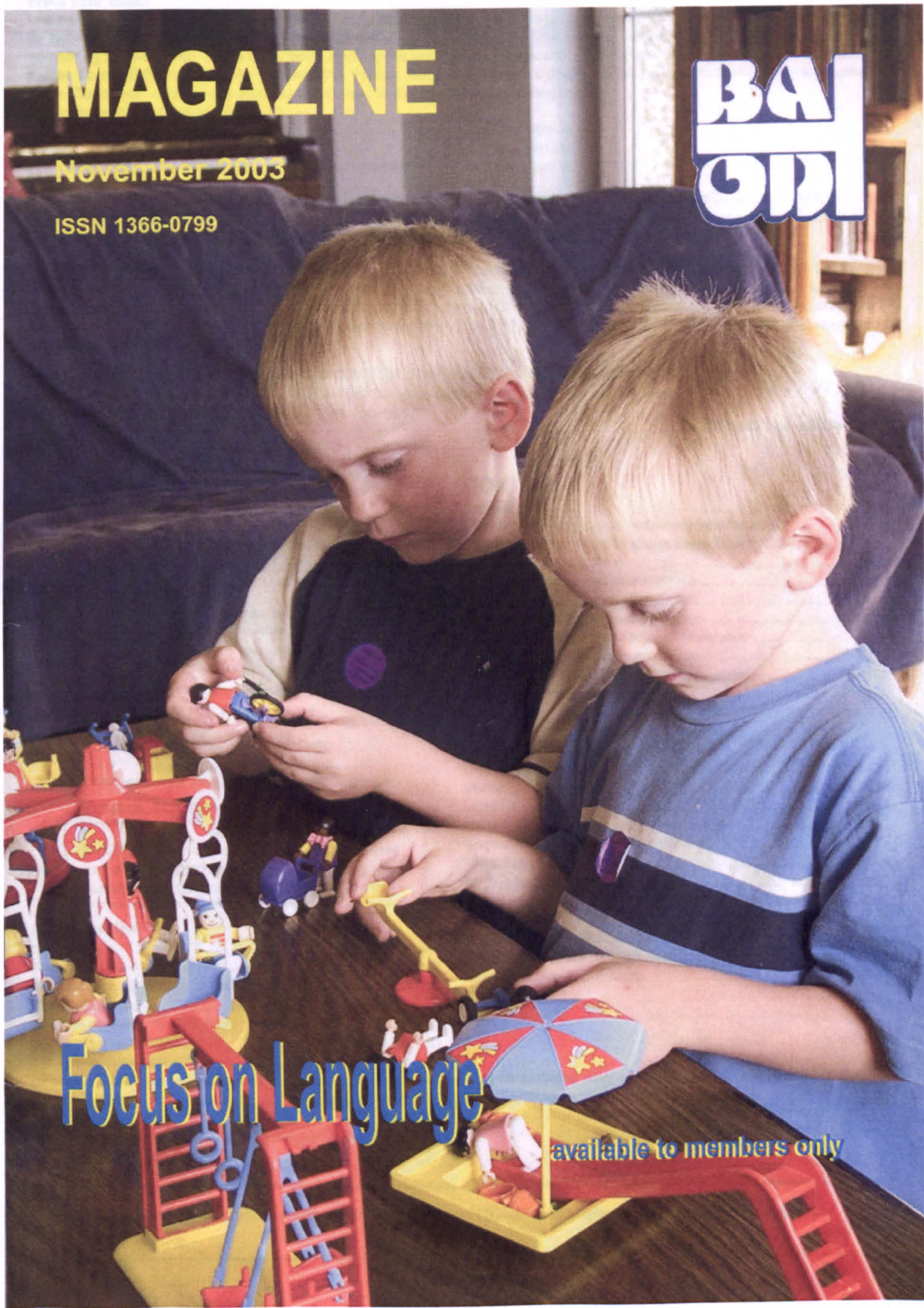
November 2003

ISSN 1366-0799

**BAL**  
**ODI**

Focus on Language

available to members only



### From your editor

Life with technology hasn't got any easier but somehow everything is coming together and this Magazine is not actually as far behind as I expected it to be. The focus on language has produced some excellent articles that I am sure will provide something for everyone! If you have more approaches and ideas that you are able to share with fellow BATOD members please do email them to me. As you read this Pauline Cobbold and I are trying to collect contributions for the Magazine focus 'Behaviour' - but we are also along the road to the next two Magazines as well.

Forthcoming Magazines will focus on

January	Behaviour	deadline Nov 20
March	Communication	deadline Jan 20
June AGM topic:	The 21st Century Teacher of the Deaf	deadline April 20

We are hoping to expand the Communication issue and include networking so if there is anything that you can think of have some courage. What you may think of as common place may actually be an "AH" moment when another Teacher of the Deaf actually gets the idea and uses it. Don't hide your light under a bushell

The AGM in March is considering 'The 21st Century Teacher of the Deaf' - will we exist, what sort of work will we be doing, what issues do we anticipate? This is an opportunity to be proactive and consider how BATOD can help prepare for the challenges of the coming century. So if you have any ideas, thoughts or suggestions for topics that can be raised either as discussion or to share then make this your chance to extend your CPD log - and share your thoughts with BATOD members through the Magazine.

Apologies for those of you who are searching for This and That and the Abbreviations page. Space dictated that several items had to be dropped.... and I thought that you would prefer to have the language articles foremost!



Magazine editor

web site: [www.BATOD.org.uk](http://www.BATOD.org.uk)

Our email addresses are easy to remember.  
They all end @BATOD.org.uk So the Magazine will be:

**[magazine@BATOD.org.uk](mailto:magazine@BATOD.org.uk)**

(check your spelling so you don't fall into the black hole!)

Phoning 01964 544243

BATOD Magazine, Publications & Advertising?

if no-one makes it to the phone to respond

....PLEASE SPEAK

(don't sigh and hang up!)

LEAVE A MESSAGE

or send a fax

or even email

[bmagazine@BATOD.org.uk](mailto:bmagazine@BATOD.org.uk)

Visit our web pages [www.BATOD.org.uk](http://www.BATOD.org.uk)

**Need to contact BATOD?**

talk to

**BATOD Secretary Paul Simpson**

email: [secretary@BATOD.org.uk](mailto:secretary@BATOD.org.uk)

answerphone/fax 01494 464190

### Association Business:

NEC Minutes 14 June 2003 .....	centre pages
Presidential View from the front .....	1
What went on at NEC on 20 September 2003 .....	2
Representing you .....	3
Tripartite meeting - BATOD, RNID and NDCS .....	32
Subscription rates 2003-4 .....	53
I've moved... notification form .....	53
Calendar - Meetings to know about .....	54
Region Officers.....	inside back cover

Details of Advertising rates can be found on the BATOD web site [www.BATOD.org.uk](http://www.BATOD.org.uk)

### CONTENTS

An ACE idea .....	4
Extending the language of secondary-aged students .....	9
Digital photography and language development .....	13
Storying and deaf children.....	19
The complemented oral model (MOC) .....	22
CALL Centre .....	25
Something more than natural language .....	35
Using objects to promote early communication .....	37
Are they using the morphological route? .....	40
Meeting the bilingual challenge in Wales .....	41
New research project in Wales .....	42

### Regular items and general information

DCCAP - providing support .....	16
Marine Conservation and Poetry ... ..	20
MGWTS - go for it! .....	26
Mandatory Qualification... ..	27
Scottish Chartered Teacher programme .....	28
Noticeboard .....	29
Meeting with the registrar of the GTC .....	31
Seminar on the use of BSL in NC tests and qualifications.....	33
ICT Newpage .....	43
Signed English for schools CD - resource review.....	46
Improving education for deaf children .....	47
Acoustic trauma in Cambodia .....	48
Working for VSO .....	51
NATED News .....	52

**just to remind you** - the term 'deaf' is used throughout this Magazine to cover the full range of hearing loss.

### Cover Picture

4 year old twins using play materials (small world materials) to tell stories about playing in a park. See 'Storying and deaf children' page 19

# Storying and deaf children

Joy Jarvis University of Hertfordshire,  
Lucy Montgomery, Hertfordshire Advisory Service  
Marion Storey, Laycock School, Islington

*We were at the farm and there was lots of goats and one was a very big goat and he was a naughty goat and he did try to get my ice cream and he made me jump and my ice cream fell down and got dirty and there was germs on it and I cried. Goats shouldn't eat ice cream because ice cream is for children not for goats and I didn't like it.*

Harry (4 years)

At four, Harry is already a storyteller. In this example, he shows that he can set the scene, identify the characters, describe a sequence of events, explain causes and outcomes and comment on the content of the story. Gordon Wells (1986), having studied young children at home and subsequently as they entered school, argued that the experience and skill of storying was key to later educational achievement. Why should this be the case and what are the implications for deaf children and their parents and teachers?

The ability to create stories in the mind is crucial to development and learning (Engel, 1995). There are two main aspects: communicative and cognitive. Stories enable us to communicate our experiences, knowledge and feelings to other people. We obtain feedback from others on our stories and build up a representation of experience that is shared with others in our family and community. Harry is likely to have received information about the habits of goats, advice on what to do next time and sympathy for the loss of his ice cream from other family members, while the story will become part of the family's shared history: 'Do you remember when Harry went on the nursery trip to the farm...?' Additionally children create stories together in play and this is an important means of building relationships.

In addition to the social and communicative importance of stories, they are a key way in which we all make sense of the world and our place in it. From a young age we identify events and their sequence in everyday life and try to make sense of these. Parents story events for us in anticipation and recall: 'We are going to the shops and then....' 'Remember this morning when ....' We are able to distance ourselves from the events and examine both these and our own role in them. We start to create a sense of ourselves through these stories. We are also enabled to deal with emotional

experiences by standing back from them. When Harry tells the story about the goat it is not as frightening for him as it was at the time. In the same way, fictional stories about fear, loss and other powerful emotions can help children to understand feelings and, through repeated tellings of the same story, gain a sense of control and order. Children will act out familiar stories and create new ones, gaining an understanding of different perspectives and other lives. They also learn that there is a range of possibilities in the way the story develops and that a story may not always end the same way.

If parents and children share a language, then adults can model stories both directly with children and indirectly by using them with other people in everyday life. If there is little access to the language then these opportunities will be limited. Peer group story-making may be limited, also, if all children do not share language skills. A deaf child in a mainstream nursery may appear to be playing in the sand tray in the same way as the hearing children. Closer inspection, however, shows that whilst all the children are hiding and finding objects in the sand, only the hearing children are making a story from the actions. Adults will need to be proactive in helping deaf children develop both understanding and use of storying in a range of contexts.

Teachers of the Deaf can encourage parents to model stories using pictures, facial expression and gestures as well as signed or spoken language. They can play with their children, acting out events or stories from television or books using props such as sofa cushions for a boat. They can recall events and make up novel scenarios using small world materials and they can support children's understanding of stories in books using objects they find themselves or those in storybags.

Teachers of the Deaf may well find that children they support have limited experience of creating their own stories when they enter school. A playful, creative approach on the part of the adults can encourage the child to be imaginative. Props can be used to develop shared stories. A wooden doll and a plastic spider, for example, can be used to explore actions, feelings and to develop a number of different scenarios. Children can act out stories they have been told and also need to be supported to develop alternative endings, another event in a series or a new story. If they have had limited storying experience, then deaf children may find it difficult to meet age-level expectations in writing. As access to a range of fiction has been found to be the best way to develop children's writing of stories (Barrs & Cork, 2001), then it is essential that deaf children have whole texts at an appropriate level read to them. Additionally the chance to act out the stories can be invaluable in aiding understanding. Children may need the support of small world materials and puppets to develop their stories before they can be expected to write imaginatively.

Many deaf children are confident and creative storytellers. The celebrating and nurturing of these skills needs to be undertaken alongside the development of the language that encodes their stories.

## References

Barrs, M and Cork, V (2001)

*The Reader in the Writer: the links between the study of literature and writing development at key stage 2* London: Centre for Language in Primary Education

Engel, S (1995)

*The Stories Children Tell: making sense of the narratives of childhood* New York: W H Freeman and Company

Wells, G (1986)

*The Meaning Makers: children learning language and using language to learn* London: Hodder & Stoughton

## Interesting.....

Aoccrdrnig to rscheearch at an Elingsh uinervtisy, it deosn't mttair in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer are in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae we do not raed ervey lteter by it slef but the wrod as a wlohe and the biran fguiers it out aynawy.

Anon contributor!



**MARINE CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) is the UK charity dedicated to the protection of the marine environment and its wildlife.

In 2001, with funding from Cheltenham & Gloucester plc, MCS was able to establish a marine turtle conservation programme which aims to secure a safer future for endangered marine turtles in the UK and abroad. Six of the worlds seven marine turtle species are now listed as either endangered or critically endangered and the MCS is supporting marine turtle research and conservation projects around the world in order to try and help save the turtles.

In the autumn of 2002, building on their joint efforts to protect marine turtles, Cheltenham & Gloucester teamed up with the MCS to organise a poetry competition for 4-11 year olds. Entitled 'Celebrate the Sea', it aimed to get youngsters thinking about the precious marine environment that the MCS works to preserve. The poems prove that the younger generation today is inspired to consider the environment for the future.

The book of poems is available for £3.50 (incl p&p) from the Marine Conservation Society .

Alternatively, you can register to take part in one of the fundraising activities for turtles and the book will be yours free of charge! For more information about school fundraising for marine turtles, give MCS a call, ☎ 01989 566017 visit [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org) or email [turtle@mcsuk.org](mailto:turtle@mcsuk.org)



## Paper Ten

Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Hamilton, P & Tyler, D (2004)  
The role of parenting classes for young fathers in  
prison: a case study *Probation Journal* 51, 1 p21-33  
ISSN 0264-5505

# Probation Journal

The Journal of Community  
and Criminal Justice

VOLUME 51

NUMBER 1

MARCH 2004



SAGE Publications

ISSN 0264-5505

# Probation Journal



The Journal of Community and Criminal Justice

VOLUME 51

NUMBER 1

MARCH 2004

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>The future of 'What Works?'</i>	
<b>Articles</b>	
<i>'What Works?': Revisiting the evidence in England and Wales</i>	<b>7</b>
Simon Merrington and Steve Stanley	
<i>The role of parenting classes for young fathers in prison: A case study</i>	<b>21</b>
Joy Jarvis, Sally Graham, Penny Hamilton and Dena Tyler	
<i>Mission control: The origins of a humanitarian service</i>	<b>34</b>
Maurice Vanstone	
<i>Does tougher enforcement lead to lower reconviction?</i>	<b>48</b>
Ian Hearnden and Andrew Millie	
<b>Comment</b>	<b>59</b>
<i>How healthy is your 'community of practice'?</i>	
Richard Lynch	
<b>Research &amp; reports</b>	<b>67</b>
Victim contact inspection; Growing old in prison; The domestic cultivation of cannabis; Impact of drug treatment and testing orders; Prison performance	
<b>Reviews</b>	<b>76</b>
Understanding Justice: An Introduction to Ideas, Perspectives and Controversies in Modern Penal Theory (2nd Edition); The Looked After Kid; Moving Probation Forward: Evidence, Arguments and Practice; Criminological Perspectives: Essential Readings (2nd Edition); Tackling Militant Racism; Qualitative Approaches to Criminal Justice: Perspectives from the Field	

## The role of parenting classes for young fathers in prison: A case study

Joy Jarvis and Sally Graham, University of Hertfordshire

Penny Hamilton and Dena Tyler, HM Young Offender Institution, Aylesbury

**Abstract** This article considers the role of parenting classes for young men in prison. Using a case study of one course delivered at a young offender institution, significant aspects of the content and delivery are identified. The ways in which this course appears to contribute to the growth of participants' understanding of their role as fathers and to their personal development are highlighted.

**Keywords** children, fathers, parenting courses, prisons, young offenders

Parenting courses are being increasingly used in a range of contexts. They are used by the youth justice system for parents of children in trouble, by health service workers to support teenage parents, and by government cross-departmental strategies, such as the Sure Start programme, to support parents of young children in deprived areas (Glass, 1999; Freely, 2000). In prisons the emphasis on rehabilitation programmes, such as those designed to address offending behaviour and develop life skills, has increased and this has included the provision of parenting classes. In 2001 only four institutions holding young male offenders did not have, or were not planning to run, parenting classes (Boswell and Wedge, 2002). Parenting classes could be seen as encouraging the young men involved to develop their role in a family network, which may reduce the likelihood of offending. They may be important, also, for the children of these young men, who with a parent in prison are statistically more likely to offend themselves. Erratic and harsh parenting are factors which may lead to offending (Sutton, 2002) and as this has been the experience of many young men in prison they are likely to repeat this with their own children. Parenting classes may make a contribution to the halting of this cycle.

Evaluations undertaken of parenting classes in prisons have shown results to

be positive in relation to the extent that knowledge of the material involved is retained over a period of time and to expressed changes in attitudes to aspects of parenting. Thompson and Harm (2000), in a detailed American case study of a 15-week parenting course in a women's prison, found that significant changes in expressed views on discipline were evident, the women involved moving from previous use of physical punishment to planned use of more nurturing methods. Dennison and Lyon's (2001) study of outcomes of a sample of parenting courses for young men in UK young offender institutions recorded that participants reported positively on the courses, retained information that had been learnt and many reported a change in attitude to their roles as fathers. Additionally, some young men report that attending parenting classes helped them to understand their partner's situation better (Katz, 2002).

This case study of one parenting course in a young offender institution (YOI) explores issues related to the content and delivery of the course. This is important as current initiatives to increase and develop parenting courses in prisons require an understanding of what needs to be included in relation to content, and how courses can be delivered effectively. A range of current initiatives such as the 'Family Man' course developed by staff and prisoners in a number of institutions (Safe Ground, 2002) are encouraging institutions to share practice, but Dennison and Lyon (2001) note that providers of parenting courses in YOIs tend to work in isolation and do not have links with other providers, nor do they have a forum for sharing information and training. Reading about the work of others developing courses in similar contexts can encourage the sharing of ideas and practice.

## **The context**

Aylesbury YOI caters for young men between the ages of 17 and 21. A parenting course was started there in 1997. The course is available to all inmates who express a wish to attend, unless the nature of their offence precludes participation. They do not have to be fathers but many have at least one child. The course is very popular, there is often a waiting list, and two classes are run in parallel to cater for the numbers involved. The study describes both the content of the course and the mode of delivery, and attempts to identify significant aspects of each.

Data for this study were collected by means of the observation of identified sessions approximately six-weekly over a period of 18 months. Observations were focused on the response of students to the modes of delivery of the course. This was identified by noting: listening behaviour, time on task, engagement with the material and spoken contributions by individuals. Students were also asked to complete end of session and end of course evaluations. Documentation related to the course was scrutinized and staff teaching the course were interviewed in relation to their approaches to teaching and learning. Written consent was obtained from participants to have their contributions quoted and examples are included in the text from participants on this course.

## The course content

The course, entitled 'Parentcraft', is part of a social and life skills programme and is validated by the Open College. It consists of 16-weekly, three-hour sessions. Course completion results in a level 1 or level 2 certificate, depending on the type and level of assessment undertaken. The certificate element is important to students taking the course, many of whom have no educational qualifications. The students completing the course often ask for their certificates to be sent home so that they do not get lost in any prison transfers. This pride in their achievement mirrors that found by other researchers who report certificates being sent home to be displayed (McDermott and King, 1992).

The course involves sessions on contraception and sexual health; pregnancy and birth; children's development between birth and five years, the role of the adult in supporting children's development; the role of the father; listening to children; managing behaviour; safety and first aid, and the responsibilities of parents, including financial and legal responsibilities. The course is adapted to meet the needs of fathers who have very young children, or young men who are likely to become fathers. It therefore focuses on the needs of children under the age of five, although parenting of other age groups is discussed. Discussion about parenting teenagers raises interesting issues for students who are teenagers themselves.

With the current emphasis on reducing the number of teenage pregnancies, the session on contraception and sexual health is clearly important. Many students feel knowledgeable in this area but in fact may have fairly limited knowledge:

. . . there was a lot of stuff I thought I knew but I learnt a lot more today. (Jason, aged 19)

While some students will have attended the birth of their child many will have been prevented from doing so by their current or previous custodial sentences. In addition to factual information about pregnancy and birth, this session also looks at emotional issues and at the needs of the mother and the role of the father at this time. For young teenage fathers, not just those in prison, the relationship with their partner at this time can be fraught with difficulties. This was expressed clearly by disadvantaged young men interviewed for The Prince's Trust (2001). Developing an understanding of others' perspectives could contribute to easing some of these problems.

A significant amount of time on the course is spent exploring children's development between birth and five years, the age range of most of the students' children. The emphasis is on learning about all aspects of development and specifically the role of the adult in supporting children's learning. The crucial importance of appropriate adult-child interaction at this stage of development is explained and strategies and resources explored through practical activities. Students often know very little about children's development and are amazed by their abilities:

I didn't know how advanced in communication babies are. (Peter, aged 20)

I didn't know that kids were learning when they were playing and I was very surprised. (Ahmed, aged 19)

Today I learnt about things like eye contact and responding to a child and how to recognize how they're coming along with their speech and how to communicate. (Ray, aged 19)

I didn't know kids were so clever. (Sean, aged 18)

Fathers in general spend proportionally more time playing with their children than do mothers, engaging in physical play particularly (Golombok, 2000). The course looks at a range of play opportunities that can arise and how fathers can use these appropriately. Suitable toys for different age groups are identified and the use of everyday materials for physical and imaginative play is explored. Students appear to have limited experience, or certainly little memory, of playing with toys or games, and need opportunities to play with these themselves before considering how these could be used with young children. Playing picture lotto, for example, has been a favourite activity for all groups. This need for students to engage with play materials themselves has been found in other parenting courses in young offender institutions (Boswell and Wedge, 2002). It emphasizes the importance of practical activities and the time to undertake these in the delivery of parenting courses in this context. It also demonstrates the need for this aspect of the course, as fathers cannot be expected to engage in play with their children if they themselves have limited experience in this area.

Sharing books is also an activity that fathers and children can do together, but one which may have particular difficulties for young men with limited literacy. While some students on these courses will have a high level of literacy and confidence in handling books, for the majority of inmates in young offender institutions this will not be the case (Neustatter, 2002). Sharing books with children is included on a number of parenting courses in prison for a range of reasons, including the importance of this activity for children's language development and their later educational progress (Wells, 1986). Book sharing is an opportunity for physical closeness and the sharing of a focus of attention. It can lead to improved communication and the building of relationships. In Wymott adult prison, for example, a writer in residence funded by The National Literacy Trust facilitates the creating of stories by prisoners for their children which can then be written, illustrated, made into a book and also taped for use at home (Evans, 2002).

On the Aylesbury course, students explore books that can be used with babies and toddlers and practise the type of language and activities one can do with pop-up and lift-the-flap books. They practise telling stories from pictures, something that they often find difficult. Again this points to the importance of actually undertaking an activity rather than just talking about it. The students need this experience to be able to use books effectively and to appreciate their use. They also need the confidence to ignore words in the book if they find them difficult and to tell the story from the pictures. In students' minds books are generally associated with reading the words and other ways of using them need to be explored:

I didn't see the point of people giving books to my baby, I thought she was too young. (Alan, aged 18)

I didn't know you could give books to children who couldn't read. (Andy, aged 19)

Play activities that can be linked to stories are also undertaken, for example making puppets of the gingerbread man so that the story can be dramatized. Personalizing the story for the child is also practised, such as making the gingerbread man hide in the child's house or run down a road to the local park.

Students are encouraged to record themselves telling or reading stories so that their children can have the tapes. They are also encouraged to make up their own stories. This is a difficult thing to do but follows time spent looking at a range of children's books and considering their themes and topics. The students are always keen to have books read to them, perhaps reflecting a lack of this experience themselves. The caring relationship that can be developed through book sharing is identified. Students watch a home-made video of a father sharing a book with his two year old twin sons who are sitting on his lap. The quality of attention that all the students give to this example and subsequent discussion indicate that it is the quality of the relationship between the man and his children that is being appreciated. This gives an opportunity of talking about love and how it can be shown and developed, something that may be difficult to talk about in the environment of a male prison.

The concept of masculinity and how this relates to showing affection towards young children and engaging in what could be seen as traditional feminine activities in relation to child care may be an issue for many men (Lamb, 1997). It is particularly an area of concern for adolescents who are still developing their own adult male identity. This may result in young men being concerned to show that they do not exhibit any supposedly feminine characteristics, which could include being seen as sensitive and caring towards children (Marsiglio and Cohan, 1997). This is something that is discussed at an early stage on the course and continues throughout the programme, with video examples of men interacting with young children. These examples have to be carefully chosen as, if the men involved are not seen by the students as good male role models, they respond adversely to them. The example of high profile fathers, such as David Beckham, who show masculine skills in football but also sensitivity in caring for young children is very important to these students and is an aid to discussing the concept of fatherhood.

In addition to issues that will relate to all fathers, the course considers aspects that are particular to parents in prison, such as developing a relationship from a distance, suitable activities for visiting times and using the telephone. Some students do not see their children and may never see them:

*My girlfriend said that if I came back inside then I couldn't see my son again, so now I don't know if I'll ever see him again. (Stuart, aged 20)*

A few students keep diaries which they may be able to show to their children at a later date to show that they were thinking about them even when they were not in contact. Some identify useful strategies for interaction during visits. One student, for example, was determined to always wear the same coloured jumper during visits so that his baby son would begin to recognize him.

The telephone is an important link with the family but children under five have difficulties with talking to people they can't see and with understanding what the other person knows. If students understand this then they are less likely to feel

rejected if phone conversations between them and their children are problematic. Phone calls between a student and his partner may take place fairly frequently and may therefore be a feature of a young child's life. The adults need to understand how this may affect a young child who suddenly is deprived of his mother's attention without warning. One student on the course had a two year old who would urinate on the carpet while his parents were on the phone. This infuriated his father who said that his partner should smack the child as 'he knows it's wrong – he's been told'. Discussion helped the student begin to understand the scenario from the child's perspective. An ability to understand another's perspective is clearly essential for parenting and indeed for an effective adult life. Many students find this difficult and it is part of cognitive self-change programmes undertaken in many prisons and YOIs (Rose, 2002). This can also be part of a parenting course, when one is considering both the perspectives of one's partner and children. One example was a discussion about how a child might feel when his/her father suddenly came home at the end of a prison sentence. This resulted in plenty of examples of how the young men themselves had felt when they had been released from other YOIs but they had a real problem identifying issues for the child. Discussion with peers and tutors can help develop understanding as can role play. Stories designed to help children deal with different issues can also provide a safe starting point for students to explore feelings; their own and other people's.

The issue of behaviour management is significant for all parents but many fathers in prison will have had poor models of parenting including emotional and physical abuse. A high proportion of young offenders convicted of violent offences have been themselves subjected to violence at home (Neustatter, 2002). For many students, therefore, progress can be identified when they identify alternatives to smacking. At the beginning of the course, the vast majority of students state that you need to smack children in order to have control and that violence is a key way of gaining respect from someone else. A significant number of students come to appreciate, through examples and discussion, that there are alternatives:

Today I learnt about how to react to a child throwing a tantrum. Even though I'd got my own views which I expressed in class, I still picked up a few tips like positive attention. (Steve, aged 20)

. . . from what I can see it's the gentle approach, showing patience and love to the child rather than the heavy handed approach and just thinking the child is bad. (Sean, aged 18)

. . . the course has given me ideas on how to approach bad behaviour. It doesn't always have to be a punishment, sometimes he will just need a hug. (Jason, aged 18)

Clearly there is no evidence as to whether the students will put these ideas into practice when they are with their children but time to explore strategies for managing children's behaviour is essential. The importance of listening to children and of offering choices is stressed throughout the course.

The role of parents, and particularly that of the father, is difficult to explore in a young offender institution. A high proportion of offenders will have spent some

time in care or will have been brought up by a single parent, usually the mother (Prince's Trust, 2001; Neustatter, 2002). Many young men at Aylesbury refuse to blame their parents for their own difficulties and cite the support given by their mothers in particular:

I liked the way my Mum supported me when I was kicked out of school. (Adam, aged 18)

My Mum did her best, but I was just a thug really. (Paul, aged 19)

Few students mentioned their fathers, although one spoke warmly of his father who had suffered redundancy but successfully retrained for a new career. He spoke of his father being a role model for him, showing that he could overcome his current difficulties and have a new future. Many students, however, will not have had fathers to provide role models for bringing up their own children. Neustatter (2002) interviewed inmates in a number of YOIs and found that many had no experience of positive fathering. One 19 year old boy she interviewed commented that when his dad was at home he never spent time with him, and was only animated when drunk:

Sometimes I'd look at the dads in the soaps on TV or in the movies all into their kids and laughing and having fun with them and wonder what that was like.

It made me dead sad when I was little but now I don't care. (Neustatter, 2002: 37)

This type of experience makes exploring the role of the father a sensitive, but essential, area. The father's role in supporting their child's development, engaging in positive interactions, modelling appropriate behaviour, and listening and responding to the child are all considered. Clearly all these aspects of the father's role are difficult to undertake in any real sense when they are separated from their children. The aim is to sow the seeds so that positive fathering can be developed after release. Many do express a wish to take their responsibilities seriously:

My family could be different by fathers playing more of a role in the children's upbringing, that's why I'm going to play more of a role than the men in my family. (Dan, aged 18)

The extent to which this will become a reality will depend on a number of factors that may be beyond his control, including the continuation of the relationship with his partner, the support given to the family after his release and employment opportunities.

Some students will become distressed during the parenting course as they appreciate what they are missing in terms of relationships with their children and may also feel guilty that they are unable to fulfil their parenting role. The perception that young fathers are not interested in their children is confounded by evidence that they often see their role as parents as central to their lives and their children as one of the best things that has happened to them (Prince's Trust, 2001). Certainly many students at Aylesbury think about their children a great deal and can, for example, tell you their ages to the nearest week.

## Delivering the course

The course is led by a lecturer employed by the local college that has the contract for delivering educational courses at the institution. She encourages other people to become involved in the delivery of the course so that students have a variety of opinions and perspectives. This is very important in this area where different cultural, class and personal factors are involved. Recently a volunteer with experience of working with young children has been participating in sessions and visiting speakers, such as an officer from the St John's Ambulance Brigade. Additionally the course has links with the local university. Universities often have education departments that deliver undergraduate and postgraduate courses in early years education and care, and undertake research in this field. In the case of the Aylesbury course university staff teach two of the sessions. An issue in course delivery is the model of parenting that is held by the course deliverers and how this relates to the social and cultural experiences of the students. As Burgess (1997) notes, there is no one model of a father and expectations of what it means to be a father will be influenced by culture, ethnicity and class, in addition to individual experiences. Course deliverers try to use a range of visual images and video material to promote discussion of different family types and different roles which fathers may have. Much parenting course material is still often white and middle class, but with the growth of a range of initiatives in working with parents, such as those promoted by Fathers Direct and The Parenting Education and Support Forum, both different materials and improved understanding of a range of approaches to parenting will be developed.

The aim in the delivery of the course is not to be didactic but to be open in sharing experiences and expressing and listening to opinions. This is more likely to bring about changes in practice (Underdown, 1998). Session leaders are prepared to share their own experiences of parenting, including those that have been less successful. It was identified during observations that the students were most engaged, as evidenced by the quality of their listening and subsequent comments, when staff told stories about their own experience of parenting or when they gave examples in 'story' mode. The use of narrative to engage students has been identified in a range of education contexts (McEwan and Egan, 1995). Students were able to make links between these stories and examples of their own experience or stories from the media. They were also able to recall the examples from previous sessions and use them to make generalizations. As Bruner (1990) has argued, we attempt to make sense of a story and in this way form links with other people and begin to understand other perspectives. Staff perceptions about the role of personal stories were that they help students to understand that parenting is an area where mistakes are often made by all of us and that no one is an expert. Additionally, being prepared to share stories helps to form relationships between people.

If students are to move on in their thinking, then it is important to identify their starting points. An atmosphere of trust is developed through mutual respect between staff and students, which is encouraged by the use and development of listening and communication skills within the session. Respect is shown by responding to students' contributions and by valuing their work, which is sometimes displayed on the classroom walls. For some students this is the first time their work will have

been valued in this way and this can support their development of self-esteem, which is notoriously low in young offenders: '... most young offenders feel shit about themselves deep down' (Sharmian, aged 20, in Huntercombe YOI, interviewed by Neustatter, 2002, p. 6). Appropriate self-esteem is an important factor in confident parenting and can be developed through the sensitive delivery of parenting courses that encourage students to reflect on and develop their knowledge and skills. The attitude of the course leaders is particularly important:

*I felt that they actually acknowledged that some of us do care about our kids, that we are not all bastards. (Prisoner on a parenting course, interviewed by Boswell and Wedge, 2002, p. 127)*

Parenting courses provide opportunities to talk about a range of emotions that may be difficult to discuss in other contexts. Don, a participant in the parenting programme at Wymott prison, reported that during the sessions men get to build closer relationships: 'We become human' (Evans, 2002, p. 119).

A break for a hot drink part way through the session encourages informality and the sharing of feelings and experiences. It also models identifying and meeting needs. The relationship the students have with the staff in the educational context can help them to become engaged in the learning process. This is sometimes identified by the students:

*One good thing about being in prison is that you have a closer relationship with your teachers. You learn better then. (Jim, aged 18)*

Engaging with the students also involves being aware of their interests and using these to encourage learning. Students watch a great deal of television, for example, and often become involved in programmes such as *EastEnders*. They are encouraged to keep a journal and note any examples of parenting in these programmes that can be used as a basis for discussion.

Most of the sessions are delivered by women and it would be advantageous to have more men involved. The students generally see women as naturally expert in relation to bringing up children. This was also the opinion of the young people interviewed for The Prince's Trust Report (2001). Students at Aylesbury assume that as men they would not be expected to know about children and are therefore happy to attend classes on the topic and to be taught by women. One student commented that he presumed that all parenting courses 'on the outside' were for men, as women would not need them. There is no stigma attached to not knowing about children, as there would be in not being capable in other areas of education. Fairly stereotypical views about men and women, and about the upbringing of boys and girls, are issues that are tackled in sessions.

Delivering a parenting course in a prison context is not easy as there are limits to the resources and materials that can be used and, above all, access to children is limited. If a father only sees his child at visiting times then it is difficult for him to tune into his child's needs and to form a relationship. Visiting times can also be stressful, due to the lack of child-friendly facilities, privacy and the emotional energy invested in them by the adults (Boswell and Wedge, 2002). The children are too young to sustain a relationship by telephone or letter and therefore the immediate

effects of a parenting course may be in changing attitudes. This may be helpful to the student's partner and therefore indirectly to the child. Boswell and Wedge (2002) interviewed the partners of some prisoners who had undertaken parenting courses and found them to be positive about their effects. One woman noted:

He told me all about it and how it helped him to think differently about family problems. He would say: 'They are only doing that [playing up or whatever] because they need attention.' He says there's no point in yelling or smacking; move them out of the situation or occupy them with something else. That's been very helpful to me because he's seeing it from a different angle. (Boswell and Wedge, 2002, p. 130)

## Discussion

Participants in this particular course indicate by what they say that the sessions are developing their knowledge and understanding in the area of parenting. Important aspects of the course would seem to be the extent to which the content relates to the needs of the participants, in that information relates to the particular age range of participants' children and to the context of the type of relationship that can be developed with children when the father is in prison. Additionally, opportunities to talk about and develop an understanding of emotional needs and perspectives of others is important. In relation to the teaching of the course, opportunities for discussion, for participants to be respected and for teachers to model, through their mode of delivery, a caring and supportive attitude to students could be seen as significant. The use of personal narratives by those teaching the course appears to increase the engagement of the students and their ability to make links between experiences. Opportunities to undertake practical activities would seem to be an essential part of the learning process. This is the case not only when playing games and practising telling stories but also by using supportive communication with each other, such as making one positive statement about another student's piece of work. In the absence of the children themselves opportunities for undertaking relevant activities need to be provided.

As Dennison and Lyon (2001) point out, a parenting course by itself may only have a limited effect. Opportunities to continue with further learning in this area following course completion would seem to be important as students may complete the parenting course months or years before they are released. Appropriate visit opportunities, including home visits, are important. Other factors, such as support for the family on release, are beyond the control of the institution yet are vital if the work undertaken during the course is to lead to more successful parent-child relationships. As Dennison and Lyon (2001) reported, many of the young men they interviewed six months after their release had good intentions of developing their family life but a number had limited contact with their children or were again in custody. A high level of support for both the young men and their families would seem to be essential. Initiatives such as Sure Start would seem to be well placed to undertake a support role if this were given a high priority.

Becoming a parent changes one's life. For young men in prison it could be an opportunity for breaking a cycle of offending. Sam's son was two months old when he started the parenting course at Aylesbury. During the initial sessions he was visibly distressed at what he was missing of his child's development, but gradually gained in confidence in relation to the role he could play in supporting his partner and, potentially, his son. At the end of the course he wrote:

I'd like to think that in the years to come I can right my wrongs and learn what I don't know about life with my son. (Sam, aged 19)

Perhaps this could be seen as unduly idealistic but certainly he showed real commitment to changing his life. The catalyst seemed to be the realization, through the birth of his son, that he was now an adult and had responsibilities. He had someone to love and someone who depended on him and would, potentially, love him unconditionally. For many, though not all of the students, their new role as a father seemed to provide a reason for changing their lives. They often had idealized pictures of the future but were nevertheless trying to make plans for their dreams to come true. Youth is a time for ideals and for thinking about the future but many disadvantaged young people are reportedly too depressed to be able to look ahead and to plan optimistically. They see themselves as having no education, no hope of a job and no stake in society. This is particularly the case with offenders who have been seen as too 'depressed and demotivated to think that the future could be any better – so they avoided thinking about it' (Prince's Trust, 2001, p. 88). If rehabilitation is to be successful, being able to think about the future is important and parenting classes can capitalize on the potential for change that exists when an offender has a young child.

Parenting courses may also have other effects not directly related to parenting itself. By building closer relationships between staff and students, these courses may encourage students to enrol for other education classes. An interest in literacy may be stimulated by the desire to read to children. Research in Canada has also suggested that bullying behaviour can be reduced in young people who learn to understand their own and others' emotions through parenting classes (Greenfield, 2002).

It would appear, therefore, that parenting classes can have significant effects on some inmates in young offender institutions and that they need to be preserved and strengthened at a time of enormous pressure on prison education due to increasing populations. In order to be effective the content and delivery of these courses have to be carefully related to the needs of young, imprisoned fathers and, ultimately, community support has to be provided to these fathers and their families on release.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks are given to students on the parenting course at Aylesbury YOI for their enthusiastic participation and for permission to use their words as quotations in the text.

## References

- Boswell, G. & Wedge, P. (2002) *Imprisoned Fathers and Their Children*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Bruner, J. (1990) *Acts of Meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burgess, A. (1997) *Fatherhood Reclaimed: The Making of the Modern Father*. London: Vermilion Random House.
- Dennison, C. & Lyon, J. (2001) *Young Offenders, Fatherhood and the Impact of Parenting Training*. Brighton: Trust for the Study of Adolescence.
- Evans, P. (2002) 'Inside Story', *The Guardian*, 17 April.
- Freely, M. (2000) *The Parent Trap: Children, Families and the New Morality*. London: Virago.
- Glass, N. (1999) 'Sure Start: The Development of an Early Intervention Programme for Young Children in the United Kingdom', in *Children and Society* 13 (4), pp. 257–264.
- Golombok, S. (2000) *Parenting: What Really Counts?* London: Routledge.
- Greenfield, N. (2002) 'Baby Acts as Bully Block', *Times Educational Supplement*, 12 April.
- Katz, A., (ed.) (2002) *Parenting Under Pressure: Prison*. London: Young Voice.
- Lamb, M. (1997) 'Fathers and Child Development: An Introductory Overview and Guide', in M. Lamb (ed.) *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, 3rd edition. New York: John Wiley.
- McDermott, K. & King, R. (1992) 'Prison Rule 102: "Stand By Your Man": The Impact of Penal Policy on the Families of Prisoners', in R. Shaw (ed.) *Prisoners' Children: What are the Issues?* London: Routledge.
- McEwan, H. & Egan, K. (1995) *Narrative in Teaching, Learning and Research*. New York: Teachers' College, Columbia University.
- Marsiglio, W. & Cohan, M. (1997) 'Young Fathers and Child Development', in M. Lamb (ed.) *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, 3rd edition. New York: John Wiley.
- Neustatter, A. (2002) *Locked In-Locked Out: The Experience of Young Offenders out of Society and in Prison*. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.
- The Prince's Trust (2001) *It's Like That: The Views and Hopes of Disadvantaged Young People*. London: The Prince's Trust.
- Safe Ground & The Prisoners' Learning and Skills Unit (2002) *Family Man: A New Approach to Learning for Use in Male Prisons*. London: Safe Ground.
- Sutton, C. (2002) *Protecting Children From Becoming Offenders: What Does the Evidence Suggest?* Leicester: De Monfort University in association with The National Children's Bureau.
- Thompson, P. & Harm, N. (2000) 'Parenting From Prison: Helping Children and Mothers', in *Issues in Comprehensive Paediatric Nursing* 23 (2), pp. 61–81.
- Underdown, A. (1998) 'Investigating Techniques used in Parenting Classes', in *Health Visitor* 71 (2), pp. 65–68.
- Wells, G. (1986) *The Meaning Makers: Children Learning Language and Using Language to Learn*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

## Useful websites

[www.fathersdirect.com](http://www.fathersdirect.com)  
[www.parenting-forum.org.uk](http://www.parenting-forum.org.uk)

Joy Jarvis and Sally Graham teach in the Department of Education, University of Hertfordshire. Penny Hamilton and Dena Tyler teach in the Education Department at HM Young Offender Institution, Aylesbury.

Correspondence to: Joy Jarvis, Education Department, University of Hertfordshire, De Havilland Campus, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 9AB.

Email: j.jarvis@herts.ac.uk

## NEW FROM SAGE PUBLICATIONS

### **The Female Offender**

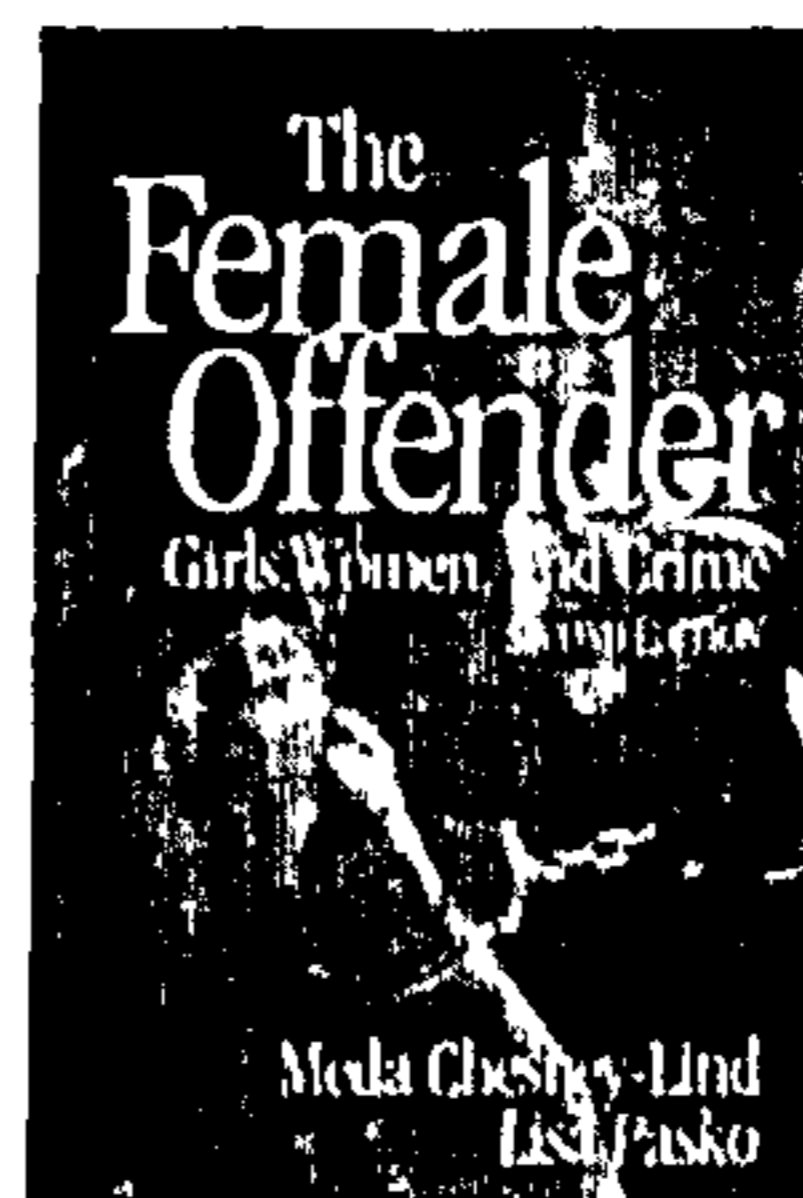
Girls, Women, and Crime  
Second Edition

**Meda Chesney-Lind and Lisa J Pasko**  
*both at University of Hawaii at Manoa*

Studies of criminology over the last few decades has often left little room for research and theory on how female offenders are perceived and handled in the criminal justice system. Co-authored by Meda Chesney-Lind, one of the pioneers in the development of the feminist theoretical perspective in criminology, this **Second Edition** redresses the balance by providing critical insight into these issues.

**The Female Offender** is an enlightening and thought-provoking read for academics, researchers and students not just in the areas of criminology and criminal justice but in more general sociology and women's studies as well.

August 2003 • 216 pages  
Cloth (0-7619-2978-9)  
Paper (0-7619-2405-1)



### **Girls, Women and Crime**

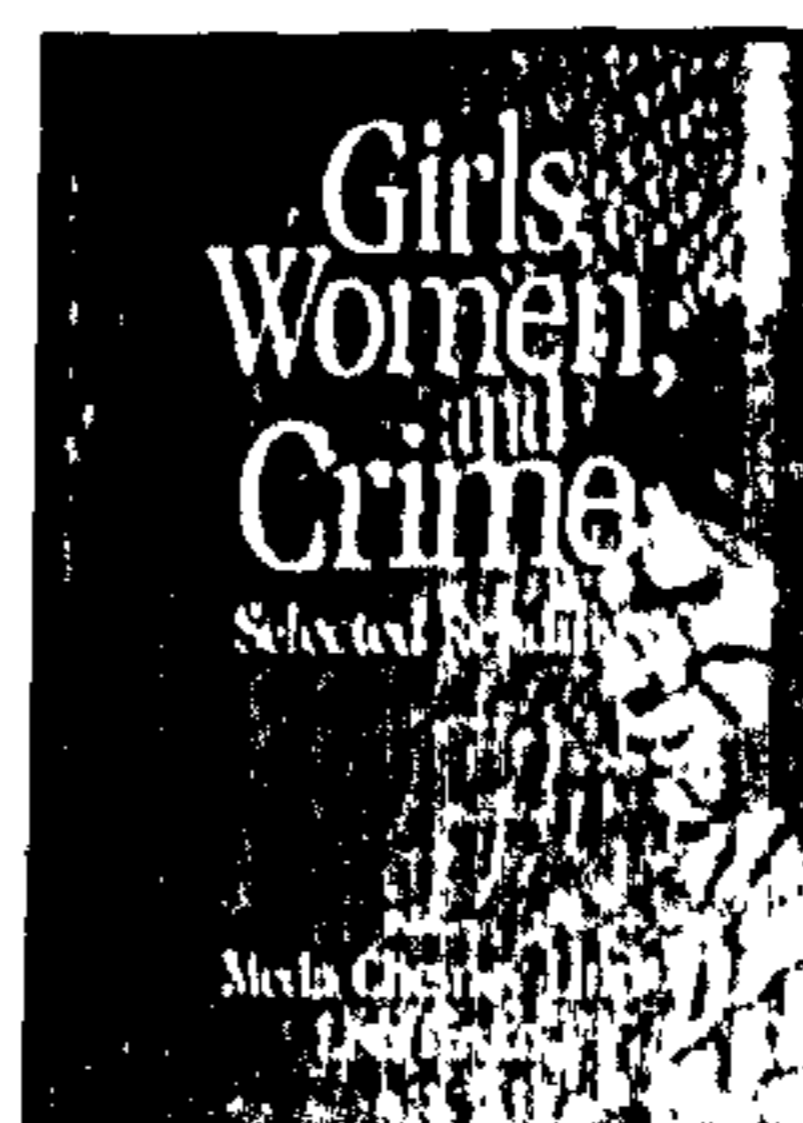
Selected Readings

**Edited by Meda Chesney-Lind and Lisa J Pasko** *both at University of Hawaii at Manoa*

This book surveys female juvenile delinquency, an important topic often receiving minimal attention in books on women and crime.

Authors of articles represent some of the leading scholars in the field - Claire Renzetti, Frank Cullen, and, of course, Meda Chesney-Lind.

August 2003 • 260 pages  
Paper (0-7619-2828-6)



**SAGE Publications**  
Los Angeles • Thousand Oaks • New Delhi  
The Academic and Professional Publisher of Choice

Order online at  
[www.sagepublications.com](http://www.sagepublications.com)

## Paper Eleven

Jarvis, J., Dyson, J., Thomas, K., Graham, S., Iantaffi, A & Burchell, H (2004) Learning Through Creating Stories: developing student teachers' understanding of the experiences of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the British Educational Research Association, Manchester*  
([www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003733.htm](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003733.htm))

Learning through creating stories: developing student teachers' understanding of the experiences of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms"

Joy Jarvis, Janet Dyson, Kit Thomas, Sally Graham, Alessandra Iantaffi and Helen Burchell

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003733.htm>

This is to confirm that the above paper has been deposited in Education-line and will remain a permanent part of the collection. Papers will only be removed from the collection at the request of the author(s)

Susan

Susan Smith  
British Education Index  
Brotherton Library  
University of Leeds  
Leeds LS2 9JT

0113 343 5525

**Learning Through Creating Stories:**  
**Developing student teachers' understanding of the**  
**experiences of pupils with special educational needs in**  
**mainstream classrooms**

*Joy Jarvis, Janet Dyson, Kit Thomas, Sally Graham, Alessandra  
Iantaffi and Helen Burchell,  
School of Education, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield.  
Hertfordshire. AL10 9AB United Kingdom*

A Paper presented at the British Educational Research Conference,  
Manchester. September 2004

An earlier draft of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the  
American Educational Research Association San Diego, April, 2004.

*Correspondence: [j.jarvis@herts.ac.uk](mailto:j.jarvis@herts.ac.uk)*

**Learning through creating stories:  
developing student teachers' understanding of the experiences of  
pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms**

*Joy Jarvis, Janet Dyson, Kit Thomas, Sally Graham,  
Alessandra Iantaffi & Helen Burchell*

*University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, AL10 9AB, UK*

**ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the roles of story in the training of teachers in the field of special education. It describes and evaluates a project that promoted the learning of student teachers both through hearing stories and writing stories themselves. The students combined their existing knowledge of schools and children with newly researched knowledge of an identified special need to create a story about the experiences of a pupil with special needs. The quality of work produced in this course, and the expressed changes in attitude suggest that story not only engages and motivates but also has the power to produce a deep level of understanding and a clear link with practice, with consequent potential for professional development and social action.

*It was the last day of term. 150 trainee teachers were attending for the final lecture before the start of the holiday. The lecturer had carefully prepared a Powerpoint presentation using both text and pictures. The lecturer started the session. Many of the students started writing. They were writing Christmas cards that were then passed around and opened by others. Smiles of acknowledgement were given. The lecturer felt separated from the students. She stopped and walked in front of the desk. 'I want to tell you a story,' she said 'about something that happened to me in a school last week.' The students stopped what they were doing. They looked at the lecturer. The silence in the room was intense. At the end of the story the lecturer went back to her 'Powerpoint' slides and the students went back to their Christmas cards.'*

***Introduction***

The story above prompted one of the authors of this paper, Joy Jarvis, to begin an investigation into promoting the learning of student teachers through the use of story. It brought into focus the dissatisfaction that she had been feeling about her teaching. This simple story acted as stories can do by 'stopping the action long enough to theorise about it.' (Akin, 2002, p 67). Joy realised that she frequently used anecdotes or short examples from case studies in her teaching and that students seemed to engage with these, but she had not analysed her own practice in this respect, or reflected on the students' reactions. In the new term Joy was due to lead a course she hadn't taught before and she decided to use these developing insights to change her practice.

***The Project – Phase One***

The course was for final year trainee teachers and was on identifying and meeting the needs of children with special educational needs in the mainstream classroom. In discussion before the course started the students had noted that they wanted to learn about 'every single special need' so that they could feel confident that they had both knowledge of the range of needs they were likely to come across and strategies that they could use in the classroom. Joy, as an experienced teacher of children with special educational needs, knew not only that this was not possible, but also it was not what she wanted the students to learn. While knowledge of ways to find out about special educational needs was important for a teacher, of more importance was the ability to understand the needs of an individual and to identify how he or she could be supported in a particular context. Of even more significance, she felt, was the development of positive attitudes to inclusion, a belief in celebrating differences, and a determination to use professional practice to promote social justice. Could both the students' and the lecturer's expectations be met? How could 'story' be used to meet these ends?

### *The Role of Narrative*

Joy's aim was to engage the students, something that had been done, if only briefly, by the personal story in the lecture theatre. She wanted the students to become deeply involved in the topic. Evidence from Rath's (2002) project on teacher action research in Ireland suggests that 'narrative may be one way that teachers enter wholeheartedly into the learning' (p.151). She also wanted to engage their 'moral imagination', something that Coles (1989) argues can be undertaken effectively through fiction, giving readers/listeners an opportunity to empathise, particularly when they are in potential positions of power, such as in the doctor/patient relationship that he explores. In relation to teaching, where the teacher is very much in the position of being able to influence the happiness and well-being of the child, the ability to put oneself in the other's shoes could be a significant step towards change. Waterland (2001) reflecting on her own work in storying the experiences of a child starting school suggests: '... it is only by constructing the world the child experiences within our own imaginations that we can make that world better' (p. 138).

### *The Teaching*

There was very little teaching on this course, indeed one of the students referred to it as a 'self-study course', and none of the teaching involved giving information about special educational needs. In the first session Joy read stories to the students. These were all on the theme of special educational needs, some being extracts from autobiographies while most were fictional stories written from different perspectives, including those of children. Source texts included a novel written from the perspective of a teenager with Asperger's Syndrome (Haddon, 2003), examples from short stories written by children's authors in collaboration with children with special educational needs (Laird, 1996) and a story written by a teacher as an approach to understanding her own practice (Winter, 1989). Egan (1997) notes the 'powerful emotional effect' of images evoked by the words used to tell a story. He also signals the importance of the memorisation function of stories, pointing to their power to, for example, help the students to see facts 'not as disembodied pieces of knowledge or skill but as embedded ' in their proper human

contexts in which they initially had affective, as well as purely cognitive, meaning' (p.64).

The initial reaction to the session, from both the students and the lecturer, was not in relation to what was said but in relation to the quality of the silence in the room while the stories were being read. The students suggested that this was because you feel relaxed when listening to stories, they are not considered 'work'; you know what the expectations are because the experience of listening to stories is familiar. One student noted: 'You get a sense of achievement, you absorb it, you understand it and you could retell it – that's different from how you'd feel in a lecture.' The ease of access to stories relates to the notion of narrative structure as a human cognitive tool (Egan, 1997) and that we learn about the social world most easily through narrative (Bruner, 1986). The students were interested and motivated but did not see how listening to stories related to their need for facts about types of special need. Could the facts and narrative be linked to involve engagement with the topic, promote deep learning and subsequent practice development? Most of the students' energy would go into the course assignment so it was important that this embraced the perceived needs of the students and the lecturer.

### *Designing the assignment*

The students were then asked to choose an identified special need, such as deafness or autism, and to research the 'facts', using books, articles and websites. They subsequently shared the information in groups, thus satisfying some of the expressed need for knowing about all special needs. This aspect of the assignment was written in traditional essay form. The lecturer, however, had no information about how fully the students had understood the facts in relation to classroom implications, the extent to which these had affected the attitudes of the students to pupils with special needs or their understanding of their role in promoting social justice in relation to these pupils. The students were then asked to combine their existing knowledge of schools and children with their new knowledge of an identified special need to create a story about the experiences of a pupil with special needs. Anderson-Patton & Bass (2002) argue that writing narratives encourages both 'imaginative identification and personal voice, two ingredients we believe are necessary for transformative learning' (p.102).

To help them with their story the students had a session with an English tutor, who talked with them about using words to make impact and ways of developing a framework for their story. A session with an artist in residence explored the role of colour and line in conveying emotion and mood. Having completed their story, the students were asked to use it with the intended audience such as children, students or teachers to obtain feedback. Subsequently all 42 students completed a questionnaire about the impact of the course and five were interviewed by a researcher.

### *Outcomes*

The engagement of the students in the project was evident from their participation in the sessions and the outstanding quality of the presentation of the books, poems and images produced. The quality of these was so good that an exhibition was set up, which over 100 students and local teachers attended. The reaction to the exhibition suggested that the

students had been able to present, effectively, the experiences of children with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. Visitors to the exhibition reported that they had learnt about particular special educational needs and also that they had been emotionally affected and that this led to a change in attitude; 'I'm going to go back to the school I support in and look at the classroom from his (child with special educational needs) eyes.' This relates powerfully to Gerrig's (1993, p.198) point that 'real world judgements can be affected by fictions.'

The students had produced effective pieces of work but what had they learnt? A senior colleague of the lecturer who visited the exhibition wrote on her comment card: 'This is some of the most interesting and insightful students' work that I have ever read...students working at the deeper structures of learning.' While the intuition of staff, based on years of teaching experience, was that the students had learnt a great deal, how could we identify this and where could we find the evidence? Conle (2003 p11) identifies five potential outcomes of narrative curricula: 'advances in understanding; increased interpretive competence; richer practical repertoires, changes in life and visions gained.' Could we find evidence of these in the students work or in the subsequent questionnaires and interviews?

Evidence of advances in understanding of the effects of special educational needs on children was clearly evidenced in the stories and images. Other adults and children engaging with the narratives could identify these features and this was recorded in the students' data on feedback they'd been asked to collect on their work. Appropriate classroom strategies were also portrayed in a number of narratives. One for example, called 'Red Class, Yellow Class', illustrated poor practice in one scenario and good practice in another. One could infer that having identified this understanding the author would go on to use a 'richer practical repertoire' in her own teaching. Another wrote a poem about the isolation of a child in the classroom, an isolation compounded by having a support helper with him all the time. Again one could infer that the poet being aware of this possibility would not allow this to happen in her own context. In relation to changes in their professional lives there was some evidence in the interviews and questionnaires that there had indeed been changes. One student wrote: 'Children are very powerful educators of each other and teachers must give them the potential to understand other children's special needs and celebrate their qualities.' While another stated: 'I would like to be a teacher who includes all children in my classroom.' One could argue that this could lead to a vision of all children being included in schools and in wider society.

It was decided that in order to improve understanding of how this project could impact on students, and if indeed it could be repeated as successfully with another group, the course would be taught the following year to a new group of students, with some changes designed to support and record learning.

### ***Project – Phase Two***

The project was undertaken as before with the following changes. Another tutor, an art specialist, would work with Joy with the aim of developing the image aspect of the work. In order to meet a range of student strengths it was seen as important to look more

carefully at how images and not just words could support learning. As Greene (2001 p11) notes, improved listening and looking and the 'wide awokeness brought about by aesthetic education' can lead to new understandings or to 'reframing' (Schon, 1991). This can then lead to practice change. We wanted our students to reframe their understanding of children with special educational needs and one way of doing this could be to increase their visual literacy.

The second change was in the assignment. The story/image had been accompanied by a written assignment on an identified special need, which had not given the lecturer a great deal of insight into the student's learning. As LaBosky (2002, p34) had noted about her own research in relation to student teachers writing observational accounts of practice: 'What I .. realized was that to achieve these narrative goals, I had been trying to use an assignment that was constructed primarily in the paradigmatic mode.' Having come to the same realisation about the written assignment Joy and her colleagues decided to replace the written account with a progress log. As the students progressed through the course and as they developed their story/image, they were asked to record their progress through story, images, factual writing, descriptions of the development of ideas and reflections on the process and on their learning. It was hoped that this would not only provide evidence of learning in relation to Conle's five outcomes but would also support the students' ability to reflect, an important strategy for practice development (Schon, 1991).

A third change from the original project was that colleagues observed and kept notes on teaching sessions and the questionnaires and interviews undertaken at the end of the course were more focused on issues of process and outcome. The aim was to try to tease out aspects of the process that enhanced student learning and to provide clearer evidence of outcomes.

### *Outcomes*

Joy's art lecturer colleague likened opening the box containing the students' assignments to 'opening a box of sweets'. This highlighted our expectations, but sweets can sometimes be a disappointment. These had colourful and exciting wrappers, but what did they have inside? The stories, poems and images were just as insightful as they had been the previous year. The progress logs were goldmines of evidence regarding learning. Both types of work were used to identify evidence of Conle's five potential outcomes.

### *Analysing the data*

We used Conle's (2003) model of the outcomes of narrative curricula as the basis for analysing and interpreting the data. We viewed the 'Five Outcomes' she identifies as being hierarchical, moving from lower to higher order impact on the students' understanding and practice. We found that there are issues in trying to represent what is happening at higher levels in students' learning. Gains in knowledge and understanding are relatively straightforward to recognise. However, when you move into the more personal, visionary dimensions there is no accepted language for representing such learning in an academic context. Conle recognises the importance of identifying and representing such learning.

The interviews with the students, the stories and our reading of their reflective Logs were the sources of evidence for making our judgements on impact. For all the students the writing of the stories and the underlying research which informed them had led to advances in their understanding of special needs in general and, in a deeper sense, of the specific special need selected as the focus for their stories. As Conle describes, the 'narrative encounters' had prompted questions which had led the students 'to a deeper comprehension of particular issues or phenomena' (p11).

Conle's second outcome, 'increased interpretive competence' was also strongly evident. She draws on the work of Barone and Eisner (1997) in describing a function of narrative as helping us 'notice what had not been seen before' and 'to know what to neglect in our efforts of interpretation,' (p11). For the students, the process of putting their research into story form, putting factual information into a different mode was, necessarily, an interpretive process. A key aspect of this process was to draw on their previous knowledge and understanding both of children's development and children's literature and integrate these understandings with their newly researched knowledge about special educational needs to create a story. They were making choices about what to include and what to leave out, 'what to neglect', and why. Some were consciously choosing a positive voice to promote a positive response towards the disability portrayed in their stories.

We found that the first two outcomes led to the third – the development of 'richer practical repertoires'. Interviews and journal accounts highlighted examples of ways in which the students were able to draw on the knowledge and understanding which had become internalised, in our view, by virtue of being heard as stories, and was now available to be drawn on in a range of practical situations. The stories themselves have added to their resources for teaching and for dialogue with other professionals – extending and enriching their practical repertoires. It is clear that understanding is a prerequisite for being able to internalise and draw on the enriched practical repertoire.

The fourth outcome – 'Changes in life' - refers to the way in which engagement with the narrative process, creating your own story, results in what Clandinin and Connelly describe as 'new stories' being 'told and lived,' (Clandinin & Connelly 2000). The impact is seen in changes in our personal and professional lives. Conle sees this evidenced in the way actions are made 'more socially informed and ecologically sound,' (p11). This description seems to blur the boundary between this category and the fifth and final outcome, 'Visions Gained'.

The journey which takes someone from the fourth to the fifth outcome seems to us to be the shift from seeing and doing things differently as a result of heightened awareness, improved knowledge and understanding, in the milieu of one's own school or classroom, to an understanding of the wider implications. This involves seeing what needs to be changed in order for things to be different – not just for *this* child in *this* school but for *all* children. The narrative experience may be the catalyst that moves the practitioner from the personal to the global perspective. This is evidence of the capacity or power of

narrative to bring out our consciousness of 'what can be and also what should not be.' (Conle, p11) It is the challenging, emancipatory aspect of educational research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986), the raising of one's consciousness to the political dimension, highlighting the causes of problems and recognising that the solutions may require political action. In some cases the students' Log entries show a growing awareness of the social justice dimension of special needs provision, particularly in relation to equality of access for all children.

Two of the stories and reflective logs have been chosen to exemplify the five curricula outcomes.

Anna decided to focus on Asperger's Syndrome, writing a story, 'My friend Joey', which uses the familiar children's story format of animals who exhibit human characteristics and behaviour traits. She uses each example to link with the behaviour of Joey, a child with Asperger's Syndrome, explaining the reasons for his actions:

*"Quite often at school we play pretend games, but my friend Joey doesn't join in, he is not being rude. He does like to play on his own quite a lot, but I love it when he chases me or lets me collect things like stones or leaves with him.*

*Do you sometimes like playing on your own?*

*Do you sometimes not understand the game others are playing? "*

*(extract from 'My Friend Joey' by Anna)*

Anna uses her Log to tell the story behind the story. There is a sense of urgency in her writing expressed in the example below:

*"12/01/04: First entry in Log Book (burst out of me, like it or not!). An emotional day, having to face the thought of looking through the eyes of a child with special educational needs, viewing a sometimes strange and hostile world."*

There is a strong link here with Conle's view that 'There is a certain amount of content that *wants* to be told' (p6) (our emphasis). For two authors of this paper Helen Burchell and Janet Dyson, there is a resonance with their own experience of writing about their professional learning (Burchell and Dyson, 2002). For them this was strongly evoked by Schlink's (1997) discussion of how he came to write the story of his novel, 'The Reader' where he says, 'the guarantee that the written one (story) is the right one lies in the fact that I wrote it and not the other versions. The written version wanted to be written, the many others did not,' (p214).

Anna's story is well informed by her research. Her interpretative competence has enabled her to apply her knowledge and understanding to form a strong underpinning for the narrative. (Outcomes 1 and 2). Her evaluations of her work suggest a richer

repertoire and personal and professional changes, hinting at a wider vision: ‘.....knowing and understanding so much more, I believe will enhance my teaching for all children.’

In her Log and reflections on the process she touches on the ‘visions gained’ outcome of narrative curricula, showing a desire to bring about social justice:

*‘Special educational needs for me comes with a thirst for inclusion, a passion for children not to feel uncomfortably different, and the knowledge that however much you love this child they are different, but NO less valuable as a person who in turn will take their place in society and have equal potential in influencing others’*

The social/political dimension is strongly evident in Beth’s story which is presented from the perspective of a deaf teenager. She found that carrying out the research and writing her story increased her awareness of ‘everyday situations that a hearing person would take for granted, for example, a cancelled train, a changed platform, an emergency siren, a fire alarm. ‘I thought about situations I hadn’t really considered.....one realises the inequality that deaf people face.’ As a result of her raised awareness (vision gained) she decided to include a scenario in her story

*Extract from ‘Deaf People Don’t Dance’ by Beth*

*I got on the train at Hatch End Station but after two stops the train just stopped and the doors stayed open for ages. I was all on my own.*

*Eventually a man came along in a British Rail Uniform and put his head into the carriage and said something, I couldn’t tell what he had said but I saw him mouth “Get off.” Now there was no one on the platform, no train and no information on the announcement boards.*

*“Where has everybody gone?” I thought to myself. I give up, I’m not asking, there’s no point, I might as well walk from here.’*

Beth records in her Log that she drew on the course input on using images, for example, using a blue tone for the photo of the girl on the station to convey the sense of isolation. Her choice of words and images convey the isolation felt by the deaf girl: “After two stops the train just stopped.”..... “I give up, I’m not asking, there’s no point, I might as well walk from here.”

Extract from Beth’s Log: ‘Yes, it certainly makes me think and it makes me want to be more considerate towards other people, whatever their disability.’ The experience of writing the story has given her a vision that things need to be better, ‘how it might be’, (Conle, 2003) this, in turn, makes her own actions more socially informed, bringing about a change in her personal life. She uses her story as a vehicle for conveying this to others, widening its impact, sharing her vision.

Like Anna, Beth describes the sense of urgency she experienced in needing to tell her story. She uses this as a basis for reflecting on her own learning about story writing and linking this to the way children write stories. Her evaluations show evidence of the first and third of Conle's outcomes. There is also evidence of the fourth outcome – a change in her view of writing and, finally, the fifth outcome, vision gained into how things will be in her classroom in the future.

Extract from Beth's Log:

*'When I had gathered sufficient information.....I felt ready to write my story. I think it's interesting that I wrote it really quickly and also how messy my handwriting was. For me the creativity of writing the story came in a rush. I just had to get it down on paper. I learnt something really important about my learning and also how children write stories. It seems wrong that we should ask children to write really neatly in story books. Their drafts can be really messy, as long as it's readable, especially by them'..... 'There must be a variety of approaches in my classroom.'*

This is a model of a process of researching her own practice that she can carry on with indeed she says in her evaluation that she intends to do this. She also says she intends to use a story approach again to explore special needs. Her final reflection gives a range of examples of how the module has influenced her practice as a teacher.

### **Discussion**

What roles can story have in the education of teachers in the field of special educational needs? A number of issues need to be discussed with colleagues working in this field. Firstly, is the approach successful for all students? A key student perspective is the grade gained for the assignment. In both years of the project the grades were above average overall and no student failed to achieve degree level work, indicating that course objectives had been achieved. All students were able to undertake appropriate research, could explain the implications of an identified need and identify strategies that could be used to support the child. They all showed advances in understanding in the field and knowledge of richer practical repertoires.

All students were able to present their material in a child's voice, and for many that was significant 'reframing', that has the potential to lead to practical change. A typical comment was: 'I know it's a really silly thing to say, but I've never thought about the classroom from a child's perspective before.' Also the students did not present stereotypical pictures of children with special educational needs. Joy had been concerned that a medical rather than a social model of special needs would be presented (Ohna, 2004) and this would have been detrimental to the students' development of understanding of inclusion and the roles of teachers, schools and societies in effecting change. It is not clear why stereotyping didn't happen. One possibility was that it was addressed in the session with the English tutor looking at the impact of words. In this session he asked the students to identify stereotypical words connected with the special need they were researching so that these were 'out in the open' for discussion and were not hidden. Most information texts present a deficit model of special educational needs, so this could reinforce stereotypes, but students went beyond this type of data in their

research. They looked at autobiographies, magazine articles by parents of children with different conditions, web sites where adults with a range of needs expressed their opinions. Many students interviewed children or adults with special needs to gain different perspectives. Also the task, that required the student to 'get into the skin' of the child and to present his or her voice, perhaps led to the avoidance of stereotypical views.

The best student work came from those who showed the ability to reflect. They could reflect on the stories they wrote about sessions, on their reading, on the process of their learning and they could identify their insights and the implications of these. Some students were weak in this area. They could story an event when requested to do so, for example an event on their recent teaching placement in school, but had limited ability to reflect on the story. One student noted in her Log: 'From the very first session where we had to share a story from [teaching] placement I learnt how important talk is when learning. It was not until I talked to my peers about what the experience from placement had taught me, that I realised it myself.' As reflection is a key aspect in practice development (Schon 1991) and as narrative is currently being used more often as a tool to support reflective practice (McEwan & Egan 1995) it would be useful to undertake more work on the reflection aspect of this course and perhaps, to take insights gained from this course into other parts of the teaching degree.

Another issue that could be explored is the role of poetry to develop insights. This emerged as a theme from this project due to the significant number of students using poetry in their progress Logs or choosing the medium to portray their chosen special need. In particular this seemed to be when they were exploring feelings and emotions, their own, and those of others, getting behind the feelings of the child, or parent, for example. They were, perhaps, using 'fresh language to describe the indescribable emotional and intellectual experiences in and beyond classrooms' (Cahnmann 2003, p35).

While as Cahnmann (2003 p 30) notes: 'Poetry is a risky business', it can help us to explore alternative ways of looking at practice, as can metaphor (Chambers 2003). How can students be supported in creative and risky processes, which could help them to gain visions of what professional practice could be? Significantly, also, how can we convince others working in similar contexts of the validity of this approach?

Hull (2004) argues that a key difficulty for teachers working with children with special educational needs is not related to teaching approaches but to the problem that teachers have of seeing the world from a very different viewpoint. 'It involves having insight into a different human world, a world in which the nature of knowledge, what is taken to be knowledge, what is regarded as being important or unimportant knowledge, may be different from the one in which the teacher lives.' (Hull, 2004 p105). He argues that teachers need to use their imaginations to do this. Storying could be one way of doing this.

The quality of work produced in this course, and the expressed changes in attitude suggest that story can not only engage the students but can also produce a deep level of

understanding and a clear link with practice, with consequent potential for professional development. If, as Nair (2003) suggests, narrative is the way that ‘memes’, or cultural understandings are shared within a community, then we would want to use this process to share and develop understandings of social justice within education. We would aim to develop teachers as ‘trans-world professionals’ (Hull, 2004 p 106) who can enter into the worlds of children in order to meet their needs.

### References

- Akin, R. (2002) Out of Despair: Reconceptualizing Teaching Through Narrative Practice in Lyons, N. & Kubler LaBoskey, V.(Eds) *Narrative Inquiry in Practice, Advancing the Knowledge of Teaching*. New York, Teachers’ College Press.
- Anderson-Patton, V. & Bass, E. (2002) Using Narrative Teaching Portfolios for Self-Study in Lyons, N. & Kubler LaBoskey, V.(Eds) *Narrative Inquiry in Practice, Advancing the Knowledge of Teaching*. New York, Teachers’ College Press.
- Barone, T. & Eisner, E. (1997) Arts –based Educational Research in R. Jaeger (ed.) *Complementary Methods for Research in Education*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association. )
- Bruner, J. (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.
- Burchell, H. & Dyson, J. (2002) *Imagining Your Reading: the value of moving beyond the text*, paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 1-5, 2002, New Orleans, LA.
- Cahnmann,M (2003) The craft, practice and possibility of poetry in educational research in *Educational Researcher* vol 32, no 3 pp 29-36
- Carr,W. & Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical, Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. London, Falmer Press.
- Chambers, P (2003) Narrative and Reflective Practice: recording and understanding experience in *Educational Action Research* vol 11 no 3 pp 403-414
- Coles, R (1989) *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination* Boston, Houghton Mifflin
- Conle, C. (2003) An Anatomy of Narrative Curricula in *Educational Researcher*, Vol 32, No 3, pp.3-15.
- Egan, K. (1997), *The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape our Understanding* Chicago, University of Chicago.
- Gerrig, K. *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: on the psychological activities of reading*. New Haven, Yale University.
- Greene, M (2001) *Variations on a Blue Guitar: The Lincoln Centre Institute Lectuers on Aesthetic Education* New York, Teachers’ College Press
- Haddon, M (2003) *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* London: Random House
- Hull, J (2004) Teaching as a trans-world activity *Support for Learning* vol 10 no 3 p 103-106

LaBosky, VK (2002) Stories as a Way of Learning both Practical and Reflective Orientations in Lyons, N. & Kubler LaBoskey, V.(Eds) *Narrative Inquiry in Practice, Advancing the Knowledge of Teaching*. New York, Teachers' College Press.

Laird, E (ed) (1998) *Me and My Electric* London: Egmont Children's Books

McEwan, H & Egan, K (1995) *Narrative in Teaching, Learning and Research* New York, Teachers' College Press

Nair, RB (2003) *Narrative Gravity: Conversation, Cognition, Culture* London, Routledge

Ohna, S (2004) Deaf in my own way: identity, learning and narratives *Deafness and Education International* vol 6 no1 pp 20-38

Rath, A. (2002) Action Research as Border Crossing: Stories from the Classroom, in Lyons, N. & Kubler LaBoskey, V.(Eds) *Narrative Inquiry in Practice, Advancing the Knowledge of Teaching*. New York, Teachers' College Press.

Schon, D (1991) *The Reflective Turn: case studies in and on reflective practice* New York, Teachers' College Press

Schlink, B. (1997) *The Reader*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

Waterland, L. (2001), Not a perfect offering in Dadds, M. & Hart, S, *Doing Practitioner Research Differently*. London, Routledge Falmer.

Winter, R (1989) *Learning from Experience: Principles and Practice in Action-Research* London: The Falmer Press

# **Contribution / Ethics Statements**

Jarvis, J & Lamb, S (1994) Talking isn't always easy: children with speech and language difficulties *Early Education Autumn p3-6*

This is to confirm that Joy Jarvis and Susan Lamb wrote this article collaboratively and each contributed half the text.

Susan Lamb Sue Lamb

Jarvis, J & Lamb, S (2001) Interaction and the Development of Communication in the Under Twos: Issues for Practitioners Working with Young Children in *Early Education vol 21 no 2 p 129-138*

This is to confirm that this research project was undertaken collaboratively by Joy Jarvis and Susan Lamb and with the consent of Susan Lamb as the mother of the children involved.

Two thirds of the article was written by Joy Jarvis and one third by Susan Lamb.

Susan Lamb Sue Lamb

Jarvis, J Montgomery, L & Storey, M (2003) Storying and Deaf Children  
*British Association of Teachers of the Deaf Magazine*, November p19-20

This is to confirm that Joy Jarvis wrote this article following discussion with  
the other two authors, who commented on the text at the draft stage.

Lucy Montgomery L.T. Montgomery 28/02/05

Marion Storey Marion Storey 11/3/05

Jarvis, J (2003) 'It's more peaceful without any support': what do deaf pupils think about the support they receive in mainstream schools? *Support for Learning* 18, 4  
p162-169 ISSN 0268 2141

The research underpinning this paper was undertaken by a research team from the University of Hertfordshire. The findings were published in the report: University of Hertfordshire (2002) *Inclusion: What deaf pupils think* (RNID)

The research team consisted of Joy Jarvis, Alessandra Iantaffi and Indra Sinka, with Darren Saunders acting as Deaf consultant to the project. Joy Jarvis was responsible for initiating the project and the application for funding. She was an equal partner with the other researchers in the design of the project, identifying appropriate methodology and data analysis. She was involved in a small amount of data collection. Joy contributed to the writing of all 9 chapters of the report, and was responsible for chapters 1, 2 and 9.

Albad . 11/4/05 .

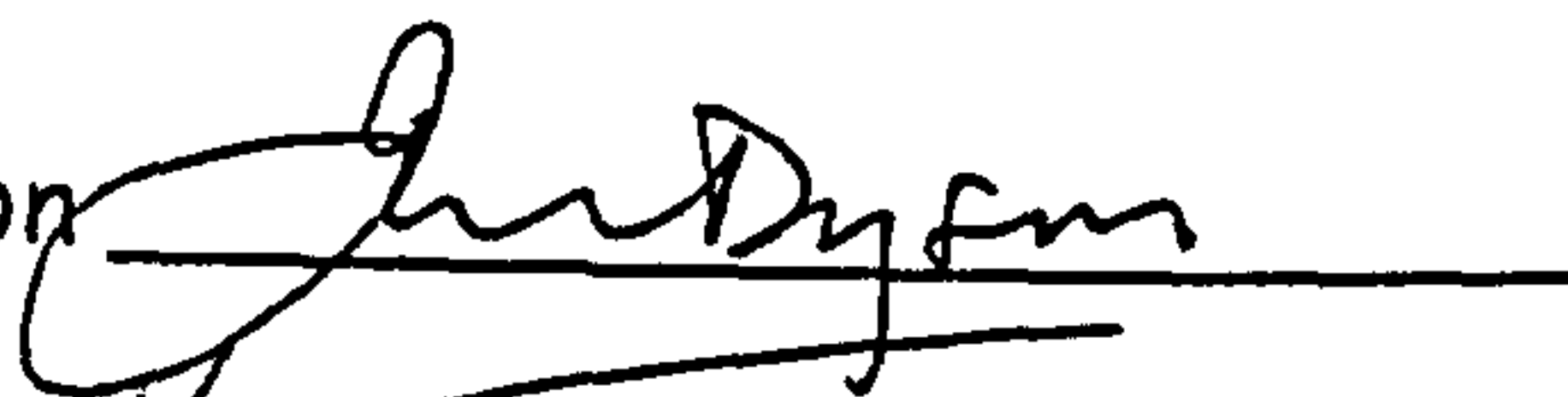
Mary Read, Head of School of Education

Jarvis, J., Dyson, J., Thomas, K., Graham, S., Iantaffi, A & Burchell, H (2004) Learning Through Creating Stories: developing student teachers' understanding of the experiences of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the British Educational Research Association, Manchester*

This is to confirm that Joy Jarvis led this research project and undertook the majority of the research leading to this publication. Janet Dyson acted as research assistant to the project.

Two thirds of the article was written by Joy Jarvis and one third was written by Janet Dyson. Both authors discussed the ideas and analysis with the other members of the research team before and during the writing process.

Janet Dyson



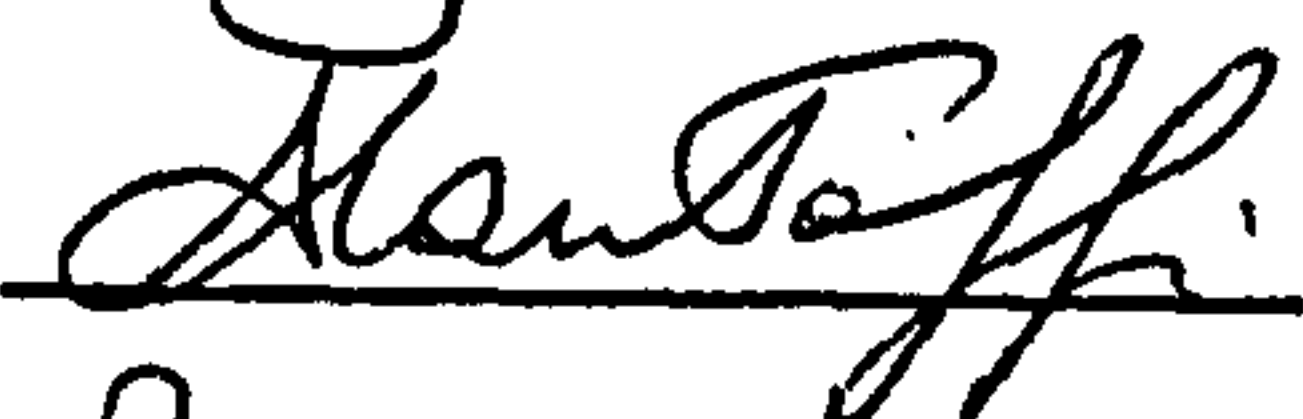
Kit Thomas



Sally Graham



Alessandra Iantaffi



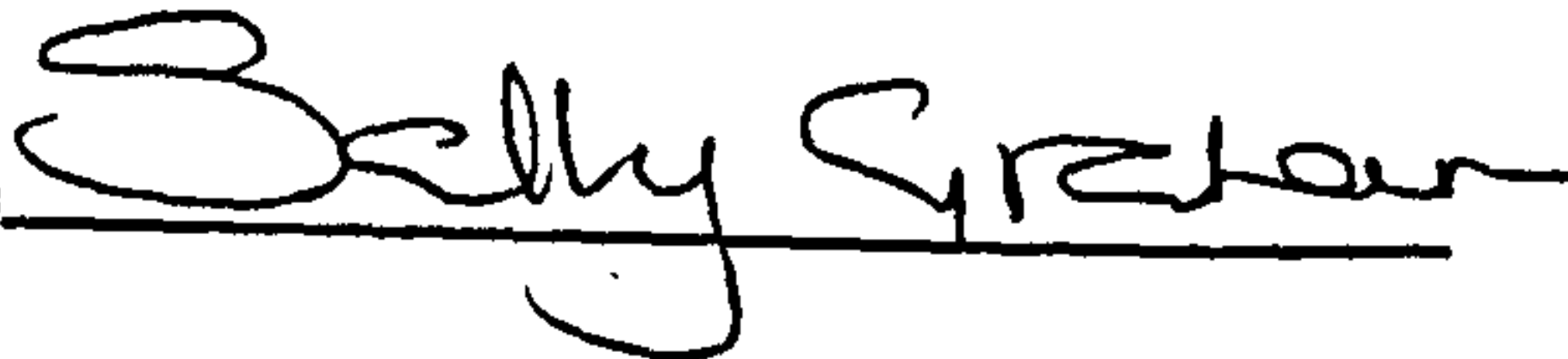
Helen Burchell



Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Tyler, D and Hamilton, P (2003) Parenting classes and personal development: issues for young offender institutions *Prison Service Journal* no 145 p19-21

Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Hamilton, P & Tyler, D (2004) The role of parenting classes for young fathers in prison: a case study *Probation Journal* vol 51, no 1 p21-33

This is to confirm that Joy Jarvis led and undertook the research project leading to the writing of these two articles. Joy Jarvis wrote the articles following discussion with the other authors, who commented on the text at the draft stages.

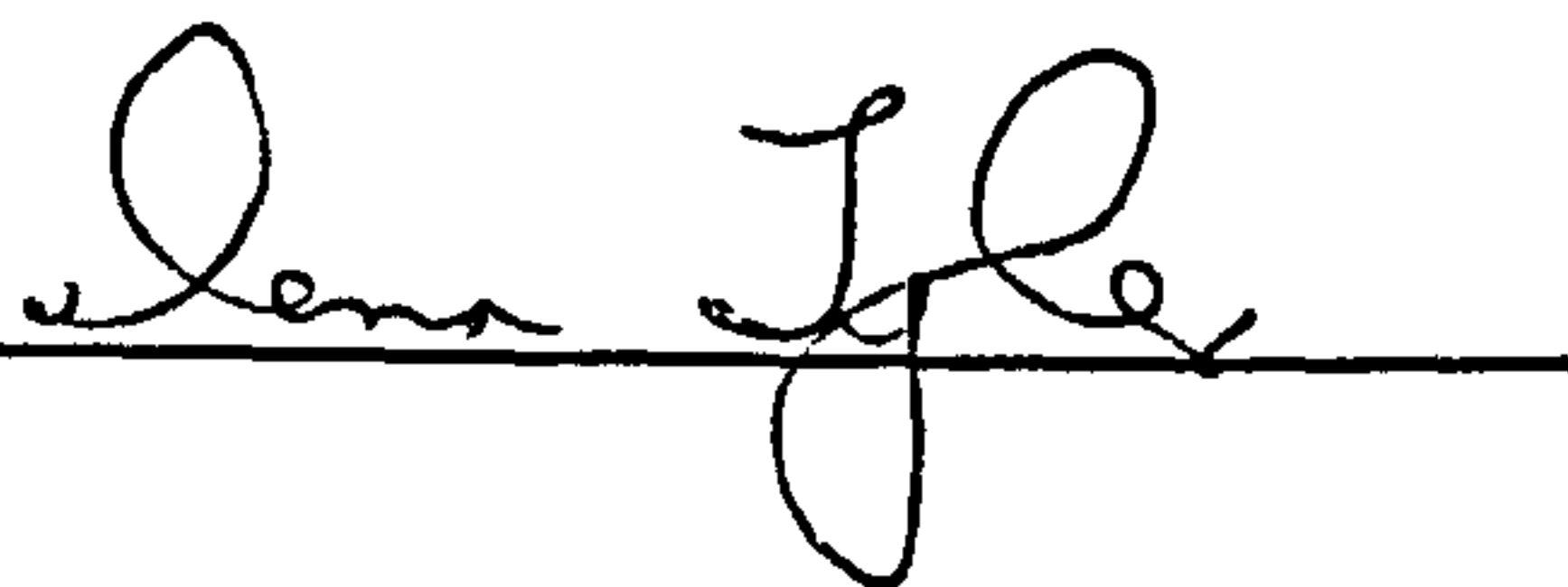
Sally Graham 

Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Tyler, D and Hamilton, P (2003) Parenting classes and personal development: issues for young offender institutions *Prison Service Journal* no 145 p19-21

Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Hamilton, P & Tyler, D (2004) The role of parenting classes for young fathers in prison: a case study *Probation Journal* vol 51, no 1 p21-33

This is to confirm that Joy Jarvis led and undertook the research project leading to the writing of these two articles. Joy Jarvis wrote the articles following discussion with the other authors, who commented on the text at the draft stages.

Dena Tyler


A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dena Tyler', is written over a horizontal line.

Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Tyler, D and Hamilton, P (2003) Parenting classes and personal development: issues for young offender institutions *Prison Service Journal* no 145 p19-21

Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Hamilton, P & Tyler, D (2004) The role of parenting classes for young fathers in prison: a case study *Probation Journal* vol 51, no 1 p21-33

This is to confirm that Joy Jarvis led and undertook the research project leading to the writing of these two articles. Joy Jarvis wrote the articles following discussion with the other authors, who commented on the text at the draft stages.

Penny Hamilton

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Hamilton', is written over a horizontal line.

## Ethics Statement

Jarvis, J (1989) Taking a Metaphon approach to phonological development: a case study *Child Language, Teaching and Therapy* 5, 1 p16-32 ISSN 0265-6590

This is to confirm that the research underpinning this article was undertaken by Joy Jarvis as part of her MA (Linguistics) course and was carried out under the ethical guidelines of Hatfield Polytechnic.

Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Tyler, D and Hamilton, P (2003) Parenting classes and personal development: issues for young offender institutions *Prison Service Journal* 145 p19-21 ISSN 0300-3558

Jarvis, J., Graham, S., Hamilton, P & Tyler, D (2004) The role of parenting classes for young fathers in prison: a case study *Probation Journal* 51, 1 p21-33 ISSN 0264-5505

This is to confirm that the research underpinning these articles was undertaken with the consent of the ethics committee, University of Hertfordshire.

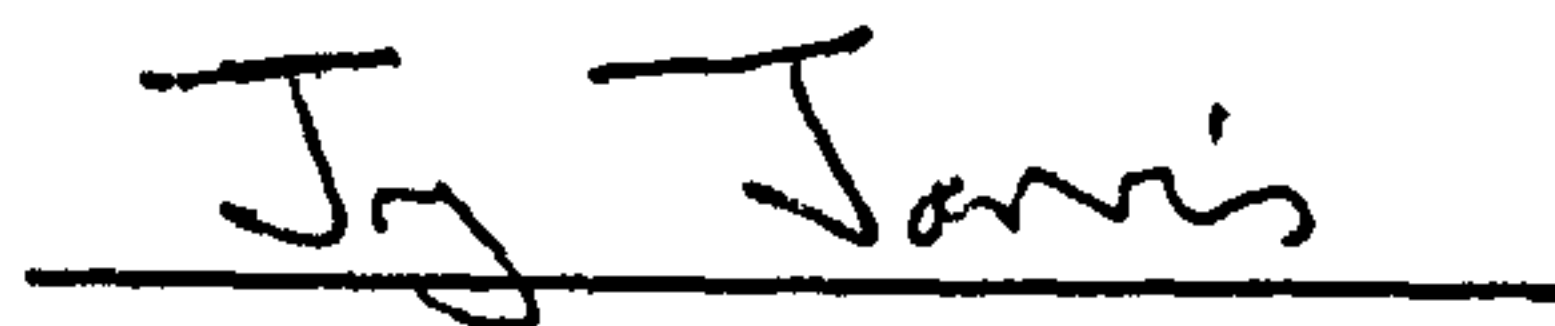
Jarvis, J (2003) 'It's more peaceful without any support': what do deaf pupils think about the support they receive in mainstream schools? *Support for Learning* 18, 4 p162-169 ISSN 0268 2141

This is to confirm that the research underpinning this article was undertaken with the consent of the ethics committee, University of Hertfordshire.

Jarvis, J., Dyson, J., Thomas, K., Graham, S., Iantaffi, A & Burchell, H (2004) Learning Through Creating Stories: developing student teachers' understanding of the experiences of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the British Educational Research Association, Manchester* ([www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003733.htm](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003733.htm))

This is to confirm that the research underpinning this article was undertaken with the consent of the ethics committee, University of Hertfordshire.

Joy Jarvis

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joy Jarvis", is written over a horizontal line.