

**Teachers' and Peers' Attitudes Towards the Integration of Pupils with
Down's Syndrome**

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ABSTRACT

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This study is an exploratory piece of research into the question of attitudes towards the process of integration. A socio-political approach to attitudes is used as a theoretical framework for exploring and understanding the meanings and the complexities involved in the formation of attitudes. The study considers the case of one primary school in particular, Yorkshire School, that had a policy of integrating, in a cross sectional way, forty pupils identified as having special educational needs, including six pupils with Down's Syndrome. The research involved extensive participant observations within the school, semi-structured interviews and informal discussions with nineteen (19) teachers as well as individual and group discussions with the use of a picture with a hundred and three (103) pupils.

The findings of this study show that integration has become a contentious term. Teachers' attitudes are conflicting and often confusing while the directives embedded in the teaching act, especially after the introduction of the Educational Reform Act, render the commitment of inclusive education more difficult to maintain. Further, the exploration of the meanings children ascribe to their interactional and perceptual patternings with disabled peers revealed the ways that "handicapped" identities are being socially created. The value conflicts and ethical dilemmas in which both teachers and pupils are becoming enmeshed as well as the structural conditions within which integration is implemented are discussed in an attempt to show that integration must become a policy oriented towards its own destruction.

The findings also confirm the necessity of a socio-political approach in the study of attitudes by revealing that any serious attempt of exploring and understanding the complexities involved in the formation of attitudes towards the integration process cannot be divorced either from the wider set of social formations or from the educational context within which attitudes have been developed in the first place.

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PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THIS STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

During my early socialisation process, the social dimension of disability was embraced by feelings of guilt and embarrassment. It was a life occurrence that had better remain hidden. Disabled children were not neighbourhood children. Whenever, accidentally, they happened to be "visible" they were targets of curiosity, pity and fear for the "unorthodox games of life" or they were targets of jokes. Inclusive education was not the type of pedagogy I encountered in my schooling experience as a student and friendships with disabled people were far from being an ordinary and typical life occurrence. The ideology beyond the educational system that I had experienced was based on highly competitive routes, centralised national directives, subject centred practices in which the student in order to succeed had to strive for "excellence"; in the way this term was pre-defined by the educational apparatus. Excellence was perceived as an individualized triumph and so was failure. In such a system disabled students merely had no place. It was not a surprise then that I had a cultural, ideological and an educational shock when some years later, in a different educational-ethnic [Canadian] system, I experienced, as a volunteer educational psychologist, an "integrated setting" catering for children with a wide variety of strengths and weaknesses, including children with Down's Syndrome. The emerging question, surrounded by both doubts and puzzlement, seemed to be unavoidable: "Why was it that what was perceived as unfeasible -an absurd idea- in one context was feasible in another?"

The above brief biographical account is just too important to be ignored in this study in which the main interest is to explore teachers' and peers' attitudes towards the process of integration, with particular reference to the integration of pupils with Down's Syndrome. It constitutes an essential part of the cultural, historical and political baggage, including tensions, conflicts and enlightenment, that I, as a researcher, carry and experience throughout the creation of this study. Often, as far as the social relations of research production are concerned, it has been ignored that:

" We [the researchers] do not come innocent to a research or a situation of events; rather we situate these events not merely in the institutional meaning which our profession provides but also constitute them as expressions of our-selves" (Clough, 1995; p. 138).

Of course this element entails a risk as well as for when the study is in the public arena,

"the researcher loses control over how it is viewed and responded to by individuals or organisations. This raises the possibility that insights are used for purposes the researcher never intended and strongly disagrees with. This is a particularly serious issue in relation to those subjects of study who are oppressed and experience institutional discrimination" (Barton and Clough, 1994; p. 145, Hammersley and Scarth, 1993).

In addition to risks, attitudinal research in the area of special educational needs raises serious questions about the area of special education research policy and practice. On the one hand this type of research can be one of the most difficult and demanding aspects of education and other social research. As Bines (1995) pin-points "the researcher must confront a range of issues and dilemmas, together with many personal and social values and vested interests" (p. 42). On the other hand, exploring attitudes is a highly problematic affair due to the nature of the construct and the way it has been perceived and analysed in previous mainly conventional research. What do attitudes involve? Is their formation so abstract and far apart from specific societal well internalized norms and directives? What is the socio-political function of the "other" in an attitudinal research? Are the expressed attitudes influenced by the nature of our questioning? How are we to perceive and interpret the inconsistencies and conflicts that are to be found between expressed attitudinal statements and actions? What is the point of reference when asking about the other's attitudes: the disabled person or the environment in which this person is called to live? Can such dichotomies exist within contexts that are based on webs of social relationships? Can we talk about situational attitudes or can we ascribe to attitudes an inherent stability regardless of situational parameters? Is there any use in studying attitudes in the first place and if so, What are the implications for the lives of those most affected by such a type of research? These are crucial, conflicting and often confusing issues and an engagement with such issues

entails an engagement with and sensitivity to the complexity that is to be found within the paramount realities of both the researcher and the participants.

Additionally, in the area of special educational needs the way we conceptualize the term "attitudes" encompasses an extension to the way we conceptualize the term "disability". A major issue of analysis in attitudinal research is the way the notion of impairment becomes synonymous with disability. The researcher, if not engaged in a continuous critical reflection of his/her own attitudes, shares the responsibility of perpetuating this phenomenon according to which socially-created assumptions are considered to be natural life occurrences. The very methods we use in attitudinal research and the context we use them creates the topic itself.

The stereotype of a researcher who is detached and above the environment that s/he are attempting to understand contradicts my experience, in which most decisions have emerged in the field and are based on trials, errors and reconstructions. It has been the experience of errors and the search for alternative ways that have helped me to realise how subjective and value-laden both the researcher and the techniques can be, and also to realise that:

"to keep our options secret, to conceal them in the cowebs of technique, or to disguise them by claiming neutrality does not constitute neutrality...It's naive to consider our roles as abstract in a matrix of neutral methods and techniques for action that does not take place in a neutral society" (Freiers, 1980; p. 39).

Further, since I am a non-British citizen and as I do not have a first hand experience of being educated in a British educational system I have to approach each situation in and outside the classroom from a 'cultural anthropology' stance. That is, questioning what for other people, who have grown up in this specific culture, seems to be unquestionable. This stance enables me to acknowledge the cultural relativity of my society (Greek) and British society, while at the same time urge me "to look with renewed attention at the details which make up the 'natural' attitudes of every day life" (Webster, 1980; p. 47).

Thus, the complexities of the notions I engage with and the unavoidable anthropological stance that has to be adopted in a personal endeavour to give meaning to experience(s) demand the "application" of methods which allow the self to be situated into a context. Ethnographic methodology provides the space and flexibility to embrace the notion of cultural contexts and to grasp -or at least try to understand- "other cultures on their own terms and to identify cultural patterns within the processes of both continuity and change" (Peters, 1995; p. 63) without negating the fact that the researcher is inclusive in the method of analysis. As Ball (1994) maintains:

"ethnography is a way of engaging critically with and developing interpretations of the 'real'. Like genealogy it is disruptive, it is often about giving voice to the unheard, it is also about the play of power-knowledge relations in local and specific settings" (p. 4).

The notion of "setting" and/or context here is of importance. The adoption of an ethnographic approach to the study of attitudes towards the process of integration is connected with a need to explore the context in which questions relating to disability are raised. In turn this demand is based on the realization that attitudes are "grounded in the choices [people make] when faced with the practical [and ideological] challenges [and constraints] of every-day living" (Peters, 1995; p. 65). This perspective provides a possibility of grasping those real contradictions within and between policies and practices [as well as] "those unintended consequences that combine to provide the possibilities for contestation and change" (Barton, 1991; p. 3). Thus instead of conceptualizing attitudes as a-historical, a-political and a-social entities, in this study they are used as the means of exploring the practices and ideologies that hinder or promote the creation of more inclusive education. They are also used as a starting point in understanding the reality of every-day life within an educational setting in which a collection of people endeavour to make sense not only of it but also of their relationships and the tensions between themselves and this reality. This necessitates taking into consideration the micropolitical struggles involved in people's endeavour to pursue individually or collectively their goals operating from within unequal power relationships, affected by and even affecting political decisions that are made at

different levels (Fulcher, 1989). In relation to questions of disability, the contextual perspective of exploring attitudes offers the means to highlight "the nature and intensity of the struggles involved over definitions, effective policy and practice" (Barton, 1991; p. 3). This perspective has found strength and significance through the personal/ideological struggles and evolution involved in the processes and practices of this study, which in turn, led to a realization that "the idea of special educational needs is one instance of a range of categories which oppress disabled people" (Fulcher, 1995; p. 9). This assumption can be understood only in relation to the wider socio-economic context in which schools are placed.

Educational ideologies and social and cultural values are amongst the most fundamental issues in analyzing the discourses surrounding the area of special educational needs, for their consideration engages directly with the structures and constraints within which both teachers' and peers' attitudes towards the process of integration are being formed. This is a particularly urgent task during an era of a radical transformation, when industrial and economic preoccupations and the celebration of excessive individualism occupy the centre ground of educational politics. Of course, educational activity is one of the many social entities that cannot be examined in a vacuum free of the larger social spectrum. Schooling is interdependent with a more extensive and complex reality, reflecting constant changes and transformations with unpredictable outcomes. Indeed, the character of school activity not only mirrors aspects of modes of production, dominant economic priorities and political activities but as Apple (1979) in his analysis of the linkages between education and economic structures maintains:

"Education is both a 'cause' and an 'effect'. The school is not a passive mirror, but an active force, one that also serves to give legitimacy to economic and social forms and ideologies so intimately connected to it" (p. 42).

This dialectical connection between school and other social systems and structures has been the starting point of raising different and even conflicting ideologies

of education, its function, uses and aims. However, for the last five years there has been remorseless pressure by Government to impose changes on schools and teachers through the introduction of a plethora of policies and innovations covering all aspects of educational provision and practice. State funded schools in the UK are currently faced with a reform package which in addition to introducing a National Curriculum also includes a) changes to the organisation of the classrooms and the teaching/learning processes (see: Alexander et al., 1993) accompanied by specific ideological philosophies; b) changes in the roles and power(s) of local educational authorities; on the management, funding and governance of schools; changes in the nature, aim and purpose of student assessments; changes in the relationships among schools and between schools and parents; changes in the area of school inspection and on teachers' education, training, work conditions and professional identities (see Ball, 1994; Ball et al., 1994; Pollard et al., 1994; Bolton, 1994; Black, 1994; O'Hear, 1994; Hargreaves, 1993; Alexander et al., 1993). In other words, changes to the purpose, aim, function and nature of both schooling and pedagogy. While the following quotation is long, it is cited at this point in the discussion because it captures powerfully and vividly the frenetic pace, intensity, confusion and nature of the consequences following the changes involved within the current radically transformative period:

"These changes are all facets of current Conservative government education policy - they are all externally imposed and virtually all have legal status. They are all happening at once. They all have dramatically short time scales for implementation. By general consensus, within the educational community they are all massively under funded...Furthermore, the changes are frequently altered, amended and reoriented...Advisory committees are set up and then ignored. Development work is commissioned and then cancelled...Separately and together these changes are bringing about profound shifts in the nature of teaching and the teachers' role, profound shifts in the relationships between schools and parents and profound shifts in the nature of schools as work organisations. Not surprisingly, many teachers appear weary and wary, stressed and depressed, alienated and bitter...They [teachers] are expected to respond constructively and intelligently to make sense of the uncertainties, incoherence and complexity of change" (Ball, 1994; p.12).

The most central feature of this transformation period is the political commitment to market forces and competition as a means of increasing educational productivity. Commercial rather than educational principles are dominating political discourses, surrounded by significant shifts in the value base of educational practice. It has become difficult to differentiate the rhetoric from the realities and while the dominant discourses give emphasis to "choice", they often ignore the significant differences that exist between "choosing (making a choice) and getting your choice" (Ball, 1994; p. 23). Meanwhile, the vision encapsulated within the current political ideology of education means that:

"The best quality education is a positional good which must be rationed and competitively sought after. Values of competitive individualism, separation and exclusion are extolled and knowledge is itself regarded as a commodity for private consumption" (Tomlinson, 1994; p. 4).

The values that define and underpin the new introduced educational reforms and the way these reforms were introduced, if not imposed, raise fundamental concerns regarding issues of inclusive education. Questions of equality and social justice seem to be "outdated" in a context where the prevailing ethos is about individualism, commercialism, productivity, competition and control/regulation. Many have voiced fears that within this climate it is unlikely that schools will give priority to inclusive values and comprehensive principles (Barton and Oliver, 1992; Ball, 1994; Carr and Quicke, 1990).

It is against this background (as it is extensively discussed in following chapters) that this study endeavours to place the question of inclusive education by focusing on the exploration of the context within which teachers' and peers' attitudes towards the process of integration have been developed. It is important to note that the data discussed in this study was collected during the years of 1992 and 1993 which can be considered as the initial phase of implementing the National Curriculum requirements. Every change involves pain, conflict and confusion and even though policies can be "crude and simple, [p]ractice is sophisticated, contingent, complex and unstable".

Indeed, "policy *as* practice is 'created' in a trialectic of dominance, resistance and chaos/freedom" (Ball, 1994; p. 11). These dimensions are all to be found in teachers' expressions as this study monitors the immediate effects of the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act. Even though, at the time of writing this introduction, there is still continual and rapid educational change as successive amendments to the original directives of the 1988 Education Reform Act are made, it is hoped that this study contributes to

"our collective understanding of the nature of the complex web of the social forces in which policy-makers, teachers, pupils and other educational professionals and consumers are inextricably enmeshed, and will highlight ways in which different aspects of this intricate reality ultimately impact on the quality of learning, which must remain its fundamental goal" (Pollard et al., 1994; p. 4).

Thus, the insights that this study provides can be one of "the many stepping stones in the quest to understand the nature of the educational enterprise and, hence, to provide for it most effectively" (Pollard et al., 1994; p. 4). To achieve its aims this thesis is organized into five parts:

Part One [Chapter 1] considers the multiplicity of the conflicting ideologies and practices that the notion of integration encompasses. Contentious notions such as "disability", "normalization" and "special needs" are theoretically analyzed for their consideration engages with the intense discursive struggles to define "how things are" or "ought to be". The aim is to reconstitute the dominant individualistic and medical deficit approach to the above issues, and by taking into serious consideration the voices of disabled people, to shift the focus of analysis onto the complexities and power relationships that are involved in controversial and wide ranging debates.

Part Two [Chapter 2] concentrates on a review of the main findings of previous attitudinal research towards the process of integration. The focus on the existing, mainly conventional, attitudinal research is connected with the attempt to show that the way both attitudes and research have been conceptualized contributes to the perpetuation of a restrictive and often oppressive way of viewing complex issues such as attitudes and

disability. A critical analysis of the construct "attitudes" is offered which in turn becomes the platform of presenting the fundamental ideological principle underlying the methodological and analytical /interpretative procedures of the present attitudinal study.

Part Three [Chapter 3] is devoted to the exploration of the social relations involved in this research production. It focus on the methodological tools that are used for the demanding practice of an in-depth understanding of a specific "culture" and attempts to illuminate some of the insider views and experiences gained during the data gathering period.

Part Four is divided into two chapters:

Chapter 4 sets the broader educational scene as this was experienced by the teachers who participated in this study. It offers an understanding of how teachers think and feel about their work and relates this to their professional ideologies and personal priorities. The work context of teachers in a rapidly changing environment is irrevocably interwoven with their attitudes towards the process of integration; a topic which constitutes the theme of analysis of Chapter five.

Chapter 5 explores the way policies made at other levels influence policies in use. It further indicates the ideological/personal constraints within which teachers try to define and to implement integration and the tensions they face in trying to resolve conflicting priorities and contradicting expectations.

Part Five also consists of two chapters:

Chapter 6 identifies some crucial issues included within the overused and often problematic notion of 'social integration'. The focus is on exploring children's meanings towards the integration of disabled children, identifying in this way the influence of adult discursive practices on children's emerging ideologies.

Chapter 7 enters into the realm of childhood culture and explores the social and cultural context within which children develop attitudes and ascribe meanings to the complex and often volatile patterning(s) of interpersonal relationships between disabled and non-

disabled children. A particular emphasis is placed on the way "handicapped" identities are socially created.

Finally, even though it is felt that in complex realities, "research is an exploration, not a finding" (Peters, 1995; p. 70) the study concludes by reconsidering the major themes and offering simultaneously potential areas for further research.

PART ONE

Chapter 1

THE PRINCIPLE OF INTEGRATION: ITS IDEOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL COMPLEXITIES

In this study the term 'integration' has a significant role in that it is one of the main concepts under analysis. However, during the search for acquiring a working definition of the concept, I realized the multiplicity of the conflicting ideologies and practices that such a term includes.

Defining processes is quite a complicated affair but it is significant as definitions serve different, although interdependent, functions; they allow for communication, thought, social interaction and control (Meighan, 1981). That is, on the one hand, they direct individuals' personal and social experiences by offering an ideological framework within which persons make sense of cultural, social and political phenomena. On the other hand, they are devices for the transmission of these ideological frameworks, including perceptions and conceptualizations between individuals.

The subjective dimension is significant within the creation of definitions because, when defining social processes, the ideas included reflect the values and priorities contained in people's subjective interpretations. In turn, through the process of communication, these definitions generate social messages that can be altered through the filter of the other's understanding and interpretation. Thus, definitions become the means of making sense of the world around us, setting our histories and ideologies in context, and provide a basis for generating action.

From a wider perspective, definitions become even more complicated and significant as they are included in political discourse, and within struggles and power relationships they constitute the theoretical basis for attaining an objective. As Fulcher

(1989) argues, "competing discourses contain a social theory of how. . . the social world works and ought to work" (p. 9). She goes further by stating that:

"Social life may be theorized as consisting of *practical* activities, which are *theoretically* based, and in each of which *social* actors struggle to attain their objectives. This means *practical* activities are simultaneously *theoretical* or *technical*, *moral* and *political*. In other words, discursive practices are theoretically, politically and morally informed" (p. 12).

Mike Oliver (1987) illustrated the connection between language, definitions and political ideologies by offering reasons why definitions are important. He claims that:

"A final reason why definitions are important stems from what might be called "the politics of minority groups". From the 1950's onwards . . . there was a growing realization that if particular social problems were going to be alleviated or removed, then nothing more or less than a fundamental redefinition of what the problem actually was, was necessary. Thus homophile groups, black people and women set about challenging the prevailing definitions by attacking the sexist and racist biases in the language used to underpin these dominant definitions and creating, substituting or taking over terminology in order to provide more positive imagery (p. 10).

Due to this social function of definitions and due to the involvement of ideology, definitions include an inherent ambiguity and a conflicting multiplicity.

Integration is a social process and its definitions can not escape from such complexities. It involves a series of parameters with educational, political, moral, theoretical and practical implications. Within the debate of integration a multifaceted divisive discourse has been created which makes it difficult to disentangle rhetoric from institutionalized realities. Pedagogical principles, humanitarian ideologies, theories of normalization, socio-political and medical approaches to education are being used in a conflicting way in the cultural struggle of different interest groups which endeavour within asymmetrical power relationships to pursue different objectives. Some definitions have a higher degree of "stickability", to use one of the terms Abberley (1989) uses, as they are rooted within institutionalized practices and discourses at different levels (see: Fulcher, 1989 for the concept of "levels"). The degree of stickability of certain discourses is strongly connected to the power some groups hold

which enables them to maintain and perpetuate their ideological positions, needs and priorities. Language, knowledge, assumptions, and myths are used to underpin and frame the manifest positions (Atkin, 1991).

This chapter is concerned with the ambiguities and conflicting multiplicities inherent in definitions of integration. It is an endeavour to explore the ways the term integration has been used in both the political and practical spheres and how the contradictions included affect and are affected by other socio-political parameters. There are a number of arguments that this chapter attempts to put forward. Firstly, there is the argument that segregation was not mainly about responding to children's needs but rather served and even masked other motives related to society's needs. Secondly, the pre-occupation of defining issues of disability and integration solely from an individualistic medical point of view has further disabled rather than enabled disabled individuals. Such an approach impinges upon efforts for creating inclusive educational systems and it has been used to cover the deficiencies of ordinary schools in responding to and educating all children. The issue of normalization is a key feature in such discussion as its definitions are associated with definitions of integration of disabled people in educational and other community settings. Finally, in this chapter I argue that integration has not been viewed as a commitment, to create inclusive education. In addition to this lack of commitment, a number of rhetorical discourses have emerged about integration that bring further complications and obscure what happens in reality.

SEGREGATION: SOME OBSERVATIONS

Reflecting on the notion of integration the first identified issue is that the debate of implementing integrational policies **"has not taken place in a neutral way but against a cultural and political backdrop of discrimination against disabled people"** (Oliver, 1987; p. 9). Understanding Oliver's statement demands an exploration and demystification of the ideologies deployed for the justification of segregation. This

is necessary because the term integration, first and foremost, implies that the individuals to which it refers have been perceived as different, inferior, and they have been segregated from mainstream practices.

This differentiation has been based on the principle according to which some children, due to individual deficits, "cannot cope" within the ordinary educational system. This medical and psychological perspective was further legitimized by a humanitarian ideology according to which a disabled person was regarded as set apart from the rest of society by his/her disability (see for instance, how a humanitarian religious fervour had pervaded the social perception of disability in 19th century British literature for children; Davidson, et al., 1994). Within this context one way of providing for "the disabled" was to "protect them from the harsher realities of ordinary school life". Protection has been synonymous with institutionalization as these children have had to be educated in special isolated classrooms. Segregated education, however, tends to imply that the children in question have been institutionally destined to live segregated adulthood lives. After all, a "protective" special educational environment has little in common with the challenges and complexities of an ordinary environment while "the result of a 'special' education is that children are destined for a 'special' life career in terms of employability, self-sufficiency and dependence" (Barton and Tomlinson, 1984; p. 70)

However, humanitarian ideologies have a high degree of stickability due to their connections with notions of "care", "love" and "protection", which are necessary elements within a person's life. Further, Hegel an early proponent of humanism "presented the history of Western civilization as being based on the progressive development of human consciousness" (in Hill, J. 1992; p. 73). However, it is the same history of humanism, in which institutionalized religions have played a vital role, which has taught us to be suspicious when "one group claims to be doing good to other groups, particularly when legal coercion is involved" (Tomlinson, 1982). While the popular view has been that the concern for disabled people has developed as a result of progress,

enlightenment and humanitarian interest, "the experience of this particular group has generally been one of exploitation, exclusion, dehumanization and regulation" (Barton; 1986; p. 276).

Thus the question arises as to "what other motives the humanitarian ideologies covered". What benefits did such a humanitarian aspect of segregation bring to the society? Tomlinson (1982), in a sociological analysis of special education has shown that these motives were related to the wider social and economic interests of a developing industrial society, which required docile bodies and productive people. She indicates that by the early Nineteenth Century education for the mass of the people was regarded as a necessary discipline for controlling potential unrest amongst the working classes and also for producing a literate population to further commercial interests.

The development of special education was seen as an "industry" which could produce profits as long as the cost of educating these children could be kept to the minimum. This side of the profit-motive was presented as a concern for educating (vocationally training) as many people as possible, which was in agreement with the wider ethic of creating productive citizens that, in turn, would be beneficial for a developing industrial society. Thus the issue which began to emerge was "how to make as many of the handicapped(sic) productive, while keeping the cost of any provision low so that the central and local government do not have to use too much money provided by non-handicapped(sic) tax- and rate- payers" (Tomlinson, 1982; p. 38).

What, however, was more important within this historical context was the use of education as a means of control and a mechanism for producing obedient and "moral" citizens. The term "defective" people was used to identify potentially troublesome and disruptive social groups, mainly originating from the lower-working classes, which did not conform to the existing system. Economic and political interest focused on controlling these groups while removing them from the ordinary educational system so as to allow its smooth functioning. Disabled people, especially mentally disabled people

and other potentially "disruptive" groups, were connected, through the influence of the eugenic movement, with crime, immorality, prostitution and unemployment and they were presented as a danger to the smooth functioning of society. As Tomlinson (1982) indicates:

"Moves to segregate mentally defective adults and children on account of their possible danger to society very largely contributed to the stigma still attached to special schooling" (p. 40).

The social history of disability (or 'disabled history' as it has been characterized by Rieser, 1992) is full of moral discourses of persuasion as to how dangerous disabled people are for society. Morality was, and still is, used as a strong cover for social control mechanisms. Some accounts representatively illustrate the above. In 1913, Fernald, an influential figure in the area of disability, wrote:

"The feeble-minded are parasitic predatory class never capable of self support or of managing their own affairs. They cause unutterable sorrow at home and are menace and danger to the community. Feeble-minded women are almost invariably immoral and if at large usually become carriers of venereal disease or give birth to children who are as defective as themselves. . . Every feeble-minded person, especially the high grade, is a potential criminal needing only the proper environment and opportunity for the development and expression of his criminal tendencies (In Rosen, Clark & Kivitz, 1976b; p. 145).

Also, Goddard (1915) has written:

"For many generations we have recognized and piled the idiot. Of late we have recognized a higher type of defective, the moron, and have discovered that he is a burden; that he is a menace to society and civilization; that he is responsible to a large degree for many, if not all, of our social problems (In Wolfensberger, 1972; p. 34).

Thus segregation even though it was presented as a recognition of children's needs and their protection from harsh realities, mainly served other ends such as economic and political ones (including the need to develop a social controlling mechanism; Oliver, 1985) . However, the popular image of society protecting its more "vulnerable" citizens has remained, as it was a good policy for masking society's contradictions. In order for protectors to exist and obtain a legitimate role there was a need to find proteges. Translating this to the language disabled people use in order to

understand their position, protectors became the oppressors and proteges became the oppressed. Within a more modern society, both charity and lay discourses have been developed prohibiting disabled people from having access to decision-making processes that affect their lives in the first place. Furthermore, such discourses have located power and responsibility/interest in the others-the professionals and specialists- by presenting them as those 'best equipped', who have both knowledge of, and 'solutions' to the pathology, and, therefore, power over the person. Power here is seen as the ability of significant others to define the identity and the needs of disabled people. The significant other becomes even more powerful when through legal requirements or voluntarily, s/he undertakes the care of "cases" imposing simultaneously a specific status on disabled people on the basis of these definitions. For instance, Simone Aspis' (1992) personal accounts of the unworthy treatment she received during her ten years in a special school are indicative of the vulnerability of disabled pupils and are illustrative of how she was made to feel inferior on the basis of the "others'" definitions of her identity:

"The teachers always told me that I could not achieve anything" (p. 282)

However, the notion of power has been partially disguised by the use of the notions of concern and interest. As Cole (1989) states:

"Special education pioneers - and indeed more recent practitioners and policy makers, including medical officers - generally seemed imbued with a deep concern for the interests of special children" (In Hill, 1992; p. 72).

After a hundred years spent building a complex system of segregation and throughout historical and political processes which included struggles between rhetorical discourses of humanitarianism and discourses on the rights of those called disabled, a new concept has emerged; that of integration. This concept emerged out of the pressure of some groups - disabled people and advocates of disabled people's rights - that segregated education is a major cause of society's widespread prejudices against disabled people. Further, special education "has always provided something of a dilemma of egalitarianism" (Tomlinson, 1982; p. 46). Within the egalitarian ethic,

segregation was perceived as a violation of human basic rights of disabled people. However, the emerging concept of integration was, and still is, highly problematic and its analysis reflects tensions, contradictions and ambiguities which have led some people to define integration as another name for special education. As Oliver, (1992) claims:

"integration as a process has taken on the language of rhetorics; to paraphrase Cohen (1985) while the language has changed the same groups of professionals are doing the same things to the same groups of children as they were before integration was ever mentioned. . . To put the matter bluntly, children with special educational needs still get an inferior education to everyone else, and although the rhetorics of integration as a process may serve to obscure or mystify this fact the reality remains" (p. 23).

The question that arises is "if the movement of integration, as it has been claimed, rested on the right of disabled children to the same opportunities for self-fulfilment as other people then why do disabled children still get an inferior education to everyone else?"

A simple response would be that there were other principles which informed the integration debate. It could be argued that integration is a cheap alternative to special education. Throughout the years of building segregated practices a wide network has developed in which a plethora of specialists and special equipment have surrounded special schooling. To maintain such a system could be costly and counter-productive. Thus a good cost-effective practice, especially in an era of capital crisis, would be to place children with special educational needs in ordinary education and hide this motive under the principle of egalitarianism. Local Authorities and some teachers base their scepticism and suspicions with regards to integrational policies and practices on the above reason. Even though the issue of cost and resources is highly significant in promoting integration (and is going to be discussed later in this chapter), it is not sufficient to explain the complexities included in the integration debate. An analysis of these complexities necessitates first and foremost an exploration of the ways the notion of disability has been defined. The issue of disability has been perceived differently by

different groups of people and it is to these perspectives that I am going to refer now, bearing in mind that perspectives are based on certain assumptions and concepts which are both culturally-specific and context bound.

DEFINING DISABILITY

The predominant point of view perceives disability as a tragic personal affair, a product of an impairment which is the main cause of disability even in cases where clinical factors are not present when the category of disability, or its synonyms, are used. This view has been highly influenced by medical discourse on disability which focuses solely on the clinical aspects of the human body and pay little attention to its socio-political aspects. The language in this discourse uses the notion of disability and impairment in a synonymously way. This medical framework reinforces and is being reinforced by charity and lay discourses which define disabled people as "in need of help (Llewellyn, 1983), as an object of pity (Borsay, 1986), as personally tragic (Oliver, 1986) as dependent and eternal children. . .[and] as low achievers by ideal standards" (in Fulcher, 1989; p. 28). In exploring the dominant way that social institutions respond to people tagged as disabled Fulcher (1989) shows how disability has been constructed as *dependence* through complex procedural politics that aim at greater regulation of the individual:

"Legislation and administrative arrangements construct disability as a procedurally complex status and experience, so that disabled people lead unusually tentative lives, which are more than usually contingent on those who hold power in an increasingly contested context" (p. 64)

Such procedures personalize and thus depoliticize issues of disability and provide the basis for "others", the "able-bodied/minded", to grant to themselves, unquestionably, the right of taking over the care and the control of the person who has been defined as disabled. The carer obtains a "liberal" and an "altruistic" perspective of being there to help, "forgive" and "semi-accept". At the same time this perspective serves the existing distribution of power in institutions and society. The thinking

beyond this type of language creates forms that covertly "justify status, power, and authority" (Apple, 1979; p. 143). Further, the other who is "in charge and control" psychologically reduces feelings of guilt by projecting a protective, maternalistic or paternalistic attitude towards the "less fortunate" person. Couple the above with the historical presentation of disability as the "unorthodox games of life" then it is not coincidental that the first discriminatory elements manifest themselves by the differentiation between "we" and "they".

This deficit approach rooted within the medical, charity and lay concepts of disability is central to the way welfare states and educational practices respond to an increasing proportion of citizens (Fulcher, 1989). This is not to say that individual factors should be ignored, for especially where learning is concerned, we cannot reject the existence of factors within the child that inhibit learning; this would be to replace one extreme view with another. As Hegarty (1987) suggested:

"the fact that there is not a direct or invariant link between a given impairment and a particular kind of learning does not mean that there are no links" (p. 36).

However, such an individualized framework of ability and disability pays little attention to the fact that in educational systems the term disability is being used in such an extraordinarily wide sense and includes not merely impaired-based disabilities but contentious concepts (i.e. socio-emotionally unstable, disruptive, learning difficulties, learning disabilities, special needs) that cover "conflict in social relations and the failure of educational practices" (Fulcher, 1989). An inclusive discourse demands first and foremost an alternative way of "seeing" and responding to issues of disability.

Disabled theorists, through their struggles, have offered the conceptual means of doing so. Finkelstein, (1980) a disabled writer and advocator of an alternative approach to the issue of disability claims that:

"In our view it is society which disables physically (and mentally) impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our

impairment by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society (p. 35, parenthesis mine).

To understand such a statement, especially if someone has not experienced the oppression that disabled people experience, is not an easy task. This happens for a number of reasons. The predominant medical model has been so powerful that as an ideology it not only shapes consciousness but also has reached into the depths of personality and is being reinforced through the patterns and routines of everyday life. Gillian Fulcher (1989) in a sociological analysis of health and illness and in an attempt to explore what discourses inform the social practices organised around the notion of disability indicated that:

"The medical model has dominated perceptions of and policy on disability...Since society is steeped in the medical model ..., its professionalism informs the perceptions of a wide range of people. This includes those with formal power (politicians, legislators, administrators), in a wide range of arenas and practices, including social workers, psychologists, rehabilitation counsellors and teachers...as well as those with informal, interpersonal power over the lives of people tagged as disabled..." (p. 44).

Thus, when asking people to express the meaning they attribute to the notion of disability we must bear in mind that ideology "as a second nature is history congealed into habit, rooted in the very structure of needs" (Giroux, 1984; 317). This implies that the notion of disability has been developed within a wider societal context in which needs and thus priorities are key features.

The predominant understanding of disability as primarily a medical phenomenon reflects, as Fulcher (1989) has argued, the authority and influence of the medical profession and the extent to which its ideas penetrate and inform everyday and professional discourses on disability. Abberley (1989) in his analysis of the notion of disability as one of oppression, has stated that:

"definitions with 'stickability' tend to be those produced by groups with power. The most powerful definitions of normality in terms of their effects upon those to whom they are applied are, for disabled people, those propagated and perpetuated by those with the most wide-ranging and immediate power over us, namely the medical and welfare professions" (p. 57).

Disability is a "category" constructed by discourses in which the medical ideology has been established due to its powerful position in the hegemony of discourses. According to Huat Chua

"a discourse is being established as it insinuates itself into the institutionalized arrangements of the social order. It is from these institutional bases that the hegemony of a discourse realizes itself as a practical system of power and a system of social control" (In Fulcher, 1989; p. 25).

Looking at the history of the development of special needs, and the devaluation of disabled people, Tomlinson (1982) informs us that "the medical profession struggling for professional recognition in nineteenth-century Britain developed an interest in mental defect, and the profession of medicine was considerably enhanced by medical claims to care for and control the mentally defective" (p. 39). It was a part of a bargain between the state, social and economic interests and the medical profession's interests to segregate, and control "mentally defective" people; bearing in mind that not only disabled but other potentially "troublesome groups" were identified with that term. This type of bargain served a variety of needs which had little to do with disabled people's needs. With regard to the state, economic interests were served by removing 'defective people' who were interrupting workhouse labour, and political interests were served by the confinement of a potentially disruptive social group (Tomlinson, 1982). As far as the medical profession were concerned such a bargain brought benefits in terms of professional status and economic interest, while educational benefits stemmed from the fact that segregation allowed ordinary schools to proceed more smoothly; which throughout educational history is one among other primary interests of educators. For instance, why do educational and political discourses, when referring to the category of "socio-emotional difficulties", predominantly focus on "loud, disruptive and potentially aggressive students" and not on students with quiet withdrawn behaviour particularly if we consider that both types of behaviour can impinge upon learning, the enhancement of self-esteem and the development of meaningful relationships within an educational

context. As Janet Collins (1994) in an analysis of the way the educational system responds to a group of children defined as "the silent minority" (i.e. students with a quite withdrawn behaviour, habitually quiet behaviour) indicates:

"...evidence from the present study suggests that quiet withdrawn pupils are often overlooked in busy classrooms. Moreover, the fact that few writers include habitually quiet behaviour in their definition of disaffection implies that the term "emotional and behavioural difficulty" is more likely to be used to define loud, disruptive and potentially aggressive pupils...The emphasis on loud potentially disruptive behaviour implies that the concept of special educational need is a form of social control and is used primarily for those pupils who cannot be easily controlled in mainstream classes or who hinder the smooth running of the school" (p. 152).

The development of these three broadly classified interest groups (state, medical and educational) was not unproblematic and their relationship included political conflicts stemming out of a concern for protecting and enhancing vested interests [see: Tomlinson, (1982) for an extensive historical analysis].

However, the medical profession, based on the concept of expert knowledge and through the language of professionalism, was granted rights and interests over the control of those "who could have less control over their bodies and minds" than the majority, violating their right of "full personal autonomy expected of those whose bodies are more easily controlled" (Fulcher, 1989). The hierarchical medical ordering of the world even though it is "conceptually limited and politically limiting" (Fulcher, 1989) has been strengthened by its projection of holding "scientific" and ostensibly "value-free" and a-political views of what constitutes disability. This view provides key aspects of the context within which social practices are being formulated as natural events (see for instance Abberley's (1992) and Oliver's (1992) analysis of the OPCS surveys regarding the practices involved in the distribution of disability). In addition, the social connotation of expertise is such that does not allow space for the lay people to question and, even harder, to object to professional judgements. As Tomlinson (1982) indicates:

"Indeed, professional powers and privileges depend upon this professional ability to create an aura of mystery around their work

while at the same time selling their labour and conforming to bureaucratic practices (p. 84).

Medical professional interests were legitimized politically, in different levels, as in a full circle their profession was used to legitimize political and economic interests of control over different groups. The historically powerful domination of a medical discourse "through its language of body, patient, help, need, cure, rehabilitation and its politics that the doctor knows best, excludes a language of rights. . .[as well as] excludes the theme of the social construction of disability" and its synonyms (Fulcher, 1989; p. 29).

In an inclusive discourse some demystifications are necessary. First, disability is a *category* and as such it is part of conflicting social relations and has social and institutional conditions of existence particularly within welfare, health and educational systems (see: Hirst and Woolley, 1982; Fulcher, 1989). Secondly, disability is a *disputed category* which has been defined differently by different groups. It is a disputed category as opposing theories exist within discourses. For some, disability is perceived as a tragic personal affair, an individualized deficit which has to be treated and cured (medical, lay and charity discourses); for others it denotes "need, help and privilege" (Stone, 1984; Blaxter, 1976; In Fulcher's, 1989). For disabled people it is a category of oppression (Abberley, 1987; Oliver, 1986) and as such emphasis must be placed on the importance of the socio-political origins of the impairment and the essential social elements that constitute the material bases for ideological phenomena. Finally, for others disability has been used as a procedural category (Fulcher, 1989) and not as something people cannot do. As a procedural category, often the term disability has been used in discursive practices for a greater regulation of the life of a disabled individual despite the emergence of 'rights' as a central issue in legislation and debate. Thus disability is "***struggled over in social practices in a range of arenas; . . .it is a political category*** (Fulcher, 1989; p.24). Disability is a political category in that (as it was indicated previously) it has been used by the state to regulate its citizens for the maintenance and the reproduction of the societal system.

The conflicting process of integration is one of the most illustrative examples showing that disability is a politically disputed category. The first conflict derives from the association between the process of integration and the process of normalization because the principle of normalization is part of the language of the present philosophy of care for disabled people in Britain (Candappa, et al., 1989). Also, within the notion of integration, there is a fundamental conflicting discourse. At one end of the continuum, the effort is to retain separate traditions but in distinctive departments with their own power bases, leaving them to resolve or harden their differences in an externally unified structure which enables them to co-exist and society to believe that they are somehow together (Sayer, 1985; 1987). At the other end efforts are made to revise and extend what is seen as the current stage of "normality" in order to provide for all needs, whether termed 'special', 'vocational', 'life-long' or whatever (Sayer, 1985; 1987; Jones, 1985). But what constitutes "normality" and how has this construct been associated with the principle of normalization? Further, how has this principle been defined in theory and in practise, what conflicts does it include, what myths has it produced and how have these myths affected disabled people?

THE PRINCIPLE OF NORMALIZATION:IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE

The principle of normalization, the way it has been understood and the manner in which it has been applied in integrational educational practices act upon and reflect the struggles over defining the notion of disability. It has also been used for legitimizing segregation and devaluation for those who do not conform to the popular images and standards and for perpetuating the medical model of disability. It has created a variety of myths which oppress disabled people, depoliticize the issue of disability and bring further confusion and rhetoric that impede upon the establishment of inclusive discourses.

The principle of normalization has been under debate and has been the subject of much confusion and misunderstanding because it includes this construct of "normality".

In theory, Wolfensberger has defined normalization as the:

"use of culturally normative means to offer [devalued] persons life conditions at least as good as the average citizens, and to as much as possible enhance or support their behaviour, appearances, experiences, status and reputation. . .(In Candappa, et al., 1989; p. 71).

In expanding this definition Wolfensberger clarified that a person becomes devalued not through his/her "differentness" itself but through negatively-valued "differentness" which is contingent upon other cultural and social factors. He further suggests that this devaluation can be eliminated by changing the perceptions and values of the perceivers, in which process a necessary condition is to minimize the differentness (stigma) which activates' the perceivers devaluation (as cited in Candappa et al., 1989).

The essential issue, and the one which has become the source of confusion, is related to the nature, the form and the ideologies within the process of "minimizing difference". What does this imply? Minimizing the "difference" according to the normalization principle, in the way it has been defined by Wolfensberger, (1972) implies certain *actions* focusing on the way society operates. It implies processes of enhancing the cultural stereotype of groups that have been perceived as deviant, in which the representation of disabled people and the allowing of their "voices" to be heard are of a high priority.

This approach necessitates the "normalization of services" by their physical placement into cultural-typical contexts so as to empower disabled people to have access to every service in the same way as every other citizen does. The assumption behind the normalization of services is that the people putting them into practice perceive the client group as valued. In turn and for this to be realized there is a need for re-examining staff-client relationships with the aim of de-emphasizing staff-client

distinctions. It presupposes relationships which challenge the deeply entrenched belief of professionalism, by granting to the client equality of knowledge and the right to choose and decide. Consequently, it opposes the ideology that disabled people, and especially mentally disabled people, are incapable of performing functions or making decisions, which staff perform on their behalf (Candappa et al., 1989). Finally, it requires a critical examination of the values and perceptions of the "carers" who impose domination and devaluation in the name of "love", "care" and "help". Within this context, the process of normalization is about rights and values and defines disability as a public highly political affair, in which the state shares a responsibility to offer the services needed for responding to its citizen's needs which indeed are different. It demands exploring the origins and nature of differences and not asserting the normality of disabled people (Abberley, 1989). It is a realization that we live in a world of difference and the struggles are for integrating these differences. In a world of difference the concept of normality does not exist. It is a construct that cannot be defined at all.

Within the general population there are those that are deemed "normal" and those that are perceived as "deviant". What is crucial is the realization that the criteria chosen for distinguishing one from the other are socially constructed. It is difficult to find a consensus over the content of these criteria. Through the interaction of the different views of various groups, these criteria are modified, extended and/or altered. What one society perceives as normal another perceives differently. For instance, some children are perceived as deviant or "handicapped" though the source of such a label is linked not only to the actual impairment or behaviour but to the social response towards their behaviour or body features.

Further, and crucially importantly, "within cultural politics, what constitutes normal behaviour depends upon the class status of the protagonists" (Corbett, 1991; p. 260). The way we form our perceptions about what constitute "normality" is highly related to our values, orientations, upbringing, needs, priorities and other prior experiences. In addition, those perceptions are highly influenced by the dominant

definitions, which are dominant because of their degree of "stickability". This, in turn, is related to the power some groups have in institutionalizing the discourse they hold.

In practice, definitions with stickability bear little relevance to the above and have created a number of oppressive practices for disabled people; moreover, their exploration is quite disturbing in a number of ways. Wolfensberger (1989) in a powerful discussion of the rhetoric versus the reality of the human service policies explores the amount and degree of deception inherent in the institutional basis of forming specific definitions relevant to notions of normalcy and deviancy:

"In the human service field, we are confronted by a great deal of rhetoric, and by an avalanche of documents, that proclaim that services are beneficent, charitable, benign, curative, habilitative, etc. These then are the manifest functions of human service organizations. But while services may be some of these things some of the time, they also commonly perform latent functions very different from these proclaimed ones, including ones that are competency-impairing, destructive of independence, that are actually dependency-making and dependency-keeping..." (p. 26).

Analyzing and substantiating further the above statement he indicates how and why according to the latent, as opposed to the manifest, functions of the "human service supersystem", popular definitions of normalcy and deviancy are formed in such a way as to perpetuate dependency. "Managing deviancy" and thus defining normalcy, is one among other political processes of responding to our post-primary production patterns of labour that demand such a degree of regulation to the point where "hardly anybody can do anything for the clients anymore" (p. 34). As the needs of the clients come last at the agenda of the "supersystem's" priorities within the process of normalization the focus has increasingly been on normalizing people.

Further, the medical model, being used in legitimizing the main functions of such a social system, translates the term normalization as "curing" and "treating" those characteristics of a person which make him/her different from the majority. This ideology, even though it is being used for further technical progress within medicine, in everyday life can be quite offensive. How, for instance, can a person with Down's

syndrome become a person without Down's syndrome? It can also be viewed in charity images of disability, such as a poster which presents a wheelchair surrounded by broken chains, something like "break through your chains" in which the physically disabled person who used the chair has disappeared (probably being somewhere else walking?). The caption above declares: Volunteer to Help Disabled People Break Free. The chains are associated with the existence of the wheelchair, which in fact is being used by a physically disabled person as an aid in his/her everyday life activities. The poster implies that it is the impairment -the chair- which chains disabled people, obscuring in this way the barriers and chains that social constructions impose on them. Such posters impose further oppression on disabled people in that they use the wheelchair as an aid that helps them with their activities and therefore they cannot or do not want to "break free" from it. However, the logic underpinning such charity adverts place disabled people in stressful and cruel position by forcing them to deny first of all their individual differences. As Morris (1992), a physically disabled, writer claims:

"in our efforts to challenge the medical and the "personal tragedy" models of disability, we have sometimes tended to deny the personal experience of disability. . .If we deny this we will find that our personal experience of disability will remain an isolated one; we will experience our differences as something peculiar to us as individuals -and we will commonly feel a sense of personal blame and responsibility" (p. 12)

In other cases the principle of normalization has been used in order to indicate that disabled people are normal, not different, and they should be treated equally to everybody else. But the notion of equality here is defined as "sameness", forgetting that 'equal' does not always mean 'the same'. Abberley (1989) has argued that

"during the last 20 years the particular structural changes which have taken place in social work in Britain have had the effect of producing a new but equally damaging 'myth' about disabled people, namely that they are 'normal'" (p. 59; see also Rowley, 1992).

This myth has a number of implications for disabled people. Abberley (1989) informs us that "under the new social fund, the higher long-term benefit rate is

abolished and the ARPs replaced by flat-rate premiums which are not geared to specific needs . . . Hardship is clearly caused by disabled people . . . who have been able to live in the community thanks to ARPs which they will no longer receive. Some of these will doubtless be forced back into the residential care as the value of the fixed transitional payment is eroded by rising costs and inflation, or as their condition leads to further special requirements" (p. 64).

Also, through efforts of 'proving' the normality of disabled people, the focus was transferred from the impairment to the search for other normal conditions of humanity which naturalize disability. Disability was connected with the natural phenomenon of ageing, "reducing the amount of perceived disability in society, presenting it as 'exceptional'" (Abberley, 1989) imposing in this way additional constraints on young disabled people who have to function in a society within which productivity is a high priority. If we link this with what Morris claimed about the denial of the disabled people's experiences then this type of normalization process leads disabled people "to normalize their situation, thus maintaining the existing structures of social organization and of work" (Abberley, 1989; p. 60). Being forced to deny their difference and normalizing their situation, the working conditions remain the same and become oppressive for them.

What is even more oppressive is the socio-psychological effect of this process on disabled people by the creation of heroic images. Their achievements are being considered as heroic activities handled only by brave people who "can make it" through the complexities of life. But as Abberley (1989) argues:

"such 'heroicism', whilst superficially a more attractive role, is in the long run not an advance for disabled people, since it obscures the social origins of the oppression of disabled people, and encourages the masking of psychological suffering" (p. 62).

Finally, this external oppression of denying the difference so as to "be normal" creates another form of oppression for disabled people and this is an internalized oppression. The internalized oppression occurs when a person feels bad about

him/herself and wishes to be like someone else. In this case it is common to also feel bad about the group one belongs to and to try to merge her/himself into the group which is perceived as superior in the hope that the difference will become invisible. As Reiser (1992) claims:

"Internalized oppression is not the cause of our mistreatment, it is the result of our mistreatment. It would not exist without the real external oppression that forms the social climate in which we exist. Once oppression has been internalized little force is needed to keep us submissive. We harbour inside ourselves the pain and the memories, the fears and the confusions, the negative self-images and the low expectations, turning them into weapons with which to re-injure ourselves, every day of our lives" (p. 27).

This happens not only to disabled people but to other devalued groups such as black people. Research has shown that black children even by the age of three were already wanting to be white as they valued their white friends more than their black friends (Research conducted by the "Save the Children Fund in Reiser's, 1992; p. 27).

In educational practices the process of normalization, the way it has been viewed and applied, creates a variety of tensions with political implications. Normalization has been viewed as a one way process in which the focus of attention in most of the practical discourses has been on "normalizing children". Children's differences have been characterized as special and integration has been perceived as being about "extra" resources and/or as being about children with special needs. Let us examine these issues further.

A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE INTEGRATION PROCESS AND THE NOTION OF "SPECIAL NEEDS"

It has been a common and accepted position that some schools offer better provision than others, in the same way as some LEAs have a higher intention and provision to integrate children that were previously segregated by others (Swann, 1985; Will Swann, 1991). Simultaneously,

"some historians and social theorists see it as inevitable that schools should create ... difficulties. Education is a form of social control, designed to fit children into a limited number of life slots, and as universal education spread, it did not respond to children's individual situations. It is unlikely that it could have done even if the intention was there. All children of the same age were assumed to be the same for purposes of instruction, despite the obvious fact that they are not, and given the same educational treatment. Those children who did not fit should have highlighted the inadequacy of the system (In Hegarty et al., 1981; p. 37).

Thus, children who did not fit into the categories that the educational system "have so painstakingly allocated for them" (Jupp, 1992; p.5) became a threat by revealing the system's inadequacies. To cover such inadequacies a variety of mechanisms were developed according to which the children who "did not fit" were perceived not as the "social products" of an insufficient system but as children with "special needs"; in other words unmet needs were characterized as "special" needs.

Mary Warnock (1991) interpreted this concept as a move away from the medical model based on diagnosis of defects which was the source of previously categorising children after their impairment. This happened because, as Jupp (1992) has indicated, "it has become obvious to many who are currently employed within human services, as it has to many who use these services, that whenever we insist upon drawing such arbitrary lines and planning in this way, there will always be those who do not fit into the categories we allocated for them" (p. 5). Further, it was a result of the struggles of avoiding categorizing people by using offensive labels such as: the spastic, the epileptic, the autistic, the mongol and so on.

The introduction of the term "special needs" was supposed to be wider and more general as there was a need to find a term which would include the increasing numbers of children (18%-20%) who were characterized as having learning or other difficulties. Due to its ambiguity and vagueness it was also supposed to have positive rather than negative overtones. The first point to be made here is that the introduction of this term was anything but a move away from the medical way of thinking according to

which "needs" are deficit-based "with an inbuilt tendency to slip back towards individuals and their problems" (Collins, 1994; p. 173).

The term implies that "a child has a learning difficulty if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his or her age. Presumably, all such children require some special education provision and all, therefore must be regarded as having special educational needs" (Hegarty, 1988; p.43). The first anomaly originates from the way this term has been associated with acquiring provision through statementing procedures. The within-the-child difficulties have been used to legitimize "extra-special provision". In the same way in order to provide "extra-provision", the child's needs have to be legitimized as deficiencies. First, to use 'needs statements' as a sufficient basis for developing policy and practice is to ignore that "to be entitled to something is very different and more positive than to need it, since it gives both validity and value to the claim" (Roaf & Bines, 1989; p. 15). Secondly, to need "extra provision" becomes the first clue that education is not constructed so as to include all children. It is rather constructed so as to include some children while afterwards efforts and struggles have to take place in order to broaden provision for those who do not fit in. Thus, to cover the deficiency of the environment children's needs have to be looked at, to be institutionalized, to be legitimized and furthermore to be cured and normalized. From this perspective *integration is presented as being about children with "special needs"*. In this case, as Barton and Oliver (1992) maintain:

"by emphasizing the pupil's failure the fundamental issue of the system's failure to meet needs of all pupils is masked" (p. 14).

Furthermore, the introduction of this vague term and the struggles that it includes in practice, have created a number of complexities and project a variety of contradictions. The term is so broad, vague and relative that a) is taking on different meanings according to the context in which it is used (usually based on professional and value judgements) and b) it refers to children with a wide range of strengths and weaknesses. As Collins (1994) indicates:

"The problem with 'needs', as currently understood, is that it is a term which often serves to mask category and disadvantage without actually specifying or overcoming these in any way... 'Needs' has become a category as in 'special needs children', gathering together widely different groups who are then assumed to be defective in some way" (p. 177).

Children under this term are being perceived as a homogeneous group focusing on their "commonality" of being "special". The term "special needs" throughout its extensive use within discourses at different levels (i.e. bureaucratic, legislative, educational, administrative and so on) has been used to refer to children who have or may not have an impairment. Thus, there has been a conflation of "normative and non normative categories of handicap" (Tomlinson, 1982; Barton & Tomlinson, 1984). The term "special needs" has been ultimately defined as disability even in cases where an impairment is not present. This is a highly political act as it further reduces the exploration of the social context of learning. From this perspective *integration is presented as being about children with disabilities.*

Secondly, the introduction of such a vague term projects the inconsistencies being included in policy making. The same term which was used in political discourses of integration and was characterized by Warnock as having positive connotations, in practice has been used to perpetuate exclusive education, difference and inferiority. As Tomlinson (1982) highlights:

"The Warnock recommendations and the government approach do go some way towards accommodating egalitarian critics of segregation, while keeping what counts as "special needs" as vague as possible in order to accommodate segregation where it is deemed necessary. Functional integration, for example could still ensure that a child is being removed from his or her normal classroom and tagged with the label "special" which carries a historical stigma of difference and inferiority" (p. 78).

On the one hand, it was claimed that ordinary schools must expect to cater for more children with special educational needs. Actually, it was claimed that functional integration would be achieved where locational and social association of children with special educational needs with their fellows leads to joint participation in educational

programs. This form was characterized as being the closest form of association, where children with special educational needs join part-time or full-time in regular classes of the school and make a full contribution to the activity of the school.

On the other hand, however, the 1980 White paper stated that:

"for some children with special needs association, or full participation, with other children is the wrong solution and to impose it would be unfair to the child, his parents, other children and the taxpayer" (as cited in Tomlinson, 1982; p. 78).

Going further the 1981 Education Act which was based on the recommendation of the Warnock Committee stated that:

"Where a local authority arranges special education provision for a child. . . it is their duty to provide[this] in an ordinary school [provided that] account has been taken of the views of the child's parents and *is compatible with:*

- a) his receiving the special educational provision that s/he requires,
- b) the provision of efficient education for the children with whom s/he will be educated and,
- c) the efficient use of resources" (as cited in Swann and Statham, 1982; p. 78).

In other words, a child defined as having "special needs" can be excluded from ordinary education if resources deemed necessary are, for a number of reasons, not in place. In this way, with regards to the majority of children in the mainstream, the vague term of "special needs" indicates a transference of features of the school environment into something that the child possesses. Hegarty et al., (1981) provide an example illustrating the above:

"Take two schools that are identical in all respects except that one permits wheelchair access and the other does not. A child that is confined to a wheelchair cannot make use of the 'educational facilities. . . generally provided' in one case but can in the other. So the child would have a learning difficulty and therefore a special educational need if living in the catchment area of one of the schools but not if living in the catchment area of the other. Apart from the anomaly, what this language is doing is transferring a feature of school architecture into something the child has (p. 44).

Thus integration is presented as being about resources and/or being simply a technical issue to be achieved through the deployment of special equipment and "special" personnel to ordinary schools. This view sees the economy as providing the principles which would shape educational practice (Fulcher, 1989). Economic interest always lies beyond discourses about resources and provision. As Tomlinson (1982) indicates "economic interests, however, dictate that there will be no widespread "integration" of children who are currently assessed out of the normal system back into it, for as one commentator has noted: 'the three words that appear most often in the White Paper . . . are not . . . special educational needs, they are Present Economic Circumstances" (p. 57)

The debate over resources has been the permanent dilemma of integration. Tony Hercock's, (Rotherham's assistant director of services) response when asked about the progress of integration was: "We had a very strong special schools base before the 1981 Act and would have been foolish to dismantle it over a night (over a night is being defined as a time-duration of ten years). The easy and cheaper option would have been to close some of our special schools as has happened elsewhere. But you cannot do that and guarantee continued support (In Education Guardian, 10-12-91).

In an era of capital crisis, notions of practicability, efficiency and cost are of a high priority and can be heard quite often when the issue of integration arises. On the one hand, the supposed aim of these three conditions is to ensure a high quality of "special" educational provision, including physical organization of facilities and expertise of the teaching staff. On the other hand it includes "the avoidance of unreasonable expenditure". The term unreasonable is relative and subject to various interpretations, according to the priorities of government representatives. Educational provision for children with special educational needs is the last challenge on the list of political priorities and in conjunction with the social devaluation of disabled people it tends to be the first area to suffer from financial cuts imposed on education. In an era of economic constraints an integration debate which focuses solely on resources and cost-

effectiveness contains the danger of *integration being viewed as a cheap alternative to special education*. As Roger Slee (1993) in an analysis of the politics of integration reminds us, the debate about resourcing integration seems to have been blighted by a form of reductionism even though the deployment of resources is an important aspect for the creation of inclusive education.

Furthermore, provision for children with special educational needs has always been identified as "extra resources", which are specifically provided for the children in question. This view of the within-the-child "special" needs which is dominant in practical discourses, and partially originates from the focus on "extra" resources, is in contradiction to the report's statement that "special needs" are *relevant*. As the report maintains:

"Whether a disability or significant difficulty constitutes an educational handicap for an individual child, and if so to what extent, will depend upon a variety of factors. Schools differ, often widely, in outlook, expertise resources, accommodation, organization and physical and social surroundings, all of which help to determine the degree to which the individual is educationally handicapped. . . It is thus impossible to establish precise criteria for defining what constitutes handicap. Yet the idea is deeply ingrained in educational thinking that there are two types of children, the handicapped and the non handicapped. (Warnock, 1978; p.37).

Despite the mentioning of the needs being relevant to the social context in which they are developed the report failed to take this aspect on board and use the issue of integration as a means for creating more inclusive educational practices.

In contrast, its perpetuation of the division between ordinary and special provision maintained and even magnified the division between "ordinary" and "special" children. In practice this contradiction has become the basis of the creation of a new "language of handicap" (i.e. the resource children, the integrated child). Also the perpetuation of linking educational provision with resources and cost-effectiveness inhibited the committee from being committed to an analysis of other aspects of educational provision such as curriculum content and an exploration of the principles which inform decisions about the type and nature of knowledge which is being provided

to children. Thus, the report has been criticized for failing to link integration to reforms of comprehensive primary and secondary schooling and the forms of organization, teaching and curricula that are required in the 'integrated' school (Booth,1981). In other words, it has been criticized for divorcing the integration of children with special educational needs from those policies which significantly affect the comprehensive education of all children (Quicke, 1981).

Finally, it has been criticized for perpetuating and strengthening professionalism. A discourse of provision from the perspective of resources "is part of professionalism since expertise implies additional costs" (Fulcher, 1989; p. 51). This is manifested in the inconsistency included in the Report which on the one hand advocated a continuum response while on the other hand perpetuated separate services and heightened specialism (Sayer, 1987).

After the 1981 Education Act according to which children are no longer assigned to categories of handicap but placed along a continuum of special educational needs, it would have been expected that the role of professionals would have been minimized. They would not have continued to be regarded as the experts and information should have been shared among other interest groups in common co-operative efforts. However, what actually happened in practice, was what Tomlinson had indicated:

"The new processes of referral and assessment for an expanded special education system will increase the number and type of professionals whose judgements are used to separate special children from ordinary children in schools. The adoption of care 'of special educational needs' as a rationale for this separation, and the abolition of statutory categories of handicap are likely to give more, not less power to professional people. While the assessment processes beyond stage 3 will increase the numbers of psychological and medical personnel plus other professionals such as social workers and speech therapists, it is educationalists, particularly heads and teachers, who will have increased powers to decide that larger number of children have special needs, and special educators who will have expanded professional interests in making provision for these children, in special units and classes as well as separate schools (In Patricia Potts, 1983; p. 191)

There are a number of important issues which can be identified about the increased educational involvement and powers of professionals in deciding which children do have special educational needs and further, in deciding their educational placement.

Firstly, within the lobby of professionals, teachers have historically been defined as a low-status occupational group, compared for instance to the medical profession. This is partly due to the perception that they do not hold any expert, superior knowledge and partly to the variety of criticism that has taken place in regard to their professional functioning. They do not possess this type of "expertise" that could enable them to create an aura of mystery around their work and it was more difficult for them to legitimize procedures of identifying children as having "special needs". Due to this lack of expertise, ordinary teachers were not perceived as adequate in teaching these children, as it was perceived that "special needs" demanded special teachers.

The creation of this new interest group called "special teachers" was initially accepted and even promoted by ordinary teachers, as benefits derived for them out of such "bargaining". This can be illustrated by a comment from a special school head teacher who wrote:

"Special school teachers were felt to have left the main field of education and were looked on as missionaries going into an unknown field. . . teachers in ordinary schools were glad that some of their profession had elected to do what they felt was distasteful. . . cope with defective children (Lindsay, 1951 In Tomlinson, 1982; p. 91).

Thus being a special teacher was surrounded by a social context which actually devalued the concept of being a "special" teacher. This derived from the perceived nature of educating children who were viewed as inferior and more difficult to teach than ordinary. However, special teachers benefited as well through the development of a specialized network. They became specialists and this characteristic of specialism was legitimized and further institutionalized within higher education's practices which

created a whole new area for the profession of special education in preparing and qualifying teachers who would have to work in the area of special education. Thus a divisive institutionalized policy was developed which reinforced the distinction of educating some teachers to become special and some to become mainstream.

The new group developed vested interests, involved in struggles of protecting (and enhancing) the benefits derived from their occupational involvement with their new clientele. The well established view was- and still is- that special teachers are necessary for some children and "this view suggests or articulates a particular range of objectives for special education, such as: identifying 'difference', separate career structures, a focus on disability and so on" (Fulcher, 1989; p. 9).

In the same way as resources, specialism has become another prominent dilemma within the integration debate. The dominant focus is on the acquisition of "special" skills and it has created the view that ordinary teachers have to acquire specific skills in order to teach children with special educational needs. As Fulcher (1989) argues:

"The institutional bases for the educational version of a discourse on deficits, difference and professionalism, which lie in teaching training institutions which separate skills for teaching those deemed disabled, were reinforced: there was to be in-service training for regular teachers to gain necessary expertise (P. 165).

The notion of special expertise in practice, the "I am not qualified", "I am not the proper person", " I have not been trained" type of arguments, have been used by ordinary teachers for a variety of purposes. In integrated settings it has been used so as to transfer responsibility of teaching children stated as having "special needs" to special teachers while ordinary teachers perceive the education of ordinary children as their main priority. Thus, the first divisive practices originate out of the relationships, roles and responsibilities between the two types of teachers -"special" and "ordinary" - who are both teaching within the same class (a point further analyzed in the discussion of the results of this study).

Galloway and Goodwin's (1987) and Fulcher's (1989) view that teachers have become key policy makers in regard to exclusive or inclusive practises is crucial. The inconsistencies of the legislation have offered them the opportunity to interpret the law in different ways according to different purposes. Ordinary teachers, if they are not committed to inclusive education, due to these inconsistencies can obtain the power of excluding children from ordinary schools. As Booth (1983) notes:

"The overwhelming conclusion is that where integration does not happen it is because people with the power to make the changes do not want children with disabilities in our schools".

To claim, however, that teachers hold such a degree of power that they determine policies is somehow naive and unfair towards teachers - especially if we consider the structural constraints within which they have to work. It is more the case that teachers are being influenced and are influencing integrational policies made at other levels. Also the essential point here is that a conflict has been developed between "the egalitarian ideology of integrating all children in a common school, and the need to separate out all children who may be troublesome in the widest possible sense" (Tomlinson, 1982; p. 105). This is an inherent conflict in both the Warnock Report and the 1981 Education Act, which while being perceived as having an impact on changing terminologies, forms and ideologies, in reality perpetuated the same underlying infrastructures and purposes of segregation, this time within ordinary schools (Tomlinson, 1982; Swann, 1985; Fulcher, 1989; Oliver, 1992). Also it is essential to note that the reports projected a lack of commitment to define *integration as the educational apparatus's failure to provide an inclusive education* (a point further discussed later in this chapter).

Jupp(1992) illustrates this in a vivid way:

"The Warnock report which came and went more than ten years ago now. . . in practice seemed to have had a minimal effect. The 1981 Education Act followed; it was born very weak, it died and was then buried without a proper funeral or even an obituary. They both seem to have been forgotten and are now being pushed, in today's scramble to implement the National Curriculum, Local Financial

Management and a host of other newly acquired responsibilities.(p. 7).

Overall, the weak commitment of the political discourse/rhetoric towards inclusive education (see Evans et al., 1990 analysis of the Implementation of the 1981 Education Act) and the lack of a serious consideration in regard to disabled people's rights, followed by a preoccupation with costs, specialism, professionalism and so on, lead to the perpetuation of a strong discourse on disability. Furthermore the needs that were prioritized had very little to do with the needs of the so called 'disabled' or 'special children'. The lack of commitment to respond to children's needs becomes even more evident in an analysis of the priorities that have been posed by the new educational trend.

THE NEW EDUCATIONAL TREND

The British education system is in the middle of a dramatic period of transformation in which patterns of access, forms of control and the nature of the curriculum, all, have been subjected to change. Even though there is a conflict of feelings towards the nature of the consequences that will stem from the introduction of the Act, there seems to be an agreement, among the authors who have focused on the analysis of the Act, that its introduction has a major impact on the governance, structure, content and outcomes of schooling (Kelly, 1990; Abbot, et al., 1991; Barton et al., 1992; Pollard, 1992)

Specifically, Wallace states that:

"The Education Reform Act(ERA) of 1988 marked a major turning point in the educational policy of the UK government. It represented the culmination of a clamour for reform from those who perceived that our educational system was failing in large measure to deliver the basic quality required, and even failing to educate a significant section up to the basic standards of literacy and numeracy. The ERA set in motion changes not only to the structure of the school system, but even to the goals at which the whole system of education was to aim" (p. 4).

This opinion is in agreement with Barton and Oliver (1992) who in an examination of the Educational Reform Act and its relation to integration argue that:

"We are in the midst of an extensive restructuring of educational provision and practice" (p. 17).

The introduction of the 1988 Act was both a result of and a stimulus towards the demands of an increased competitive economic scheme that requires national standards and skilled citizens. It includes a marketing ideology according to which (at least as it was claimed by the representatives of the government), consumers (ostensibly children, whose absence from most contemporary discussions of consumer choice is interesting in itself, and parents) are granted the capacity to choose and acquire control over the schools. The passing of the Act was claimed to be an action of increasing the autonomy of schools and their responsiveness to parental choice (DES, 1987). Behind the education reality, choice and accountability were presented as key concepts of the philosophy underpinning current educational policy while across all the new introduced themes, the rhetoric has been concerned with "raising standards". Thus, it was thought that:

-by introducing a local financial management scheme that provides the framework for a system of educational voucher economy in schools (see Thomas, 1990)

- by allowing schools to opt out (GM schools) and be directly financed from the central government,

- by stating national educational standards, attainment targets, programmes of study,

- by introducing a common National Curriculum presenting it as a measure of "equal" treatment for all pupils, (it is highly disputable how "equal" can be a curriculum when "the structures that emanate from other measures all conspired to deny it having any meaningful effect" towards an egalitarian approach to the education of all children; see Whitty, 1990; pp 21-35),

- by making explicit the goals children are to pursue, the curriculum followed and the learning levels which have been achieved in comparison to national targets,

- by implementing standardized national assessment tests at 7, 11, 14 and 16 as performance indicators (see: Murphy, 1990);
- by pressurizing schools to publicize their results, and
- by framing the role, constitution and membership of school's governing bodies, consumers would be informed of the functioning of their school and thus, they could choose accordingly.

It was also thought that, in the past, the allocation of resources had been a closed professional affair with LEA's occupying a significant role in distributing the resources. It has been claimed that by offering opportunities for schools to become self-managed and/or more autonomous, the distribution of resources will become a subject of public debate in which parents will voice their concerns and oppositions. Further, by pressurizing schools and making them accountable to their consumers, a marketing competition will take place among schools, and this will as a result, reinforce standards of learning and teaching particularly as the funding of schools is related directly to the number of pupils on roll. Thus, government interventions in education have been extensive in their effort to introduce a competitive market system for the supply of educational services.

A marketing language has emerged which ipso-facto became constituents of schooling; we have expressions such as: delivery of the goods, competition, competitors, offer and demand, cost-effectiveness, providers, clients or consumers, users of the system and senior management teams. Bearing in mind that language is both a sensitive indicator and a powerful creator of the underlying ideologies and assumptions inherent within political discourses (Apple, 1979), it is evident that education is being perceived as a part of a marketing system, as a national investment. For instance, while historically HMI (one of the most powerful groups of professional educationalists) were required to have taught, and it can be assumed to have had considerable teaching experience - usually in senior positions in schools - recently there

were indications that this requirement is changing. Powell and Solity (1990) inform us that : "an advert for HMI which appeared in The Times Educational Supplement on 12 May stated: 'applicants are usually aged between 35 and 45 with experience drawn from successful careers in education but also increasingly, from commerce and industry" (p. 15).

As Kelly (1990) notes "the picture is that of a factory-farming approach to schooling" (p.48). He quotes Elliot Eisner (1985) who has summed this up in his description of the "job analysis" approach to educational planning which began to be favoured in the early part of this century.

"The school was seen as a *plant*. The superintendent directed the operation of the plant. The teachers were engaged in a job of *engineering*, and the pupils were the *raw material* to be processed in that plant according to the demands of the consumers. Furthermore, the product was to be judged at regular intervals along the production line using *quality control standards* which were to be quantified to reduce the likelihood of error. *Product specifications* were to be prescribed before the raw material was processed. In this way efficiency, measured with respect to cost primarily, could be determined (Eisner, 1985 as cited in Kelly's 1990; p. 48).

This metaphor presents what was intended and what is happening within the context of the new educational trend. The main concerns of the architects of the National Curriculum(NC) - behind the rhetoric- were to use the curriculum as a means for economic advancement; to use it as a device for maintaining a high level of social control; and third, to use it as the best means towards achieving the kind of centralized control of the education system which is needed to attain most effectively the first two goals (see: Kelly's analysis, 1990). As it has already been reported the level on which an analysis of the new "educational" interventions is most effective is that of discourse about education which, more often than not, take place *at some distance from the classroom* and involves not only teachers but other interest parties as well. The new measures while having an aspect of irrationality in terms of education/pedagogy are highly sophisticated and rational in terms of marketing and regulating schooling (see: Whitty, 1990; Murphy, 1990; Thomas, 1990; Stillman, 1990; Brehony, 1990). Thus, the

arguments in justifying such a curriculum are not educational, nor for children's needs; rather, they are highly political and most of all economic.

Further, within the history of education there is evidence that schoolchildren are the least powerful interest group in influencing or participating in decision processes which affect their lives. As Blishen (1969) stated:

"in all the millions of words that are written annually about education, one viewpoint is invariably absent, that of the child, the client of the school. It is difficult to think of another sphere of social activity in which the opinions of the consumer are so persistently overlooked"

In collecting and organizing children's essays responding to a competition directed by the Observer (In December, 1967) with the title "The School That I'd Like" Blishen concluded that:

"No-one will read this selection without feeling some shame at what we have done to these children? Who will answer them? Who will explain to them why they should not have what they demand?"

Currently, in the Document published by the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office in July 1987 entitled The National Curriculum 5-6:A Consultation Document it was declared that such a curriculum will:

"enable schools to be more accountable for the education they offer to their pupils, individually and collectively"
(DES, 1987; pp 4-5)

Some lines further it was declared that:

"employers, too will have a better idea of what a school leaver will have studied and learnt at school irrespective of where s/he went to school"
(DES, 1987; pp 4-5)

In a highly competitive society within which the supply of labour far outstrips demand, the intention is that employers and not children influence the nature of the Curriculum, its philosophy, structure, funding and control of the school system. As Powell and Soly (1990) indicate "The Secretary of State has been determined to ensure that the local community, especially the business community, shall have its views

represented to the school ... (p. 6). Further, Kelly (1990) in a critical analysis of the ideologies underpinning the new educational policies, argues that if teachers resort to commercial competitiveness hidden within the new political rhetoric, children can only be the losers. This is partly because what is being offered to children is a "common curriculum" which imposes on all of them the values of its creators. It can be argued that "every aspect of every curriculum is value-laden - the choice of subjects, the choice of content, the choice of aims, the choice of models and approaches. And those values are communicated to the recipients of that curriculum in very subtle ways" (Kelly, 1990; p. 99). However, a highly centralized curriculum which a) perceives teachers mainly as "the service deliverers", b) circumscribes significantly their professional autonomy (Pollard, 1990), and c) has been designed with little reference to previous research in regard to children's social world and to the influence of their different socio-cultural backgrounds on their learning, imposes on children an alienated experience. Such a curriculum and its practices create an alien and alienating culture for some children, by imposing a set of values which may be in conflict with their own, with all the overtones that such an imposition implies. Such an imposition obtains further significance as "the principles underpinning the legislation are very different from the social-democratic, egalitarian and child-centred ideas to which most primary school teachers have subscribed in the past" (Pollard, 1990; p. 74).

The question that arises now is where does the inclusion of children with special educational needs stand within such a context and how will it be affected by these new values and priorities? Inclusive education seems to be an incompatible notion within a system that has highly prioritized mechanisms of assessment, sameness, commercialism, elitism, productiveness and approaches of effectiveness from its economic-industrialized perspective.

Personally, coming , from a system which has traditionally focused on centralized policies, has an assessment-led and subject-oriented curriculum, I am aware that such a system is highly exclusive and creates failures. The ones who survive

throughout the system either have private extra help outside the state education (which has led to the development of a well- established private sector of tutoring schools, functioning along-side state education) or have managed through personal struggles to conform to the system's demands. Excellence has been perceived as an individualized triumph, and so has failure.

However, within this country's educational policies Barton and Oliver (1992) points are highly significant. They claim that:

"Centralized control is being accomplished through the articulation of a new vision over what schools must achieve and how that success and effectiveness is to be defined and monitored. Central to this approach is a belief in the importance of competition and consumer choice . . . Within this climate pupils with special educational needs are not viewed as politically significant and questions of social justice and equity become marginalized" (p. 17).

They go further by stating that:

"the possibility of establishing a comprehensive integration policy becomes more difficult. Indeed, the whole question of integration may well become an increasingly contentious issue" (p. 17)

On the other hand, in CURRICULUM GUIDANCE: THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND PUPILS WITH SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (1992), it has been clarified that:

"The principle that all pupils should receive a broad and balanced curriculum, relevant to their individual needs is now for the first time established in law. For pupils with special educational needs this entitlement represents an opportunity to improve standards further, building on the advances of recent years as highlighted in the Warnock Report and the 1981 Act".

(Circular number 5, NCC, 1988; p. 3)

Such a statement does not give reassurance that disabled children will have access to enabling educational opportunities within ordinary education. In contrast, the philosophy underpinning the new policies in regard to the context, the form, the structure, and the implementation of the curriculum, excludes any serious consideration about an inclusive education. Even if children with special educational needs are taught in the same classes with the other children, they are going to be "kept down" while their

peers will move up through a system based on a "linear thirty-nine steps learning hierarchy" (Kely, 1990).

The political and economic directives surrounding the notions of progress, and the values included in the particular image of the "normal child", widens the gap between ability and "disability" by culturally over-estimating ability. It strengthens the perception of the individual as an achiever or a failure and gives stronger emphasis to the cognitive function of the individual, separating people as successes or failures. The focus on the within-the-child difficulties or "incapabilities" might be strengthened in order to contribute to explaining why some children fail in a system that provides "a legal entitlement of all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum". As Russell (1990) notes "many of us are already cynical about the emphasis given to disability even within schools which have an 'equal opportunities' policies" (p. 215).

Even though individual teachers differ about the nature of their own aims and the way they respond to the immense ideological/educational changes that they are confronted with and even though they still have the power of the "face to face action" with children it is important to bear in mind that teachers "have, in a sense been 'caught in a trap', torn between the aims which they espouse and the means to bring them about" (Pollard, 1990; p. 70). For instance, even teachers committed to inclusive education may find themselves constrained in responding effectively at the challenges that children with special educational needs bring forward due to the increasing pressures of raising "the standards" of their school, especially as such results are to be published and teachers to be judged on the basis of these results. As Booth (1982) has suggested:

"If teachers are to be held directly responsible for the progress of their pupils then they may be increasingly willing to separate children they consider to have 'real' intractable problems from those amenable to 'ordinary teaching'" (in Barton and Tomlinson, 1984; p. 75).

In addition pressures of accountability via the use of marketing forces implies that securing "good results" can be the barometer for success and failure and is likely to

be the single most persuasive "selling" indicator that parents will adopt (Powell and Solity, 1990). Thus the intensification of competitiveness and open enrolment can make the commitment to inclusive education more difficult to maintain. A commitment that becomes even more difficult to be accomplished if we take into serious consideration the total "burdens" laid upon teachers and schools as they have to respond to increasingly various and often contradicting demands (see: Blyth, 1990) accompanied by strategies for coping with the logistics of manageability (see: Dearing Report, 1994).

It seems that the new educational policies are far from being committed to any kind of inclusive education. Thus there is an urgent demand for struggles over inclusive education to be intensified by attacking the core of this problematic situation - the curriculum and the values underpinning it. It is via the curriculum (in its context, content, form, structure, and implementation) that policies exercise control by imposing certain ideologies, values, needs and priorities. As Fulcher (1989) has already argued "Since integration is about discipline and control rather than disability, it is at the centre rather than the periphery of educational practises. It may therefore be argued that it is the *educational apparatus's failure to provide an inclusive curriculum*, rather than the problems specific "disabilities" pose, *which constructs the "problems and the politics of integration"* (p. 54)

From this perspective, integration is about the way ordinary schools are functioning and their effectiveness has to be analyzed in terms of how successful or not they have been in integrating differences. Integration is not an end in itself but rather a means for creating school systems which will focus their endeavours on including all children regardless of their level of ability, gender, colour of hair or skin, and religion. The focus is on elaborating and restructuring teaching practices with a commitment to understanding and responding to different children and further enabling them to strive to explore their potential and talents.

Central to this approach is the perception of the curriculum not only as a device for transferring knowledge and acquiring skills but as a means of transferring values to individuals (children) who rely heavily on an adult's constructed world. This involves teachers critically reflecting upon the values they are transferring and the ways they are doing so in their everyday practises. In turn,

"some understanding of the dilemmas, transient as well as deep-seated with which teachers are confronted, is a necessary step towards effective action, both by teachers themselves and by those outside the profession who are genuinely and influentially concerned about what goes on in primary education" (Blyth, 1990; pp. 191-192).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued that the notion of integration does not share a common meaning among different groups of people and does not have a single definition. It has more than one meaning in that it reflects experiences, practices, ideologies and interests of particular groups that interact within asymmetrical power relationships. By presenting how a written policy can be internally inconsistent it has been indicated that positions can be antithetical. As Fulcher (1989) maintains:

"This reveals the struggles in the policy-writing process, struggles which occur despite a report being presented as consensus. These 'inconsistencies' in policy are often articulated in policy analysis as 'tensions' between principles, but in a political concept of policy they are more accurately seen as the outcome of struggles between parties contending to achieve their different objectives. . ." (p. 7).

It has been noted, moreover, that the dominant discourses of integration have been influenced and shaped by an established medical deficit approach which views the issue of disability as an individualized affair. Within this context, disability has been perceived as the direct consequence of an impairment rather than the social product of a relationship between the impairment and the socio-political response to it. Thus the process of integration has been strongly related to a particular notion of the normalization process. This notion is based on practices of "institutionalization",

"treatment" and "cure" of the "individual deficiencies". All of these practices and perceptions, have in turn, been related to the development of special education and the justification of exclusion of potentially 'disruptive' individuals. On this basis, "significant others" have obtained the right to define situations and acquire power over the 'needs' and thus over the identity and the life of the whole person. From this perspective, children's differences have been defined as "special needs"; a notion which, as it has been emphasized, is in itself ambiguous and contentious in that it has been used in different contexts for different purposes.

Characterizing, within the process of integration some needs as "special" denotes that ideas arising from the practices of special education have been imposed on the integration process, limiting visions of educational opportunity for all. The loose definition of "special needs" and the way it has been used within different educational structures are mechanisms that perpetuate segregated ideologies even within integrated settings. It has been indicated that, on the one hand, the maintenance and perpetuation of such differentiation promote the retention of traditional notions of "handicap" and, in turn, demand the retention and extension of those factors which characterize special schooling. On the other hand, they strengthen the focus on pupils for justifying failure. Individualizing, and thus de-contextualizing the creation of learning difficulties, covers the inefficiencies of an educational system that has been constructed to include some children and not others.

This divisive ideology within political discourses between "special" and "ordinary" needs, which has been translated to a division between "special" and "ordinary" children, derives partially from a lack of commitment towards inclusive education. The above, in conjunction with the new trends that emphasise regulation and market forces (competition, open-enrolment), reflects a lack of serious consideration about the right of all children to be included in ordinary schools. It has been argued that, within the current climate, children with special educational needs can become

more vulnerable as individual differences are perceived as deficits that impinge upon the smooth functioning of "raising standards" within ordinary schools.

However, within the struggle of defining integration, an alternative approach has emerged, mainly by pressure groups (disabled people) and advocates of inclusive education, according to which both integration and attitudes towards integration should be explored from the analysis of the social environment and its responses towards differences. Such an analysis problematizes the already existing linguistic system that perpetuates unequal relationships, examines the role and the relationships between professionals and disabled people, and explores the new educational trends in regard to their relationship and impact upon integration policies and practices.

Taking this perspective on board, the main aim of this study is to explore teachers' and peers' attitudes towards the notions of integration and disability. Such an exploration can indicate the effect of the political discourses, made at other levels, on everyday educational practices. It also enables us to identify those institutionalized processes (actions) and ideologies that perpetuate exclusive practices. The principle underlying the examination of attitudes that this study is based on support Finkelstein's argument, according to which:

"The predominant focus of attitudes, help, research and so on, has as a neutral expression of one side of the disability relationship, been towards the disabled person. Nearly all references concerned with attitudes towards disability use the disabled person as the point of focus. *The emergent approach is to focus on the behaviour, roles, perceptions, attitudes etc. of the helpers as representatives of a socially determined relationship*' (my emphasis, In Mike Oliver's, 1987; p.10).

However, the nature and complexity of the construct 'attitudes' make the exploration of those attitudes a difficult affair. It has become even more difficult to explore attitudes because of a dominant perception that attitudes are abstract ideologies located in the sphere of the unconscious and revealed differently in different situations. It is this construct and its complexities that I am going to analyze in the following chapter via a critical exploration of previous conventional attitudinal research.

PART TWO

Chapter 2

A LITERATURE REVIEW AND A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCT "ATTITUDES"

This chapter is devoted to exploring the complexities and the tensions that took place at a theoretical and methodological level. This includes analysing how we define attitudes, and most important of all, how we proceed in exploring them. This theoretical framework in turn, has influenced not only the methodological design and the actions in the field, but the way the findings have been interpreted. Reflecting on the process that took place for my understanding about attitudes and the elements that constitute them, I can at this point say that the process was everything but linear.

The first issue was to contextualize my initial cognitive contact with attitudinal research regarding integration. I was introduced to both integration policies, practices and processes and to attitudinal research in a North American university where the dominant focus was geared towards conventional attitudinal measures. Thus, the first notion that I had to reflect upon was "measuring attitudes", using as a methodological aid highly structured questionnaires, scales, check-lists and standardized self-concept tests. Attitudes were nothing more or less than what the questionnaire endeavoured to measure. Simultaneously the nature of the questions were such as to be directly connected with a "target population", which in this case were specific groups of disabled people.

After deciding to be involved in attitudinal research, my first theoretical conflict arose from the different theoretical and ideological orientations emphasizing that

attitudes cannot be measured but, rather, be explored. Thus I endeavoured to understand the difference between "measuring" and "exploring" attitudes. It was difficult to figure out and internalize what the difference was, due to the fact that I still had not a clear conceptualization of the term 'attitudes'. I left this puzzling question aside and I focused on what had been theoretically discussed about the nature of attitudes. To say that after this reading the notion was clarified would be a lie; instead of being clarified it became more complicated with an increased agony of how in research practice I was going to proceed.

Simultaneously, however, I was gradually introduced to the perspectives and arguments of disabled people who had been affected the most from attitudinal research. And thus, my thinking became even more complicated and often more conflicting. Further, I was introduced to a "new" (at the time, new for me, fashionable or out of date for some others) way of approaching research. Discussions about ethnographic, naturalistic accounts in educational settings were in almost every book I was reading (Burgess, 1981; Lincoln et al., 1985; Burgess, 1984; Taylor et al., 1984; Burgess, 1985; Woods, 1986; Jorgensen, 1989; Hammersley 1990; Delamont, 1992; Erlandson, et al., 1993) or in most of the discussions I was listening to. So I found myself being involved theoretically in both positivist and non-positivist ways of thinking, in which at some stages one perspective was dominating the other and vice-versa.

Thus, this chapter is divided in three sections. Section one presents a literature review of strictly empirical research regarding teachers' and peers' attitudes towards integration of disabled students. The research being presented here differs in methodological designs, the ideological assumptions related to disability, and the way data is analyzed and presented. The research accounts that are going to be presented have been conducted in both an American and a British context. However, it is important to mention that the majority of research has been conducted in an American context. This has involved using conventional attitudinal measures; that is, Likert-type

attitude scales, attitudinal check-lists, and sociometric devices often within experimental and control environments.

Section two focuses on the literature related to the theoretical and methodological basis regarding the term attitude in a more general perspective. Again this literature review originates from an American positivistic epistemological way of thinking. This review became one amongst other stimuli that generated further thinking and analysis and thus,

Section three focuses on a critical retrospection of both empirical conventional attitudinal research and the main theoretical/epistemological principles underlying such research. It includes an identification of the principles which generated a restrictive and a mechanistic approach to a highly complex issue such as attitudes. Here, an alternative approach is presented which simultaneously constitutes the ideological basis of this study.

EMPIRICAL ATTITUDINAL RESEARCH REGARDING INTEGRATION

Existing attitudinal research has approached the analysis of integration from a variety of perspectives. The first one includes the effects of labelling on attitudes and stigma attachment to disabled children in educational settings (MacMillan, 1974; Gottlieb, 1974; Kurtz et al., 1977; Siperstein et al., 1980; Aloia et al., 1983; Bromfield et al., 1986; Krasner, 1984; Eayrs et al., 1993). A second set of studies investigated the social adjustment of disabled people in integrated settings by measuring their self-concept and their sociometric status, comparing it with the self-concept and status of children being in segregated settings (Cassidy, 1959; Thurston, 1959; Mayrowitz 1962; Carroll, 1967; Strang et al., 1978;). A third set of studies measured/explored peers' attitudes towards and interactions with disabled children (Baldwin, 1958; Jordan 1959; Goodman, et al, 1972; Sheare, 1974; Gottlieb and Kaufman, 1977; Cavallaro and Portrer 1980; McHale et al., 1980; Hoben, 1980; Rynders et al., 1980; Johnson et al.,

1981; Kennedy et al., 1982; Miller, et al., 1984; Jenkins et al., 1989; Bowman, 1989; Lynas, 1986; Lewis et al., 1988; Karagiannis, 1988; Shapiro et al., 1988; Siperstein et al., 1988; Kyle et al., 1991). Finally, there is a number of studies which focused on teachers' attitudes and factors influencing the formation of their attitudes (Gickling et al., 1975; Baker et al., 1980; Hegarty et al., 1981; Reynolds et al., 1982; Leyser et al., 1983; Stainback, et al., 1984; Feldman et al., 1985; Thomas 1985; Bowman, 1989; Pinhas et al., 1989; Clough et al., 1991).

Based mainly on thematic categorization, the following discussion will concentrate on a review of the main findings of the above studies. This review has a two-fold purpose. First, it sheds light on how the process of integration has been tackled, what has been done and what previous researchers have found. Secondly, the majority of the following research will act as a platform for a further consideration and reconstruction of the way the issues of integration and attitudes have been approached by previous conventional attitudinal research.

In this initial phase of the discussion it is important to mention that the range of variables covered by the following studies provides a whole series of problems - operational, conceptual and analytical. At times, different studies involve different views of 'integration' and mainstreaming including different assumptions, processes and implications. Finally, as indicated at Chapter One, progressive policies for promoting integration have not been the dominant approaches and often policies impinge upon practices and vice-versa. Thus, it was expected that attitudinal research regarding integration would reveal conflicting feelings and opinions reflecting the conflict in the wider social spectrum (Quicke et al., 1990). Bearing the above in mind the first issue under exploration is the process of labelling and, in particular the way this has been approached by previous research into integration.

Attitude, integration and the process of labelling

Theories of deviance, and labelling have strong historical roots. They were originally developed by sociologists in the study of crime and have since been expounded and applied to disabled people (Eayrs et al., 1993). In the area of integration there has been considerable controversy and a number of arguments have been produced for and against the use of labels. There are circumstances (1981 Education Act) in which some labels have been abandoned (i.e. educationally subnormal), being replaced with other labels (severe or moderate difficulties) based on the assumption that the latter terms have a more positive connotation than the former.

Other authors claimed that the term label itself has a specific and a general use (Eayrs et al., 1993). According to Eayrs, Ellis and Jones (1993) the first use is connected with unequal relationships in which powerful groups have the means and are able to define the way less powerful groups are perceived and treated. The second is a more commonplace usage in a looser sense of a term to describe another person. Eayrs et al., (1993) have not expounded on what a looser sense of using labels actually means, and so it is difficult to proceed in a further interpretation of the above suggestion.

Disabled people and advocates of the rights of disabled people insist on abandoning labels altogether and focus more on the person and his/her social experiences. Mike Oliver (1992) strongly advocates that going back and examining what able-bodied theorists and researchers have maintained "is not very useful in understanding the real nature of disability or indeed, integration in modern society. . .If disability is socially created . . .then such arguments are both sterile and futile" (pp. 20-22). He further claims that:

"A start can be made by not talking over our heads about issues that are irrelevant to our needs and by allowing us the dignity of deciding what we want to be called" (p. 26)

Oliver (1992) believes that the way to deal with disablist societies is "to change what people do, not what people think." But the way of thinking highly influences the way of living and one cannot be fragmented from the other. If this is the case, then the information we have been offered about the effects of labelling on able-bodied attitudes towards disabled people, directly or indirectly is going to affect our actions. To "join the struggle" of disabled people against a disablist society means first of all to internalize, as an able-bodied person, that the society is disablist. One way of reaching this state is to go through the history of information offered by research and critically reflect upon it. The review of empirical studies regarding the use and effects of labelling show that the issue is highly complicated with conflicting feelings and opinions.

Mac Millan et al., (1974) identified five areas in which labelling could affect disabled children: self concept, peers rejection, future vocational adjustment, family attitudes and teachers' expectations. After reviewing the available literature in each of these areas, they concluded that there was little support for the notion that disabled children by being labelled as "retarded" were stigmatized. Gottlieb (1974); examining whether the label "mentally retarded" influenced peers' attitudes towards disabled people, found that middle-class children are influenced more by the level of academic competence they witness in a child than by the label attached to the child. There was not any statistically significant difference in peers' attitudes due to the label and he interpreted this finding to mean that labels do not lead to negative attitudes that are associated with stigma.

In another survey study (1986) similar conclusions were reached. Gottlieb went further by pin-pointing that children's observable behaviour could stigmatize them in the eyes of their peers, regardless of whether they are formally labelled by the school as being "retarded". He also claimed that if this is the case and children's inappropriate behaviour contributes to their social rejection by peers, then integrating them into ordinary schools could result in greater ostracism than if they were educated in

segregated classes. He justified this argument on the basis that children's inappropriate behaviour will be more visible in an ordinary school.

As far as the effect of labelling on teachers' attitude is concerned, Kurtz et al., (1977) in their study, which used both an experimental (labelled) and control (non-labelled) child, found that the label did produce a biasing effect but in this case the effect was positive. They found that teachers rather than responding negatively to the label, responded in a positive manner by showing less social distance. Their finding was in agreement with Siperstein et al., (1980) and also with Towne et al., (1968) and Goodman et al., (1972) as cited in the literature review of Gottlieb's (1974) study. These three studies found that labelling may have a protective effect and they have even pointed out potential benefits. For instance, Siperstein et al., (1980) by using an adjective check-list attitude scale found that the label "mentally retarded" has a beneficial effect as it offers "a reason" to peers for explaining and understanding their disabled peer's academic incompetence or "inadequate" behaviour. The authors of this study argued that if no explanations had been given then children may proceed to make unfavourable comparisons between themselves and their disabled peers.

In contrast, Bromfield et al., (1986) found that labelling has an influence but not a positive one. They claimed that labelling has a negative effect because teachers have low expectations of their pupils resulting from labelling; consequently the children are likely to underachieve. This experimental study conducted by the use of video-tapes and questionnaires revealed that the participants who were presented with a 'mentally retarded' label for the child in the video were less likely to attribute the child's failure to low effort or to environmental factors. Krasner's (1984) findings were similar to the above, even though he went further by claiming that it is not only attitudes but observed behaviour that was influenced by labels as well.

Dandy et al., (1988), stated that there are a number of other studies using both attitudes and observed behaviour as measures and they tend to show an effect of

labelling, although not a strongly consistent one. They also claimed that showing that there is a labelling effect does not tell us if alternative terms used in integrated settings such as "learning difficulties" or "having special educational need" are more or less influential than the old categories.

A more recent study by Eayrs et al., (1993) investigated the effect of three different labels in current usage on public perceptions of the groups so labelled. The labels contrasted were "mentally subnormal", "mentally handicapped" and "people with learning difficulties". Three independent groups of subjects were presented with an attitude questionnaire. The main findings of this study supported the view that the term "learning difficulties" is associated with more positive attitudes than either of the other labels which do not significantly differ from each other.

In summary, the results of the above research are inconclusive, with some of them attributing negative, and some, positive effects on children who have been labelled. Other studies found no effect of labelling per se in the formation of attitudes towards disabled individuals. The notion of positive effects, however, as it has been presented in the above research is quite disturbing. How "positive" can be interactions that include notions of pity, overprotectiveness, dependency, "special dispensation" and the perpetuation of "sick roles" ? The response to this question has been offered by numerous disabled people who are the first to be affected by such "positive" labelling effects and interactions (Brisenden, 1986; Oliver, 1987; Morris, 1992; Finkelstein, 1980; Harry, 1991; Verity, 1991; Jones, 1991; Kefala, 1991).

Additionally, the above studies have isolated the creation and formation of labelling from the institutionalized practices of the society that created such labels in the first place. As some of these studies were mainly experimental, they did not pay attention to the reasons and the social roots behind the creation of such labels. The question raised by Oliver (1992) regarding the consequences of integrating children into

an education system which reflects and reinforces inequality is of a high importance. The creation of labelling has been associated with wider and complex ideological assumptions and myths that are to be found within institutions such as schools.

"The problem is to adjust unsatisfactory pupils to satisfactory schools. . .Pupils are failing to adjust satisfactorily to schools is the verdict, and the necessary remedy is to modify this behaviour, to replace the unsatisfactory responses by more appropriate social behaviour (or at least place them in a room in which their influence on the rest of the school populace will be minimal) using positive and negative stimuli devised by a skilled modifier" (Barton & Meighan 1979; p. 1)

In the book *Schools, Pupils & Deviance* (1979), a number of authors have shown how deviancy and labelling is a creation of institutional climates - an issue that the majority of the above studies failed to take on board.

Further, there are other studies that have shown that :

"...even if teachers set out to treat children as individuals, they are constrained by circumstances to label them in terms of categories reflecting institutional necessities and external pressures (Sharp and Green, 1975; Hargreaves et al.,1975, cited in Quicke et al., 1990; p. 35).

Finally, Karagiannis (1988), exploring the effect of labelling in peers' and teachers' attitudes and how labelling affects disabled childrens' lives claims that:

"Handicapped (sic) children have been stereotyped by "non-handicapped" children as less capable, less assertive, unattractive academically and behaviourally problematic, unhappy, non-conforming, withdrawn, requiring supervision, and opposing peers. Labelling persons using the above characterizations has serious impact in their lives. On one hand they are forced to perceive themselves as useless in society. On the other hand, by socially devaluating them through social stigmata we reduce their chances to participate in the community and prove that they are not what their social stigmata have characterized them. Therefore, they are unwillingly involved in a vicious circle as a shifting of others' attitudes cannot be accomplished without interaction" (Karagiannis, 1988).

The above has been supported by Quicke et al., (1990) who points out that deviant labelling "contributes to the maintenance of a social climate where pupils are not treated with equal respect either by peers or by teachers- a climate, therefore, which is a breeding ground for prejudice" (p. 35). In a microlevel analysis, labelling is

associated with interpersonal behaviour in that the concepts of self and social roles are both learned in personal relationships. It has been argued that the self is 'penetrated' by others whom we meet and by their responses to us (Thomas, 1978). For a disabled person the basic means by which the self is evaluated has been qualitatively different from the experience of the majority. For instance, Thomas, (1978) has argued that interpersonal communication between disabled and non-disabled children has been greatly influenced by two types of 'deviance': primary and secondary deviance. Primary deviance according to Thomas is linked with the practical difficulties in interpersonal relationships deriving from the impairment itself, which are accompanied by social stigmatization and stereotyping, continuing secondary deviance.

The issue of interpersonal relationships between disabled and non-disabled children in integrated settings has been approached by a number of attitudinal studies from two points of view. One set of studies investigated the social adjustment of disabled children in integrated settings by measuring their self-concept and sociometric status, 'comparing' it with the self-concept and status of children in segregated settings. Another set of studies has focused on measuring or exploring peers' attitudes towards and interactions with disabled children. Both sets of studies have used social relationships as a criterion of 'assessing' the social benefits of the integration process, and it is the main findings of these studies that I turn to now.

Social relationships between disabled and non-disabled children

In the initial phase of the integration process, the main tendency was to examine the issue of social relationships, including attitudes, between disabled and non-disabled children from the perspective of disabled children's social adjustment within integrated settings. Social adjustment data are mainly of two kinds, self-concept and sociometric status. Investigators who have compared the self-concepts of students who attended special classes with students who attended ordinary classes have reported conflicting results, with some finding no significant differences and others reporting significant

differences favouring either children who have been educated in segregated schools or children educated in ordinary schools.

Strang et al., (1978) revealed that students who were partially segregated and partially integrated were found to have significantly higher self-concept scores than did children who were totally segregated. The above finding was in congruence with the two earlier studies of Carroll (1967) and Mayrowitz (1962) who found that students in partially segregated settings showed higher improvement than students in segregated settings. Strang et al., (1978) explained this finding by suggesting that children having a dual reference group of both disabled and non-disabled students are able to gain satisfaction from knowing that they, too, are as capable as a group of other children (i.e., their segregated classmates). Much earlier studies reflecting the dominant ideologies of their time have argued that children had better self concepts when they were fully segregated (Thurston, 1959; Cassidy, 1959).

Even though the above studies are not recent they serve the purpose of showing how futile and problematic was the debate in the research area regarding integration versus segregation processes. Firstly, this type of work provides a whole series of operational, conceptual and analytical problems. The concept of 'social adjustment' and the development of self-concept/esteem were perceived as a context-free process with little reference to the fact that in a very fundamental sense the self is a product of a person's interaction with others. By decontextualizing the formation of self-concept, the tendency was to belittle the importance of the social environment in which the meaning of such a concept had been developed in the first place. Secondly, another concern derives from the way complex issues such as the formation of self-concept/esteem were approached. It is questionable whether the nature of a person's experience, her interpretation of her surroundings, the meaning of her statements and the nature of her emotions can be quantified on a rating scale of self-esteem. I will leave this issue for the moment as it deserves further analysis in a following discussion. Thirdly, conclusions

such as 'children had better self-concepts when they were fully segregated' tended to be self-justifiable, paying little attention to the fact that such conclusions were based on doubtful comparisons that have failed to offer an account of the social and cultural worlds of the persons under investigation. Thus, on the one hand they tended to justify segregated practices and legitimise a deficit model with regard to disabled people. On the other hand they offered little to the struggle of how integration can be used as a means for the creation of a more inclusive understanding of the educational community.

More recent empirical studies concentrated on the highly important issue of interactions and/or patterns of interactions between disabled children and their peers. Researchers have examined a) the degree to which disabled and non-disabled children interact in integrated situations; b) what elements influence these interactions; c) the characteristics and consequences of those interactions; and d) how interactions influence peers' attitudes towards their disabled peers.

Cavalliaro et al., (1980) studied children's choice of partner in free play. They found that friendship patterns of ordinary children were such that they tended to have one partner who they consistently chose but disabled children did not seem to have such strong relationships. Guralnick (1980) also examined the degree of social interactions within a group of pre-school students. In the group non-disabled, mildly, moderately, and severely "handicapped" children were included. With adults constructing play situations it was found that a) moderately and severely "handicapped" children interacted with all four sub-groups of children, b) non-disabled and mildly "handicapped" children interacted more frequently among each other than was expected by the researchers; and c) non-disabled and mildly "handicapped" children interacted less frequently with moderately and severe "handicapped" children than expected.

Another study investigating the inclinations of non-disabled children to help their disabled peers, it was found that overall the 'orthopedically handicapped children' were selected first, more often than children with Down's Syndrome (Kennedy et al;

1982). The reasons given by the young participants for their choices varied. This study found that the notion that a disabled individual should be helped seems to occur quite early (i.e. 8 years old) while children have an inclination to offer more help to a disabled child who appears to be the "most needy". In addition it was found that children ascribed negative status to disabled children by referring to them as babies, young and small. In a more recent study where social integration was measured by the frequency with which disabled children interacted with their peers it was found, that interactions were less than the level that could be expected by chance alone (Jenkins et al., 1989).

The above findings were similar to earlier studies examining peers' acceptance scores among each other and between them and disabled students. They found that the scores of acceptance were significantly lower when referring to disabled children than non-disabled peers. Additionally, it was found that the degree of isolation of disabled children steadily increased the lower down the intellectual scale one went (Baldwin, 1958; Jordan, 1959).

These findings can be interpreted in another way as well. They indicate that the nature of social isolation that disabled children had experienced at the initial phase of integrational practices [in the 60's] was not qualitatively altered in the 80's, despite the rhetoric surrounding integrational policies and practices. These findings bring forward an opposite reality to the claim that inclusion is the primary aim of education, which has been made, verbally at least, by political and administrative lobbies. It shows that:

"children with special needs still get an inferior education to everyone else, and although the rhetoric of integration as process may serve to obscure or mystify this fact, the reality remains" (Oliver, 1992; p. 23).

However, it will be misleading to assume that integration is static and has not brought any attitudinal changes. There are studies that have investigated the influence of disabled and non-disabled children's interactions on the attitudes and the understanding of non-disabled towards disabled people. These studies have indicated that contact with disabled children influences non-disabled children's attitudes. Specifically, Sheare

(1974) in an experimental study found that the experimental group of children who were assigned to non-academic classes with disabled children revealed more positive attitude ratings at the Acceptance Scale than the control group of children who had not been integrated in classes with disabled children. Gottlieb and Kaufman (1977) claimed that non-disabled students' attitudes towards their disabled peers become more positive as a function of increased interaction. Further, McHale and Simeonsson (1980) showed that contact with "severely handicapped" students improved non-disabled students' "understanding" of their disabled peers.

Rynders, Johnson, Johnson and Schmidt (1980) examined how interactions and attitudes are influenced by different structured learning activities within a classroom setting. There were three different structured learning situations: (1) competitive, that is, a student achieved his/her goal only if the other members of the group failed to reach their goal, (2) individualistic, that is, a child could reach a goal regardless of the success of the other members of the group, and (3) co-operative, that is a student will achieve a goal only if other members of the group achieved their goal. The findings showed that the way the activities are structured influences the nature of interactions among disabled and non-disabled children. According to that study, the cooperative structure promoted significantly more positive and inclusive interactions and attitudes. That cooperative learning experiences promote positive interactions and friendships between non-disabled and disabled peers has been reported in another study by Johnson and Johnson (1981). Comparing the effects of individualistic and co-operative instruction on interpersonal attraction they found that cooperative learning experiences a) promote more cross-handicapped (sic) interactions during instruction; b) promote interactions characterized by involving handicapped (sic) students in the learning activities, giving them assistance, and encouraging them to achieve, and c) promote more cross-handicap (sic) interactions during post-instructional free-time.

In addition to the nature of structured learning activities, Lynas (1986), pointed out that teachers should be careful about the amount of help they offer to disabled children and the way this help is offered to them. Positive discrimination, if not presented carefully, can have socially segregating effects, by reinforcing negative peer attitudes. Additionally, Lewis and Lewis (1988) have advocated that the co-operative structuring of learning activities, when accompanied by information/knowledge to peers about disability issues, provide a background for the creation of positive attitudes of young children towards their disabled peers. Knowledge and awareness regarding disability issues have been characterized as key features in changing negative peer attitudes towards disabled children by Shapiro and Morgolis, (1988) as well.

However, attitudes seem to be a much more complicated affair. This was shown by a study which endeavoured to examine the attitudes of secondary school pupils towards the notion of mental retardation. The results indicated a confusion about the nature and causes of mental retardation. It also indicated that the same person held conflicting feelings and opinions regarding integration and interaction with disabled people (Kyle and Davies, 1991). Other studies have demonstrated that attitudes towards and interactions of non-disabled with disabled people include other parameters such as age, gender, class, race, and level of perceived competence that the non-disabled child holds. Gender was especially highlighted as a social parameter influencing the nature of attitudes (Mischel, 1970; Goodman et al., 1972; Thomas, 1978; Sandberg, 1982; Firth and Rapley, 1990).

Specifically, it has been emphasized by Quicke (1990; 1989) that attitudinal research should take into consideration the impact of gender when children are asked to reveal their opinions and feelings regarding interactions with disabled children. As he stated:

"A number of quantitative attitudinal studies have suggested that in relation to all forms of handicap females demonstrate more "positive" attitudes than males. . . Explanations for these findings have been various, but usually refer either to psycho-biological

"within child" factors or to role socialized traits. . . Such findings would suggest that cultural studies might help to illuminate attitudes to mental handicap by examining the relationship between integration policies and the establishment of gender identities" (pp 32-33).

The above studies are only a small sample of the type of investigations that have been conducted in the area of social integration and an examination of peers' attitudes towards interactions with disabled children. Overall, it was apparent that different studies have approached the issue of peers' attitudes towards disabled children from different angles. The majority of studies focused on the degree rather than the nature, the meaning(s) and the quality of interactions between disabled and non-disabled children. Peer rejection was a fairly common pattern revealed by the evidence of these studies and it was indicated that peers' attitudes were influenced by a number of variables. Disabled children's 'ability' or 'inability' to form relationships, peers' perceptions of a disabled person, peers perceptions of a disabled child's academic performance, the amount of actual interaction with disabled children, the type of learning activities within which both disabled and non-disabled children interact and the age, gender and class of the peers have been identified by previous attitudinal research as being some of the variables influencing peers' attitudes towards their disabled classmates. However, the majority of these studies have isolated each of these variables from their social and cultural contexts and in so doing they have belittled their complexity. A reference to these variables remained in a superficial identification of them. Complex relationships were summarized in conclusive statements often with little or no explanation of the "why's" and "how's" necessary for understanding the creation and meaning of different social patterns. At times the dominant language used in the majority of these studies was in itself offensive and disablist while concepts such as "social interactions" and "social acceptability" were often ill-defined, generating a dependency deficit model with regard to disabled children.

The majority of the above studies used the 'assessment' of the social acceptability of disabled children as one of several criteria to evaluate the effectiveness

of the integration process. Another set of studies in evaluating the integration process has focused on teachers' attitudes towards integration. These studies are based on a recognition that positive teacher attitudes are the most important factor in ensuring the success of integration and it is the main findings of these investigations I turn to now.

Teachers' attitudes towards the integration process

There are a number of studies which have examined integration from the teachers' perspective. The findings on this issue are inconclusive with some studies (mainly conducted in United States) reporting negative teachers' attitudes towards integrating disabled students (Baker and Gottlieb, 1980; Leyser et al., 1983; Feldman & Altman, 1985) and some others reporting positive attitudes (Hegarty et al., 1981; Pinhas, 1989). Thomas (1985) identified numerous factors, both institutional and personal, which in combination may serve as predictors of teachers' attitudes towards integrating disabled children. Some of these factors were: the traditional school policy regarding integration, policy of allocation of students to classes, (mixed ability or streaming), the headteacher's attitude to integration, the quality of support offered by the contact special educator, the relationship between the mainstream and the support teacher, their roles and their ascribed responsibilities, conservatism as a dimension of teacher's personality, gender, type of teaching and teacher's level of confidence in selecting appropriate teaching methods for disabled children.

In another study where the aim was: to review teacher- training in the context of a variety of country systems (including fourteen countries); to consider teachers' attitudes to integration, and to produce a report which could form the basis of meetings about teacher training and integration, the results revealed significant aspects connected to integration. In each of the five UNESCO world regions it was found that teachers' perceptions of integration differed significantly across and within countries according to various factors: the existence or not of a mandate law favouring integration, to the

amount and type of their training, their experience of pupils with potentially "handicapping" conditions, and support available in the ordinary school (Bowman, 1989). Specifically, it was found that teachers' attitudes were positive towards the integration of 'delicate' students (75.5%), physical 'handicap' students (63%), students with specific learning difficulties (54%), students with speech 'defect' (50%) while they revealed less positive attitudes towards the integration of students with severe mental handicap(sic) (2.5%) and students with multiple handicaps(sic) (7.5%). This study was based on a "hierarchy of preference" list of disability groups which has also been used in other studies (Hegarty and Pocklington 1981). There are two crucial issues revealed by these two studies. Firstly, teachers do categorize children according to their specific impairment and secondly, mentally disabled children are at the bottom of the teachers' preference list. Moreover, the findings of this study revealed that teachers' attitudes are influenced by the forms of help and support that they receive. The link between the formation of attitudes and the nature and the quality of support that teachers receive in their working environment has been substantiated by other studies (Thomas, 1985; Karagiannis, 1988).

Finally, there are a number of other characteristics that have been identified as influential on the formation of teachers' attitudes towards integration. These are related more to personal/demographic characteristics of teachers, such as age and amount of teaching experience with disabled people. Specifically, it has been reported that younger educators and educators with a greater amount of teaching experience with disabled children tended to have more positive attitudes towards integration (Stainback et al., 1984). It seems, however, that these characteristics are not so strong in influencing attitudes. Reynolds, Reynolds and Mark (1982) did not find any significant differences in teachers' responses towards integration when compared on the basis of teacher ages, teaching experiences, and teaching experiences with disabled children.

All of the above empirical findings provide us with a bulk of information, that we should be aware of as researchers when involved in attitudinal research regarding integration. Why did I become dissatisfied with the empirical readings I was initially engaged with, mainly with the ones using conventional attitudinal measures? The response to such a question involves theoretical/ideological problems, tensions and tangles of thought I experienced in this complex interface between various theories regarding attitudes per se and integration as well as my experiences in the field. The first step was to explore the fundamental theoretical principles underlying the examination of attitudes from a conventional measuring perspective. It was considered necessary to be familiar with the ideological/methodological logic underpinning the dominant patterns of attitudinal research before proceeding to a more extensive critical reflection. Thus in section two, the discussion will focus on the literature related to the theoretical/methodological basis regarding the term attitude in a more general perspective. The following review originates mainly from an American positivist epistemological way of thinking and serves as a stimulus for further consideration.

THE EXAMINATION OF THE "DEPENDENT" VARIABLE

Going briefly through the history of the term "attitudes" I identified a variety of meanings that have been given to it. Initially, the term attitude was used as a jargon term for artists to describe body position in painting. Later though that term was used by Darwin as a stereotypic behavioural motoric response associated with the expression of an emotion. (In Kahle, 1984). In 1906 Charles Sherrington referred to attitudes as a continuous state, and not as an occasional outburst as was defined by Darwin. Therefore, according to Sherrington "attitude reflected the stable nature of body position" (In Kahle, 1984). In the German language a similar term was developed, "aufgabe", that was usually translated as mind-set rather than attitude. Margaret Wasburn attempted to integrate Sherrington's concept of attitude with the concept of aufgabe by proposing a theory of incipient action, of learning by doing. As Kahle stated,

this development helped to establish one element of the eventual term "attitude". Golstein, by criticizing Sherrington's thinking, provided a second element of the term "attitude". According to Golstein, imagination, creative thinking and the ability of humans to be concerned with the possibilities of life should be part of this term. William Thomas expounded upon the meaning of the term and he defined attitudes as "a process of individual consciousness in the social world" (In Kahle, 1984; p.3) As Kahle (1984) claimed:

"Thomas formulated a vision of the attitude concept that more or less persists until today, he perhaps unwittingly removed the psychological element and, therefore, the observable element of an attitude" (p. 3)

Other authors (Thurstone, 1928; and Likert, 1932) in operationalizing the term attitude for research purposes claimed that attitudes are nothing more or nothing less than what the attitude scale measures. Mainly, operationally attitudes were defined as a matter of preference.

This battle over defining attitudes continued to be of great importance. Actually one of the major epistemological positions within the traditional positivist way of thinking was to operationalize their concepts and to define them in terms of either measurable behaviour or in terms of measurable variables. The conceptual or operational definition of the term attitudes has been one of the major problems in social psychology for more than half a century. Possible explanations of such a difficulty were offered and one among other reasons underlying this difficulty was reported to be the fact that attitudes are constructs rather than concepts. As Cameron (1983) stated

"Constructs are abstractions that exist in the heads of people but they have no object reality. They cannot be pin-pointed, counted or observed. They exist only because they are inferred from the results of observable phenomena. They are mental abstractions designed to give meaning to ideas or interpretations. One difference between constructs and concepts is that concepts can be defined and exactly specified by observing objective events. Constructs cannot be so specified (p. 7).

Other authors have suggested that attitudes are difficult to define due to their multidimensional character, which includes a variety of components such as cognitive, affective and conative ones (Fisbein & Ajzen, 1974). The operational formulation of the term included three elements as components: the affective or evaluative dimension (good - bad), activity dimension (active - passive), and the potency or cognitive dimension (strong - weak).

Definitions became more abstract and ambiguous while attitude was perceived as some "inaccessible entity in the "black box" of the individual" (Roiser, 1974; p. 112) that can be measured somehow with complicated behavioristic measures. Characteristically, two definitions given in the literature demonstrate the above:

"Attitudes have been conceptualized as underlying dispositions which enter, along with other influences into the determination of a variety of behaviours toward an object" (Allport, 1954; see also: Cambell, 1963) and

"A person's attitude toward an object can be estimated by multiplying his evaluation of each attribute associated with the object by his subjective probability that the objects has that attribute, and then summing the products for the total set of beliefs. Similarly, a person's attitude toward a behaviour can be estimated by multiplying his evaluation of each of the behaviour's consequences by his subjective probability that performing that behaviour will lead to that consequence, and then summing the products for the total set of belief. (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; p. 223).

There were other theorists who even though they perceived attitudes as abstractions linked them directly with the environment. As Kahle, (1984) pin-pointed:

"Attitudes are adaptation abstractions, or generalizations, about functioning in the environment, especially the social environment that are expressed as predispositions to evaluate an object, concept or symbol. This abstraction process emerges continuously from the assimilation, accommodation, and organization of environmental information, by individuals in order to promote interchanges between the individual and the environment that from the individual's perspective, are favourable to preservation and optimal functioning (p. 5).

Thus, attitudes even though they were linked with a social environment were rather perceived from an individualistic perspective. The emphasis was on accommodating or assimilating information into already existent mental structures. The

key feature was not conflict but generalization that promoted adaptability for a better functioning into different environments.

According to the conventional attitudinal logic researchers when examining these generalizations in order to be objective must bear in mind that they are restricted to analyze attitudes in relation to the specific action, the target, at which the action is directed, the context in which the action is performed, and the time at which it is performed (Ajzen and Fishbein 1977). Thus, a specific action must be insulated and fragmented from the wider environment without the involvement of relationships and interactions, if attitudes are to be measured.

Finally, another issue that has arisen from the positivistic logic regarding attitudinal research, which has actually become one of the fundamental problems in social psychology, involves the attitude-behaviour consistency. This concern was based on the assumption that

"If attitudes have no relationship whatsoever with behaviour except for occasionally sharing something trivial like method variance then it is almost pointless to attempt to understand attitudes. The basic rationale for understanding attitudes hinges on the notion that attitudes will reveal something about probable behaviour . . . attitudes would provide a short-cut to understanding behaviours" (Bentler, 1981; p. 105).

There has been an ongoing debate about the value of measuring attitudes, as predictors of overt behaviour, if there are low or non significant relations between attitudinal predictors and behavioural criteria.

However, social psychology has been witnessing a revival of interest in the relationship between attitudes and action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Some authors have responded to the accumulated evidence of attitude-behaviour inconsistency by suggesting conceptual and methodological refinements intending to increase the likelihood of correspondence between attitude and action. They were engaged with the issue of the "casual" priority of attitudes on behaviours versus that of behaviours on attitudes. It has been reported that:

"Investigators have taken four different positions concerning causal relationships between attitudes and behaviours : attitudes cause behaviours (McGuire, 1976); behaviours cause attitudes (Bem, 1972); attitudes and behaviours have mutual causal impact (Kelman, 1974) and attitudes and behaviours are slightly if at all, related (Wicker, 1969; In Bentler & Speckart, 1981; p. 226).

Other authors reached a consensus according to which attitudes should be conceptualized as underlying dispositions which enter along with other influences, into the determination of a variety of behaviours toward an object (Tognacci et al., 1974). So attitude was considered to be only one of many factors determining behaviour. Therefore, it was a shift in the focus of research efforts; a shift from examining whether or not attitudes are related to behaviour to examining the conditions under which attitudes and behaviour co-vary (Weigel & Newman, 1976).

Fishbein and Ajzen (1974) and Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) in their thorough exploration of the research literature on the attitude-behaviour relationship made an attempt to integrate discrepant findings. They found that people's actions are systematically related to their attitudes only when the nature of the attitude predictors and behavioural criteria are taken into consideration. After defining the four elements that constitute attitudinal and behavioural entities -action, target at which the action is directed, the context in which the action is performed, and the time at which it is performed- they suggested that:

"The strength of an attitude-behaviour relationship depends in large part on the degree of correspondence between attitudinal and behavioural entities" (p. 891).

Through a review of the existing attitude-behaviour research literature they concluded that:

- a) attitude-behaviour relationships lacking in correspondence are low and non-significant;
- b) studies in which attitude-behavioural entities corresponded only in one of their two major elements (i.e target or action) reported either non-significant relations or inconsistent results; and finally
- c) studies that indicated significant attitude-behaviour relations of considerable magnitude had consistently established high correspondence between attitudinal and behavioural entities.

In the traditional positivistic logic of measuring attitudes Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) suggested that a researcher would have to take a closer look at the behavioural criteria. They suggested three behavioural terms: a single act criterion for a behaviour delineated according to a specific action, target, time and place; a repeated observation criterion generalized across different targets, times or places; and a multi-act criterion further generalized across different actions. Although a global attitudinal predisposition may not be related to any particular single act criterion, it will be significantly related to a repeated-observation or multiple act criterion if target, action and context are at identical levels of specificity in attitudinal and behavioural measures (in Bentler & Speckart, 1979). Thus, experimental and control environments were required in order to obtain identical levels of specificity in attitudinal and behavioural measures. Such a methodological logic demanded the control of the environment, by requesting participants to take a specific role, respond to certain questions and further respond in certain ways predetermined by the researcher. In turn this logic created the assumption that researchers ought to be "neutral", "objective" and "ideologically detached" from the topic they had set under examination, so as not to 'jeopardize' the objectivity of the study. However, my experiences throughout this study and the ideological/theoretical tensions involved largely did not reflect the above principles. This realization was strengthened after reading accounts which included an alternative methodological stance than the conventional one (Hargreaves, 1972; Cohen et al., 1976; Davies, 1982; Dunn, 1991; Pollard, 1992; Berger, 1976). These were accounts in which the aims and the arguments were not only valid and strong but offered a deeper understanding of everyday complex social relationships. Simultaneously, my contact with accounts written by disabled people challenged my own pre-assumptions about issues of disability and the assumptions involved in the way attitudes towards disabled people have been examined with attitudinal research.

A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON CONVENTIONAL ATTITUDINAL RESEARCH

Quantitative empirical research mainly conducted in American contexts using conventional attitudinal measures, seems to have examined most of the areas of integration (i.e., effectiveness of integration versus segregation, peers' interactions with disabled children, teachers' and peers attitudes towards integration) in a quite mechanical way. Even though this type of research showed that results are inconclusive and that some groups of children seemed to evoke more negative attitudes on their teachers and/or their peers than some others, they did not shed light on the context in which such attitudes were developed in the first place.

Further, like Mehan (1993),

"I felt that large scale surveys and experiments masked important theoretical and policy issues, were ill-equipped to uncover the root causes of inequality and did not enable us to hear the voices of the disenfranchised. I thought that it was necessary to look much more closely at social life and listen to the voices of the dispossessed to understand the complex processes composing inequality" (p. 94)

Going back to the methodological procedures of some of the above attitudinal research conducted with the aid of conventional attitudinal measures I realized that attitudes were perceived as quantifiable stimuli and that they could be measured on precise scales with a "high degree of objectivity" and generalizability. Integration was perceived as an unproblematic notion usually specified by the researchers. Comparisons were made between children educated in segregated settings with children educated in integrated settings like the two settings and the children's' experiences were comparable.

Control and experimental unnatural settings were considered to be sufficient for measuring value- judgements. Justifying the above logic, Siperstein, Bak and O'keefe (1988) stated that "a step-wise multiple regression analysis showed that children's

attitudes towards the target child in the laboratory setting were related to their sociometric choices of the retarded classmate" (p. 24).

Within the same conventional logic, labelling and competence were seen as independent variables that had, or did not have, an influence on the dependent variable-attitudes. This mechanical behaviouristic treatment of attitudes was far from my understanding of attitudes as being a complex phenomenon, often a conflicting one, influenced by different social parameters with unpredictable outcomes.

I do not mean to argue that research using conventional positivistic methods is of no value in our understanding of social phenomena. My dissatisfaction rather stemmed from the unproblematic way that both the terms attitudes and integration were used. It also stemmed from an emerging belief that our methodological tools construct the topic itself. Further, the nature of the topic influences and is being influenced by the type of methods we are going to use.

A further dissatisfaction with a lot of the articles of empirical research that I read originated from the aims of the research. If its aim, as it has been claimed, was to enable teachers and peers to understand the processes in which they operate and to make sense of their experience then I could hardly see what could be the contribution of such structured experimental research. Experiences, meanings and definition of situations as well as formulation of ideas and restructuring of these ideas are much more complex than they were presented in quantifiable research. As Armistead (1974) stated:

"With the best of scientific intentions, it (psychological social psychology) has left itself high and dry by ignoring social contexts which should not be taken for granted" (p. 15).

In summary, attitude has been perceived as an entity that in order to be measured it has to be fragmented from its relationships with other social entities. Sometimes this entity has been perceived as inaccessible as it resides somewhere in the individual (subconscious) and it also includes a biological and a habitual dimension. There are,

however, some general laws that can be depicted and applied to every situation as long as we can quantify and standardize them with highly sophisticated measurements. According to conventional attitude measures this can happen when we have operationalized the dependent variable attitude and the statements "emanating" from it can be seen as a simple stimuli from which the larger attitude is inferred. (for an extensive analysis see Roiser's, 1974; article: Asking Silly Questions). The next step is to find, whenever this is possible, a kind of a causal or deterministic relationship between verbal responses and overt actions; treating and perceiving this relationship as having a stimulus-response mechanical connection. For this to proceed, an attitude item should be precise, unambiguous and concrete otherwise it cannot be valid.. If the relationship is not strong and significant then attitudinal dichotomous responses are of low value.

Thus, attitudes have been abstracted from the context in which they were developed in the first place and so they become a-political, a-social and a-historical. An involvement of ideologies and social, cultural, or moral parameters may jeopardize the objectiveness of the study and the researcher can be accused of not being a value-free researcher. The role of the researcher here is crucial as according to the conventional positivistic logic she has to be a "tabula-rasa" excluding her subjectivity and any other leading interpretation. She has to be 'neutral' and 'detached' from the happenings.

At the stage that I have reached now, it is difficult to accept this rational because a) social phenomena are not events in the outside world perceived by passive observers, but interpretations by an active subject who defines the field, affects and is affected by the environment in which she participates, acting intentionally in relation to that environment (Armistead, 1974), and b) the nature of the vexed topic of attitudes and integration is highly political, cultural, historical and social.

Attitude is a social entity that encompass ways of thinking, ways of feeling and experiences that are developed in specific interdependent cultural contexts. Thus,

measuring attitudes means measuring people's thoughts, opinions and experiences. The notion of experience here is not the same as the notion of overt behaviour that researchers strive to measure and afterwards connect with verbally expressed opinions to figure out if there is any consistency. Experience is a broader term which includes behaviour in relation to the way the participant feels about it, understands it, interprets it and even evaluates it. The first problematic issue derives from the question that Armistead (1974) stated:

"Does a lifetime's stigmatization reflect itself in where a black person marks a rating scale of self esteem? . . . Can you quantify the nature of a person's experience, his interpretation of his surroundings, the meaning of his statements, the nature of his emotions?" (p. 19).

Decontextualized, polarized dichotomous responses of agreement and/or disagreement about complex phenomena become alienated knowledge to the researcher but most of all to the participants and their lives.

On the one hand, it becomes alienated knowledge for the researcher because as Armistead (1974) pointed out:

"If you spend your time concentrating upon variations aren't you likely to forget about the nature of what you are studying and why it is there on the first place? For instance, if you set about accounting for variations in prejudice won't you tend to ignore the nature and meaning of prejudice as a social phenomenon and what this might tell us about why there is prejudice at all?" (p. 19).

On the other hand it becomes alienated knowledge to the participants due to their passive position towards a stage of a research process that is fragmented from all the other research stages.

There are other consequences for both the researcher and the researched. From the researchers' point of view she thinks that the predefined statements offered to the participants do not include any moral assumptions and they have been checked so as to be clear and non-biased. However, this is not the case. A statement "Every 'handicapped' person should be treated equally in an educational setting" reflects the attitude of the researcher. There are going to be participants (especially disabled

participants) that would claim that such a statement uses a disabling language. Additionally it is ambiguous because equality is a complex contingent phenomenon subject to different interpretations.

On the other hand, the participant is caught in a pre-specified context with little or no space for voicing her objections or expounding upon the statement. Both the expression of attitudes and the concrete actions are subject to a range of contingencies.

"As any interviewer will tell you, people just do not want to answer specific-sounding questions in general terms; their attitude is enshrined in the interviewer's bugbear 'it all depends'" (Heritage; 1974).

Thus, attitude scales typically comprise of a number of brief predefined statements that tended to be fraught with value-judgements, ignore the meaning of the situation to the participants, depoliticize the social context and treat participants as passive respondents abstracted from any ongoing real life contexts and processes.

In the case in which the researcher measures behaviour, what happens when the same behaviour has different meanings for different actors displaying the behaviour? Further, what happens when the interpretation the researcher offers for an overt behaviour is far from the interpretation ascribed to the behaviour by either the person who exhibited it or by the persons who are affected by it?

Thus, a fundamental principle underlying the methodological and analytical/interpretative procedures of this study is the recognition that attitude is a complex social phenomenon which includes ideologies, thoughts, feelings and experiences. It can be seen as

"A communicative act, aimed at defining the relationship between people or groups. . . The attitude and its statements are all part of a debate. . . The debates between attitudinal groups are grounded in the real problems of the social world. The resolution is thus an extremely slow process, depending on the ability of particular groups to succeed in overcoming the problems they set themselves" (Armistead, 1974; p. 112).

Overt behaviour is not perceived as an automatic response towards a stimulus allowing the existence of a non accessible "black box". It is rather connected with the ideology that a person holds and brings into the working environment in relation to the structural constraints that an institutionalized environment impose upon the person.

The role of the subconscious here is critical. Going so deep as to explore the hidden implicits of explicit behaviour it is too much of an ambition. It has not only hardly begun to be studied but it is even doubtful how much we as researchers can share from the other's implicit private world. (The notion of sharing here is disturbing as it is a one way "sharing" relationship. The researcher is the one who wants and wish the participants to open themselves and provide information and feelings about different situations with an "authentic" voice).

In addition, disposition as well as personality is related with the history that each person carries. This includes contradictory needs (perceived and actual or repressive and emancipatory in nature) and priorities as these have been produced, formulated, and even altered out of a social relationship between active persons and the different institutional and cultural contexts in which the person is being involved.

Social relationships and interactions in everyday life are key features as they affect, shape or even structure identities and vice-versa. Exploring relationships at a micro-level help us to understand, or at least to try to understand, how we make sense of the happenings that affect our lives and even help us to identify what has been internalized and taken for granted as natural happenings.

In every social interaction we exhibit attitudes by how we define the interaction, (the situation) what we believe and what we feel about it including the ways we choose to behave towards something or someone. As Armistead (1974) notes:

"The social is not just something that occurs when people meet, but is involved more deeply in our very thoughts and identities" (p. 20).

In more complex situations what we believe and what we feel is in contrast to how we act. In these cases our actions are not "authentic". The essential point, here, is the understanding of the relationships and tensions created between the self and the paramount reality by which it's being surrounded. A better explanation and understanding of the reasons behind this inconsistency can be offered by an examination of the institutionalized constraints (structural, situational, personal, ideological) that the environment imposes on the person. How does the individual make sense of this environment and the social relationships involved?

Thus, the micro-interactional analysis of everyday life can be complemented by a macro-analysis as both levels dialectically interact. It is important to mention here that as Fulcher (1989) has powerfully shown policies are being made at different levels. Therefore, the first attempt was to avoid thinking of attitudes as a consensus among groups. In doing so, I wanted to understand how different participants of the study made sense of what they were experiencing, what was the reason and justification behind their interaction, what were their definitions, myths, prejudices, opinions and feelings. I was strongly influenced in this decision by an analysis of attitudes from Roiser (1974) and Quicke (1990). The first author showed how conventional measures exclude alternative ways of thinking by trying to achieve a consensus measure taking the line of least resistance among the groups battling to define the situation. He also referred to the issue that studies on deviancy in sociology even though they have received a number of criticisms at least show that there are persons that do not reach (or they do not want to reach) the dominant or popular consensus regardless of the consequence. The second author stressed the point that we are unable to understand and much more to evaluate attitudes if we are not aware of the reasons behind their existence. In practice taking the perspective that the individual, her sense of identity and her behaviour are produced and shaped through social interactions I was searching for a methodological design that will enable me to make sense of these processes in a "natural" social environment. That is, I had to "merge" myself in this environment, communicate formally and informally

with participants, allowing space for participants to express their own understanding about integration and interactions with disabled children (in this case children with Down's syndrome).

However, there was one more strong assumption that shaped the design of this study. My own attitudes towards issues of disability originating from an interaction between my thinking and the thinking of disabled people. As I have already mentioned an impairment may lead to disability but disability is not causally linked with an impairment. Disability is a product of social interactions between persons with impairments and the way others respond to them. That is, there are strong and long social conditions and relationships that define a person with an impairment as a disabled person. Disabled persons identities have already been defined "for them by us" in the most discriminatory and derogatory way.

As researchers we may share the responsibility of perpetuating discrimination towards disabled people by the very nature of our questions, and the methods we use. Due to our attitudes, on the one hand we claim that research into attitudes regarding disability has as an ultimate aim to explore others' attitudes so as to contribute on policy making for a more positive and inclusive environment. On the other hand we tend to ignore what disabled people so strongly advocate. And what they advocate is that if researchers do not take into consideration disabled people's voices than the research is much more harmful and discriminatory for them.

I feel that this is associated with what Oliver (1992) has pointed out. That is, research involves the exploration of the lives of poor people, of women, of people from ethnic "minorities" in host societies, of disabled people and I will add teachers and children. While, research has uncovered little about the lives and activities of psychiatrists, bank managers, policy makers, captains of industry and so on. Research reflects the structure of society. The former group is the more powerless, more vulnerable, and much more under scrutiny. The later group have the resources and the

status to protect themselves. These unequal social power relationships manifest themselves in research where in the first case the researcher as an "expert" hold the powerful position over a less powerful group. In the second case the roles researcher-researched are being reversed.

There are a lot of accounts written by disabled people on breaking this perpetuation and enabling us, as non-disabled researchers to proceed in non discriminatory research. Oliver (1987) in his article, "Re-defining Disability: A Challenge to Research", stated that research on disability has too often failed to involve disabled people except, for example, as passive subjects of interviews schedules, observations drawn up by non-disabled researchers and based upon able-bodied assumptions. He pointed out that much research on disability has contributed little or nothing to improving the quality of life of disabled people as well as to influencing social policies.

Finkelstein (1980) stated that even where researchers have focused upon social factors like attitudes of the able-bodied or stigma, they have still seen these factors as being causally related to the impaired individual. Further, Trieschmann (1980) claims that disabled people have felt victimized by professionals who write articles about the reactions to disability that are based more upon theory than fact. However, even the notion of facts has been problematized by other disabled people when they lead to a partial and inhibiting view of the disabled individual. Brisenden (1986) extensively analyzed the demand to look beyond fragmented facts, especially the medical "facts". His analysis purports that:

"Presumably it is possible, under certain conditions, to isolate a set of 'facts', in the form of a list of general physical or intellectual characteristics, that apply to each form of disability. But the use of these is limited as there cannot be a formula derived from them that will cope with the particular needs of each individual. Indeed, taken alone, the 'facts' may lead only to distortion and misunderstanding and to a view of disabled people as a category of rejects, as people flawed in some aspect of their humanity" (p. 1).

This argument has to be seen in relation to the wider struggle of disabled people against deficiency approaches that determine not only forms of treatment but also the form of their lives. This lack of opportunities for expressing their voices has led increasing numbers of disabled people to believe that research conducted by non-disabled people can often be harmful to them.

In order to minimize this, the main question is "if non-disabled people are to carry on doing research into disability - as they undoubtedly will - what kind of research should they be doing? (Morris 1992; p.14). The answer to this question given by Morris came strongly and enlighteningly to me as a non-disabled researcher being involved in attitudinal research regarding disability issues. The response to the above question explicitly stated that

"Non-disabled people's behaviour towards disabled people is a social problem -it is a social problem because it is an expression of prejudice. Such expressions of prejudice take place within personal relationships as well as through social, economic and political institutions . . ." (p. 14).

In the light of the above, it became a commitment (and an evolution in my attitudes) that disabled people were not going to be presented in this study as passive creatures who can be placed under scrutiny, and can be victimized for methodological/research purposes.

I differentiate methods from methodology as methods refer to specific techniques and procedures used in the process of data-gathering while methodology includes an analysis of these methods, throwing light on their limitations and clarifying their presuppositions and consequences. (Cohen et al., 1980). That does not mean that methods and methodology are not interrelated; it rather means that the methodological assumptions influence both the methods used in a study and the way they are being used.

What follows is a presentation and an analysis of the methods used to conduct this study in relation to the rationale for selecting the particular methods, the way different methods are related to each other and the ethical dilemmas or practical difficulties generated from this methodological stance. Thus, the following chapter attempts to illuminate the processes involved during the period of data collection which is one of the main series of practices which contributes to the social production of "knowledge". The main consideration is how to tune the research instruments so as a) to deal with the everyday world of the particular school and b) to enable the exploration of this educational context/culture as closely as possible without destroying the "authentic" meaning for the people involved. This includes the tensions between pragmatical, theoretical and ethical aspects which have to be clarified in the concrete research activity. The assumption underpinning the presentation of "the research act" is that "it is not so much the scientific design [as such] that determines the research findings but the interactions among the people involved" (Schatz, 1993; p. 57).

PART THREE

Chapter 3

THE RESEARCH ACT

A book is not a series of words: it is a part of people's lives. Probably a more significant part of the authors' lives than of the readers' insofar as the authors have put more of themselves into it"
(Armistead, 1974; p.7)

This part of the research derives from the pragmatic everyday life responses for more than one and a half years of being in an educational setting not as a teacher and not as a student but as a "researcher". It is life translated to words. I personally considered the field experiences with its happenings as the most important source of learning. Learning through other people, redefining aspects of my sense of identity, acquiring social skills that some times I did not have, being puzzled with ethical issues, being authentic or playing roles (sometimes conflicting ones). Both me and the participants were involved in a life game with stereotyped and/or authentic relationships, dilemmas and conflicts. There was a continuous evaluation of me as a researcher by the participants and of the participant by me as a researcher. The majority of the happenings were taking place in a web of social interactions channelled through subjective interpretations by all of us who were in one or the other way included in this research process.

This chapter deals with presenting reflectively some of the actions that took place in the field. Questions of "what", "why", "why not" and "how" are going to be theorized but not abstracted from their context. Additionally, this chapter cannot be viewed separately from the previously discussed ideological assumptions that influenced the way of acting and were manifested in the selection of particular methods

as the appropriate ones for understanding participants' views and social (institutionalized) interactions.

The way I define the field poses certain restrictions. The field where this study took place was a school which included different people who tried to pursue collectively or individually different or similar aims. Each of us brought into this field our histories and personal cultures. That is, we brought experiences, sets of values, beliefs, needs and priorities that had been developed from our living experiences in other fields (community, neighbourhood, family). I will use the word field experiences because one of the methodological approaches of this topic was participant observation. Even though this was not the only approach used, it is of a significant importance because it became the ground from where the other approaches (individual discussions, and group discussions with the use of a photograph) were developed. Further, it was the one which included the most conflicting and difficult aspects of "doing research" but at the same time it offered an excitement of continuing the discovery. I was present at the school almost every day for an extended amount of time (a year and a half) being the main instrument for the conduct of this study. Positive as well as negative consequences are going to be discussed in the following presentation.

Personal accounts are being included based on the recognition that a) the pragmatic nature of this study involves me as a person and b) "any writing-perhaps apart from that of certain truly great stylists- that is not imaginable as human speech is bad writing (Wright Mills, in Davies, 1982; p.5).

FIELD EXPERIENCES

One of the principal methods that has been used in ethnography mainly by anthropologists but also by sociologists and social psychologists is observation: either participant or non participant observation. A number of researchers have defined the term observation as a methodological strategy "which provides firsthand reports of

events and actions and much fuller coverage of an organization's activities giving direct knowledge of matters that from interviewing we could know about only by hearsay" (Becker et al; 1982 p.39). In an holistic perspective they define observation as a continuum that can be further classified in three general types according to the activities, the roles, and the relationships that take place in a research process. Even though it has not been claimed that there is a strict distinction between the different types of observation often there is a reference to "total participant researcher" at one end of the continuum and "total researcher" at the other end. According to Gans (1982; p.54), in the total participant type, the fieldworker 'would be completely involved emotionally in a social situation and only after it is over becomes a researcher again and writes down what has happened'. In the researcher participant, the fieldworker participates in a social situation but is personally only partially involved, so that he/she can function as a researcher; and finally in the total researcher type the fieldworker observes without any personal involvement in the situation under study.

The above is a distinction made for technical-research purposes. In essence, it is important to mention, and this is a point that is going to be under analysis at this chapter, that the fieldworker is the *main instrument* of social investigation. As Freilich (1977) has claimed " he[the researcher] is the information absorber, the information analyzer, the information synthesizer and the information interpreter" (p. 32).

As field researchers we observe people in the settings in which they live and we participate in their day to day activities and either simultaneously or afterwards we conceptualize, for instance, what we perceive that for the participants are pragmatic responses to the situations they deal with. In doing so, we may affect or may be affected by the environment under study. We are in the middle of a learning process. It would be better to say that we may mingle in two different worlds with different cultures, values, and categories; worlds which often cannot be reconciled. That is, we are driven towards involvement by participating in situations which include values and principles different

to our own (Gans, 1982; p.55). As Evans-Pritchard (1973) has highlighted: "one becomes a sort of a double marginal man[sic], alienated from both worlds (pp. 2-3).

My involvement with the issues of integration and disability affected first and foremost my own thinking and value system through theoretical and emotional conflicts. Conflicts of involvement or detachment with the different interest-groups of people that I was coming in contact with. I can identify this process with what Frankenberg (1982) pin-pointed:

"What they all [researchers] have in common is the experience of having submerged themselves for anything from a year to three or four years in a cultural environment different from their own. What few recognize is that they can never *look on society in quite the same way again* (p. 50 italics mine).

Even though a number of important issues emerge through the fieldwork per se, issues that influence the way we define aspects of the paramount reality we endeavour to explore (in the way paramount reality has been defined by Cohen et al; 1976) relatively little material exists regarding fieldworkers' experiences. Hopefully, researchers, increasingly, have begun to pay more attention to the personal dimensions of their work (Davies, 1982; Dunn, 1991; Schratz, 1993). The importance of such written materials lies in the sharing of our experiences with other researchers and the developing of our understanding about the social dimensions of knowledge or as Easterday et al.,(1982) state: "of developing our research skills and enterprise" (p. 66).

I do not feel that admitting the effects and the constraints we pose in defining and/or even creating the field sacrifices objectivity. In contrast and in response to fears that by doing so the objective dimension of research is at stake I think that no research can become objective unless we share, reflect upon and evaluate the scope from which we approach different aspects of reality.

Further, LeCompte, Millroy and Preissle (1992) discussing about the criteria necessary for a good ethnography of education, state that among other things:

"The presence of the ethnographer should be acknowledged and his or her social, interactional position in the situation described. This may result in a more narrative, personalized style of reporting than has been the case in the past in ethnographic reporting" (p. 74).

In the light of the above, the following account will present some of the issues which emerged during the field work. I focus on specific influences of being a young, female, Greek, student-researcher in relation to general methodological issues, such as research relationships. There is an effort to explore how certain factors such as status, gender, and age influence power relationships and role formations in a specific context. Before, however, proceeding in such an analysis it is necessary to describe the school so as to introduce the research scene. A further description and details of the school community will emerge from discussions in later chapters.

The educational setting

This study took place at a primary school that is going to be called a Yorkshire school for anonymity purposes. The school is situated in an area consisting of mainly white British working class, lower middle class and middle class inhabitants. According to the teachers the children originate from a wide socio-economic background. Over the last 10 to 15 years due to the redevelopment of the catchment area and the building of new council housing a lot of new families have arrived. Specifically, during the year of '93 there were 25 new children registered at the school. Teachers perceived this move as problematic because it causes additional difficulties related to the fact that the children have to adjust to a new educational environment, establish relationships with their new peers and teachers. Moreover teachers, especially the ones of the infant level, believe that they have to deal with more complex social problems as compared to previous years, originating from the high ratio of children coming from broken or extended families with low financial support.

Some of the aims of the school as they have been reported in official documents given to parents are:

- a) to create an environment and atmosphere which will foster in the children a positive attitude to education and to life in general;
- b) to help pupils to develop intellectually and socially, placing a high value on literacy, numeracy and communication skills,
- c) to stimulate lively and enquiring minds; and
- d) to create an atmosphere of trust and respect in which children and adults can live and work together in a positive and supportive manner.

In pursuit of these aims it is claimed that the school is "run on a firm, fair and friendly basis".

The two-level building is in the middle of a huge green yard. The front yard is the juniors' playground while the back one is for the infant classes. For me coming from a Mediterranean country where almost all the buildings are colourful or white, the facade of the building made by a brown-reddish bricks gave me a depressive impression. However, the first negative impression disappeared the moment I entered the building.

Inside, on the first floor the corridor walls were covered by colourful nature-orientated pictures. There was an open library, an open room for home economics, a gym room and the dining room. This floor consisted of six classes. The inside of the classrooms have been decorated in almost the same way. At one corner of the room there was a green carpet where all the students were sitting down next to their teacher's desk. In the middle there were four or five groups of six desks, while at another corner in different classes there were different settings such as a hospital corner, a restaurant corner, a cafe corner. These settings were changing throughout the year. At a third corner there was an inner opening that led to a very small room which was full of teaching and playing materials used in classroom situations. The walls in each class were covered with pictures that had been created together by the teacher and the students.

Outside of each classroom there was a sign indicating the class number and the teacher's name. At one side of the first floor's corridor next to other classes there was a room known by the students as room 1 and it was functioning as a resource class. The whole first floor was the infant school which catered for approximately 160 children aged 4 to 6+ years old and it had its own playground separated from the middle school's playground.

The middle school was on the second floor and was usually called by teachers and students as the upper school indicating in a way a hierarchical order. The design and decor of the upper school had a lot of commonalities with the infant school. The most common were the colourful walls with the difference lying on the themes presented in pictures (i.e. historical events, sport events, art pictures, and demonstration of students' essays or suggestions). There were two open library rooms, a big gym room that functioned as an assembly point as well and two close rooms with materials for students with special educational difficulties. There was not a separate room that functioned as a resource room per se and this could be an indication of the degree of integration from its physical dimension. Additionally, there were six more rooms that functioned as classes for different aged year groups. The upper school catered for approximately 190 students aged 7 to 11 plus years old. It was claimed by teachers in both the infant and middle school that the number of enrolments was increasing. In each class there were approximately 30 students, and each class included a combination of two year classes (i.e. year 3 and year 4 students were being educated together in one class).

The administrative aspect of the school was of importance. Each school had different head teachers; a female for the infant and a male head teacher for the middle school. The staffing of the infant school was made up from thirteen teachers, all females, with only one male who functioned as the head of the special needs area as well. Nine of the thirteen were mainstream teachers, while the remaining functioned as

resource teachers or child care assistants inside a mainstream class or for a respectful amount of time they had the total responsibility for the students with learning difficulties in the resource room. The staffing of the middle school was made up of eleven mixed gender teachers. Six of the eleven were mainstream teachers, one of whom a male teacher, functioned as a deputy head. The remaining five, two males and three females were the resource teachers who worked most of the time alongside the mainstream teachers, being responsible mainly for the students with learning difficulties.

During the initial period of the study (from March to July 1992) a change took place. The upper school was a middle school and catered for children 11 and 12 plus years old, while in 92-93 the two last classes were abolished and instead of a middle became a junior school. Simultaneously, both the infant and the junior school were under one administration, with one male head teacher and two -a male and a female- deputy heads. The two different staffrooms were amalgamated into one and located in the upper school. This change brought some inconveniences as all the teachers had to move to a different staffroom, which initially they were not over-pleased about. Additionally, some members of the staff were "separated" because of the non-smoking policy which was imposed after this amalgamation. The teachers who smoked found a very small room where smoking was allowed and they spent most of their break time in this room, creating a slightly different staffroom culture influenced by the smaller size of the group.

During the initial phases of the amalgamation process all the staff of both the infant and the junior school experienced stress and bewilderment. Further, I noticed (from observations not discussed with teachers) that even though the two schools became one, the teachers working at the infant school considered themselves responsible for the infant students, while the teachers of the junior school claimed

responsibilities for the junior students. The following example drawn from the research diary can illustrate this point:

During lunch time most teachers from both the infant and the junior school gathered in the staffroom for their lunch, when one of the teachers of the junior school looked amazingly at the teachers of the infant school and asked: "Where are your children? Your playground is empty?" This comment initiated laughs only from the junior school teachers. The infant school teachers tried to defend themselves.

Analyzing such events, without prior knowledge of the school's culture, however, can lead to misunderstandings and unfair judgements. To understand what such comments meant to the persons who act upon them demanded an understanding of the way they interpret their reality at school. As Pollard (1985) highlights

"a school is not , in itself , anything more than a particular collection of resources and people. We must be careful, therefore, not to reify any such institution by implying that it has some intrinsic characters or quality in itself. Thus a stranger is immediately exposed to the problem of how to conduct him or herself when social conventions and assumptions are unfamiliar, and it is to this problem that any visitor must respond"(p. 116).

Negotiating access

Before entering the school I was aware from the readings how significant the negotiation process is. I was aware that I had to establish a rapport with this particular collection of people who had formed a certain institutional bias. I had read that in order to act

"I had to identify what I want, establish an objective or goal, map out a prospective line of behaviour, note and interpret the actions of others, size up my situation, check myself at this or at that point, figure out what to do at other points and frequently spur myself on in the face of dragging dispositions or discouraging settings" (Blumer, 1971, p.12).

It seemed at the time that there were two general ways of negotiating access, through formal or informal encounters. Even though I was puzzled over which way would be the best to use for a smooth negotiation I have to admit that I started by using

the formal approach. This decision was based mainly on personal parameters of who I am and how I act in environments that are unfamiliar to me (including the difficulties deriving from cultural and ethnic unfamiliarity). However, I figured out that the junior school, in contrast to the infant one, functioned in an informal way without a "big deal" being made about my presence in their "territories". I felt that such an environment was quite helpful in alleviating some of my initial stress of whether or not I was going to be accepted.

The first thing I had identified as necessary was to merge myself as a person and as a researcher within the educational setting that I was going to study; being more specific to merge myself to the culture that this collection of people had formed. The word culture has different meanings to different people. In this study it has a broad interpretation. It includes "a way of life", and "represents the ordinary processes" of human minds: how people think, value and attribute meaning, the traditions which inform these processes, and the way in which they are creatively interpreted and applied in new settings" (Dunn, 1991; p. 35).

In the same manner what makes one educational setting different from another is associated to the histories that people bring forward, the way these histories are interwoven in an institutional setting, and the way they are being used. Further, the term culture when applied to educational settings encompasses another meaning which is known as ethos or institutional bias. Pollard (1985) in an effort to explore and analyze the common everyday processes in primary schools with a particular reference to teacher-pupil relationships defined the term ethos as the coexistence of:

" the official system of the school with its hierarchy, rules and particular criteria of evaluation which exists alongside the children's own social system, which may appear to be less formal but which also has its own hierarchy, rules and particular criteria of judgement" (p.81).

In order to make sense of a particular way of living and thinking I needed to participate in the lived culture as much as possible. This was identified as one of my first goals. However, the decision to move into school was followed by other decisions.

Having a formal starting point in considering the questions of access to the research site I "had to case the joint" in terms of three criteria (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). First, "I had to determine whether the selected site met my substantive requirements". The Yorkshire school met these criteria as it was one of the very few school settings that had an implemented policy of integrating students with Down's syndrome in a cross-sectional way. Indeed, after visiting twenty seven primary schools, I realized that a respectable number of students with Down's syndrome were integrated at the nursery level, while only one, or at the most two students with Down's syndrome were to be found at any other year than the nursery. The Yorkshire school was one of the few which catered for six students with Down's syndrome across different classes at both infant and junior levels. Secondly, I had to consider whether the size of the site, its population, complexity and special layout is appropriate given the resources of time. In practise such a criterion, no matter how salient it is, is extremely difficult if not impossible to be determined, at least in the early stages of research. The difficulty relates to the second part of the criterion: time. Time was a continuous stressful concern, not only from the perspective of the time that was given by me as a researcher, but mainly, of the time that was going to be given to me by the participants. It might be a common feeling that the period in a setting is highly determined by the social relationships between the researcher and the researched, the confidence of the researched and the situations that the collection of people are going through. It is not a rare phenomenon, that a reason for a researcher to be excluded from a setting is the fact that the participants are going through unstable and stressful conditions. In other words, achieving entry does not necessarily put an end to anxiety over possible rejection; nor does it guarantee that the fieldworker's rapport will always be smooth (Gans, 1982 ;p.53). There is a continuous negotiation and re-negotiation for access. Initially, access

to the school, then access to specific classrooms, to staffroom and its culture, to meetings, and to the children's culture.

From the first day of entering the school I was asked "For how long?". Maybe this was a casual question from the teacher who asked it but it was not seen as such by me. Even though I offered a flexible response indicating that the duration was going to be mainly determined by the participants as well- i.e. the availability of the participants- retrospectively thinking I feel I made the mistake of saying "up to the end of the school year". After exploring more and deeper the site under study I realized that the task I set myself needed at least triple the time I gave. Such an awareness put me under enormous and stressful constraints. This situation became a two-sided coin. At one level I had to deal with pressure and stress arising from the realization that there was insufficient time to complete what I started. On the other hand because of this pressure I decided, with the teachers' agreement, to visit the school almost every day; two days at the infant and two days at the junior school. This frequency offered me the opportunity to be present and become familiar with the teachers, and some of the happenings that were taking place in the school quite early in the research process. Close to the end of the school year I decided to discuss the issue of time with one of the heads of the "special needs" area. I considered as a consequence of the informal environment that the teachers of the junior school had formed, the fact, that I was offered the opportunity to continue at this school for as long as I needed to be there. The third criterion according to Schatzman and Strauss (1973) and the one that I strived to accomplish from the initial phase of the study was to prepare suitable tactics for more formal negotiation and further access. One of these tactics was to be connected with a participant who would become a key informant. As Tremblay (1982) states

"There has been extensive use of the key informant technique in anthropological fieldwork but relatively few attempts have been made to spell it out, especially from the viewpoint of its planning and its place in a structured, yet flexible research design for data gathering" (p.99).

It has been reported that key informants can play a vital role as they are the source of important information and "ethnographical description of the social and cultural patterns of their group" (Tremblay 1982; p. 96). Their role is multidimensional. They can be a sponsor for a better and more formal access of the researcher and the research objectives, they can contribute to the smoothing of the research process when dragging dispositions and discouraging settings arise; they can report events not directly observed by the fieldworker obtaining the role of the "informant as the observer's observer" (Zelditch, 1982), they can have specialized information, or they can contribute to our holistic understanding of an organization's culture.

In this study, however, I was searching for a person whose formal role in the community under study was such as to expose her/him to the kind of information being sought. I was searching for a person who was able and willing as well to communicate his/her knowledge to me. However, before deciding the criteria for the selection of the informants I had decided in a flexible manner the type of information I wanted from them. From a pragmatic perspective finding a key informant was quite difficult at the infant school, and quite satisfactory at the junior school.

At both the infant and junior levels I decided to approach the heads of the "special needs" area as I was coming in contact with them more frequently compared to the other teachers. Additionally, they both had one of the many criteria of eligibility: their formal role in the setting. They were the heads of the "special needs" area and simultaneously they were working in mainstream classes alongside mainstream teachers. They were coming in contact on an every day basis with children with Down's syndrome and their parents.

However, in addition to the formal role, the informant of the junior school seemed to reveal a power derived from her personality. Her co-operative and communicative skills, her humorous manner, and sense of confidence had rendered her quite influential in the staffroom community. Initially, she became my sponsor by

introducing me to the setting and to specific individuals. She initiated discussions with other staff members about the aims of my presence. With her co-operation I got access for long periods of participant observations in classes that included students with Down's syndrome.

The relationship with the key informant of the infant school revealed different but important issues. Even though this informant held the same position as the former, the function and the nature of his role differed. It seemed that the staff of the "special needs" area in the infant school were "isolated" from the other teachers. The younger age of the students, the higher demands of their learning developments, and the educational policies at the infant level have led to a more frequent withdrawal of students with special educational needs. While in the upper school students with special educational needs were being educated for the majority of the time alongside their mainstream peers, in the infant school students with special educational needs spent almost half of their day outside mainstream classes. A consequence of this mechanism was that most of the time the staff of the infant "special needs area" met each other at the resource room either for formal discussions or for informal gatherings such as having lunch together. Thus, the informant of the infant school neither mingled a lot nor influenced discussions of mainstream teachers.

The above in conjunction to the personality of the second key informant might have been some of the reasons that the informant became my sponsor only to the staff of the "special needs" area, and indirectly was not willing to introduce me and the research to the mainstream staff. This brought complications in relation to further access to the infant staffroom and classrooms. As it was, at the initial phase only a small proportion of teachers of the infant school knew the aims of my presence in the school. If we interrelate this to teachers' lack of free time during the school day then we realize that the issue of introducing one's research interests, asking for access in classes and time for interviewing becomes a difficult task. Retrospectively, it would have been less

stressful and time-consuming if after approaching the key informant, I had held a meeting with as many teachers as possible, to introduce myself and the research interest.

Another issue that emerged from my interactions with the second informant was the "researcher's threat" caused by my presence at the setting. The key informant revealed feelings of "being threatened" by my presence. This threat derived from the key informant's perception that he, himself, and the school were under evaluation. In his effort to minimize such a threat he presented an ideal functioning of the school, and an ideal implementation process of integration. It was "obvious" that my presence was altering the key informant's environment.

Undoubtedly such behaviour, especially from a key informant can bring a lot of operational inconveniences and biases to a research process. I "was being called" to deal with these responses in the most satisfactory way for the sake of the research. I found that, time and familiarity reduced some of the initial stress and formalities incorporated in our relationship.

I got the feeling that this key informant and some other teachers had been demoralized and became more angry as a result of the nature and extent of criticism made against teachers and schools. This kind of imposition underestimate and devalue teachers as professionals. I found that teachers can contribute in an essential way to the research design and its actual implementation. Their input is significant if we consider that they, and not the researcher, were the most familiar with the topic under investigation. As Amabile & Stubbs (1982) have noted:

"An exchange of ideas and a clarification of positions can serve the function of enlightening both groups and leading them to a recognition of their common goals. . . Researchers rather than trying to change teachers who believe in the value of their informal research, acknowledge its potential importance, and at the same time, teachers although they may see no immediate benefits from formal research make the leap of faith that research results might have long range utility and grant academic researchers the freedom to continue their pursuits" (p. 20).

However, it is important to mention that during the process a third teacher obtained the role of the key informant. This relationship seemed to emerge out of building relationships during the field work. I did not expect such a "close" relationship to occur and initially I had not thought of him as being a key informant. A factor that influenced the frequency of meetings with him in informal situations within the school was our habit of both being "heavy smokers". The nature of the relationship was somehow interesting. He was the older teacher from the staff and at times his suggestions included a "protective-patronizing" dimension as, according to him, I was the youngest person among the rest of the adults in school. His respect for me stemmed from his belief that I was leading an active life "full of enquiries" in different countries. Additionally, my Greek origin seemed to promote admiration in his eyes as I was a descendant of the "great philosophers". In the smoking staffroom he had obtained a seniority status due to his age, his teaching experience and his willingness to be outspoken regarding situations that were considered problematic in the educational setting. Our discussions proved to be of great importance. We were discussing a variety of issues related not only to the topic I was interested in but to the problematics of research as well. This included a reflection of the field actions, my role as a researcher, the role of researchers in general, and the utility of research to teachers' every-day practises.

The issues that emerged from such relationships led me to the question of how my perceived and actual social role in the setting influenced research relationships. Undoubtedly in a research setting as in every other lived setting we act as social actors in which the actual or perceived characteristics that we "transmit" influence the nature of the relationships in which we are involved.

Social actors

Firstly, both I and the participants were aware that our relationship stemmed from the research. In this case there are similarities but differences as well to the roles we play throughout life. As Burgess (1982) has already suggested:

"Participant observers have to learn to take and play roles in essentially the same way as they play roles throughout life. However, in the case of taking roles in field situations, participant observers have to be able to evaluate them, to evaluate their relationships with their informants and the influence that their role performance may have on the data that they collect" (p.46).

I will add that as a participant observer I had to interpret and analyse different situations and phenomena that arose in the setting and explore or explain certain actions.

What was more difficult to be analyzed was how my obvious personal front influenced the research relationships. Some of these attributes such as ethnicity, speech, gender, age, social class and even dress directly or indirectly add their colour on the nature of the relationship and the kind of material provided/revealed by the participants. As a researcher I could not escape from the stereotyping images that participants may have had about me.

Certainly the fact that I originate from a different ethnic group influenced my perceptions and analysis of the setting as well as the participants' perceptions towards me as a person who evaluates the setting. This is the case in every research. The differentiation lies on how far the ethnicity can influence the relationships in the research process at least in the initial phases. This is one of the many factors that a pilot study can be valuable for both the researcher and the researched. The operational inconveniences caused by either real ethnic differences or stereotyped differences can be reduced through the process of adjustment. As this is a mutual relationship there should be offered time and explanation to the participants about "ethnic peculiarities" that characterize the researcher's actions or ways of thinking as well. It may causes more difficulties regarding access, acceptance and rapport or it can take longer for understanding yet it embodied an anthropological dimension for me.

I, like an anthropologist, having no previous experience of that certain nation, sought to find out what was new, different or common, strange or familiar with what I had already experienced. Further, I endeavoured to figure out and explore the reasons

beyond an action, or a phenomenon. A simple example that was striking from the first time I entered the school can partially illustrate the above. Most of the informal discussions with teachers started with a reference to the weather. At the beginning I found such an opening "natural" as a stranger was talking to another stranger. Afterwards, and when for several days most of the teachers I met in the corridor, staffroom or in the playground, again opened a discussion by a reference to the weather, or the discussion was solely surrounded the weather topic, I found myself in a quite difficult position to respond. Originating from Greece I was aware that we talk about the weather only when we want to keep someone a good distance from us. Therefore, discussions about the weather have a negative or unpleasant/unfriendly connotation for me. With that in mind I became quite stressed, perceiving the situation as a lack of good rapport. Even worse, I found it difficult to open a discussion by using such a topic. As this pressure became stronger and stronger I started asking British colleagues, and friends about this "habit". Their responses became the stimulus to my exploration and understanding of how climate and geographical conditions can have an influence on our ordinary every-day life.

I can go on enumerating a number of ethnic differences-such as talking distance, spontaneous touching, body language, expressiveness, degree and nature of extroversion-introversion, - that can be seen as an embarrassment or inconveniences but they can also raise questions about the nature of differences as well. What I found the most difficult to overcome was language. The use and meanings of words have an intrinsic power, and can influence highly the nature and the quality of interaction/communication. A whole culture is hidden beyond language. For example, it is interesting that when some jokes are translated from one to another language they are not seen as funny anymore. This may happen not because of the changing of the words but the alteration to the cultural dimension hidden through the words (i.e. approaching humour from a different perspective).

Moreover, in textbooks related to interviewing skills it has been reported that the way we, as researchers, form our questions is of a vital if not determinant importance. In formal structured interviews the questions asked have been through a fine-tooth comb. In situations such as educational settings, language can become a barrier and can influence spontaneous communication, especially when we deal with primary school children. For the first two months at the junior school I was perceived by the students as "the person with the weird accent"; for some students my syntactical/grammatical mistakes became a stimulus for jokes. The only solution for not being perceived by the students as a weird stranger and for building rapport with them was to explain the reasons for my accent and my mistakes. Knowledge is capable of reducing prejudices and fantasies.

However, being a foreigner, had some beneficial effects as well. It has been reported that learning to ask questions demands confidence, humility, interest, love and more than all of these factors a willingness to 'risk' and experience hurt and to be surprised" (Benjamin, 1939 as cited in Dunn,1991; p. 48). Both I and the participants perceived my anthropological dimension in such a way as to allow space for risking when asking questions. While participants were not surprised by the nature of my questions I was often surprised by the content of the responses. This element of surprise acted as a stimulus for further enquiry. My questions no matter how simple and basic found ground for exploration. Both teachers and children in informal conversations were willing to explain to me with details aspects of the way the school functioned.

Further, I experienced feelings of love, anger and I dare to say commitment of a high tension as, after all, my involvement with this piece of work started to become the major purpose of staying in Britain, and facing all the consequences that such a decision involved. I assume it was my commitment to it which helped me to remain and continue the study even though at times of research crisis my wish was to withdraw. With these elements at the background I did not have to construct a fake identity of being a learner

by desperately seeking not to be seen as a "university type" researcher: I was feeling and I got the impression that the participants were seeing me more as a learner than as a researcher.

In addition to the above my image as a learner was further fostered by other obvious attributes such as age and gender. As Easterday et al, (1982) highlighted: "while being young and being female represent two ascribed criteria influencing social interactions in any setting, the configuration of social relationships in a particular organizational setting further defines our opportunities and limitations as researchers" (p. 62). The author goes on by stating that every research setting is being characterized by a simple typology of sex-roles and power. She identifies three typologies: primarily male (those dominated both in power and number by men), traditional male-female (those dominated in power but not in number by men, and non-traditional male-female(those in which women occupy some positions of power). I will add a fourth typology and this is primarily female (those dominated both in number and power by women).

Before the merger of the two schools-both infant and junior- the two settings could be characterized as primarily female, and traditional male-female respectively; after the merger the school as a whole can be characterized as a traditional male-female.

It has been reported that traditional male-female settings are sometimes sexually segregated, creating difficulties for the researcher establishing rapport with all persons (Easterday et. al., 1982). This was not the case in this study as "neither sex-role separation nor any institutionalised pattern of relationships in which women are professionally, personally, and politically subject to male authority" (Easterday et al. 1982; p.65) was identified. In fact before the merger of the two schools I found it more difficult to be included in the primarily female setting of the infant school. This can be attributed to the formality which was evident in the staffroom environment and which was affecting my personal characteristic of becoming more introvert in such settings.

In relation to the dimension of age, it played a positive role in my relationships with the staff. It has been a well rooted stereotype that maturity and critical mind are developed analogically to age perhaps due to accumulation of experiences even though this is not always the case. The most obvious problem of being a young student-researcher is not being taken seriously. However, as Easterday (1982) pointed: "this problem can work to one's benefit. . . If the researcher is not taken seriously people in a setting may confide in the researcher or let her hear things because they perceive her as powerless and non-threatening (p.66). Thus, both age and gender were positive influences in forming relationships and being involve in informal discussions initiated among teachers regarding their view of educational and other processes.

However, what I had a difficulty dealing with was my everyday position within the setting. Here the notion of position is not being related to the ethical dilemma of the position of the researcher who in one or the other way constructs at least theoretically the reality of the persons who participate in the study. (For an extensive analysis of this see Dunn, 1991). It is rather related to the interference of the researcher in a highly hierarchical organized setting where the hours and duties have been apportioned among the members of the staff.

Within such hierarchical scheduled programmes, being in a class as a participant observer can be problematic, especially when some teachers either did not feel comfortable or they felt indignant from the external inrush into their territories . While some of the teachers expressed a pleasure to include another adult in their class, others expressed the wish to teach with "their doors closed" as they felt that other persons, especially researchers, interfere and interrupt or even disturb the classroom organization. I could not ignore such personal teaching styles and I found that becoming a "fly on the wall" - was extremely difficult to be realized. As Vidich (1955) pointed out:

"Whether the field-worker is totally or not at all disguised, the respondent forms an image of him and uses that image as a basis of response. Without such an image, the relationship between the field-worker and the respondent by definition does not exist" (in Hammersley, 1986; p.36).

I found it useful to observe and analyze intuitively the "teacher's mood" at the beginning of the school day. It was a strategy that I had developed during the years of being a student myself and which proved useful. Additionally, informal discussions with teachers or just listening to teachers' discussions at the staffroom were offering me the clues for teachers' preferences.

However, this does not eliminate the "unwanted feeling" that a participant observer experiences during fieldwork. Further, this feeling is one of the components of the researcher's marginalization-the outsider- that paradoxically is significant and beneficial. On one hand this unwanted feeling can be stressful for the researcher; on the other hand it can be helpful for the researcher's detachment from the setting and the individuals under study.

The recognition of this takes us naturally to another main feature that I experienced in fieldwork: the ethical integrity of attachment and detachment. As Jarvie (1982) notes:

"a curious problem arises in connection with the notion of the participant observer, a problem partly ethical and partly methodological. . . . Standard accounts of the method of participant observation require an observer to be both a stranger and a friend among the people he[sic] is studying. Yet one person cannot be a stranger and a friend at the same time: the roles are mutually exclusive." (p. 68).

Theoretically it has been argued that this dual role of outsider and insider offers the participant observer a greater opportunity of being able to participate and to reflect on the material gathered. On one hand the outsider role, while being an insider, prevents the researcher from being overidentified with the group that is being studied. On the other hand the insider role, while being an outsider, enhance the observer's understanding as he or she obtains empathy for the situations and individuals under

study. The boundaries between the outsider's and insider's role are very fluid. Thus, an identity crisis may arise caused by a clash of roles that the participant observer undertakes: the friend and the stranger (see: Jarvie, 1982).

Retrospectively, I do not feel that I have been either "a friend" or "a stranger" with the participants. Being a friend with someone includes a "personal exposition", time, emotional energy and shared personal experiences. Being a stranger means a total emotional and mental detachment. I think I stand somewhere in between combining elements of both roles.

There were times when the teachers, especially of the upper school revealed to me their frustrations, complaints, and indignations about particular students or parents or about the demands of their job. They may have done this, indeed because I was a researcher and they knew my role. However, they may have done it out of human necessity to be understood or to "talk to someone". I was caught in an ethical dilemma of being "authentic" with the risk of jeopardizing the research or just listening to what was said pretending that I was "neutral". In any case I was neither "authentic" -with regards to teachers' conversations- nor "neutral".

Further, it was not so difficult to be spontaneous when the conversations dealt with subjects I was not studying, but that was not the case in particular classroom or playground circumstances. If I had not been a researcher my involvement would have been decided without a second thought. There were times when a student with Down's Syndrome was involved in rather unpleasant situations with his/her peers. A group of other students were coming to me-as I was wandering freely in the playground-asking for my help. As one of my aims was to observe the nature of social interactions and happenings on the playground among the students with Down's syndrome and their peers my involvement would have thwarted the natural sequence of events.

If we agree that the researcher is a human being as well, there is a limit to everyone of what she allows to happen in front of her eyes without intervening. Jarvie (1982) in his article: THE PROBLEM OF ETHICAL INTEGRITY IN PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION explores the question of the relationship between taking the role of stranger and of a friend. He suggests that "the unresolved identity crisis precipitates an integrity crisis and only by allowing one role to override the other, can the two crisis be resolved" (p.68). He stated examples taken mainly from anthropological experiences and after he analyzed the ideal versus the practise in participant observation. All these were connected to the fieldworker's struggle to be honest, fair, truthful but an explorer as well. The conclusion he reached became a basic principle during the process of this study.

"The observer does himself[sic] no harm if he[sic] acts in integrity towards his[sic] society and its values as far as possible. There is no reason to think the host people will not respect him[sic] more for this than for attempting to curry favour by pretending to go along with things that in truth offend, horrify or disgust him[sic]. Deception and hypocrisy are difficult enough to defend in the name of science. If we think science is served by entering into a full and equal relationship with the subjects of study, than both human and scientific integrity require that we do not artificially exclude from those relationships. By and large anthropologists- I will add participant observers- act on this, but they do not give it due credit in their methodological discussions" (p.72).

The human and scientific integrity can eliminate the fieldworker's conflict that arises from the internal pressure to be involved and the external pressure to be detached so as not to alter the environment she is studying; in other words "to feel part of the group in his[sic] own marginal way" (Gans, 1982; p.55)

However, there is another and a quite more problematic dilemma in regard to the integrity of attachment or detachment with the different interest-groups involved in the study. An integrity that includes conflict. It is the ideological identification with the positions and the concerns of the different groups. To claim that at different times throughout the course of the entire research I did not "take sides" by identifying myself and developing empathy for different groups it would be a lie. I have worked as a

teacher and due to my professional experience at times I was prioritizing the concerns and the constraints as well as the "interests-at hand" (see Pollard, 1992) that teachers exhibit. Such a prioritization toned down my passion and idealism in regard to the students' or the parents' needs. At other times, being a student for almost twenty five years now, I could not help but identify my self with the students and the reality they have constructed within the adults' institutionalized contexts. Taking students' side made me feel anger towards educationists who try to mould and even modify students' actions and ways of thinking in the name of personal and social development.

What brought more conflict in my consciousness was my emerged ideologies about issues of disability and the way educational and other social and political apparatuses approach this issue. My involvement with disabled children and adults, and the opportunities I had to read or listen to their views increased my passion and excitement for further action. Often, however, my excitement was to impinge upon every day exclusive processes and structures.

To summarise, I was feeling attached to these groups who hold different hierarchical and social positions as well as needs and priorities that could not necessarily coincide. At the same time though I could not claim that I belong to any of these groups as my position was somehow different from theirs. It is one thing to talk and empathise with a situation and another thing to actually experience it. For a long period, and still even now, this integrity of ideological positions was not easy to reach.

However, this conflicting ideological attachment and detachment offered me the opportunity to experience the conflict that the different groups experience when they endeavour to pursue their interests. Setting this conflict in a wider perspective in my view it represented aspects of culture if we view culture as

"an ongoing political struggle around the meaning given to actions of people located within unbounded asymmetrical power relationships" (LeCompte et al., 1992; p.483).

Most of what was discussed above was related to some of the issues and complexities involved in being a participant observer in an educational setting. Additionally, the discussion was limited within the adults context. I assume these were some of the complexities in the field that made me realize that social relationships with their endemic conflicts influence the materials we obtain as researchers. Further our engagement with a variety of participants (i.e. as in this study with teachers, students, parents, disabled persons) who approach the same issue from different positions definitely have an impact on our own value system and way of thinking, which again can influence our approach towards the analysis and interpretation of the materials.

However, this presentation will be incomplete if I did not refer to aspects of my involvement with the children which whom I spent the majority of time while being in the field. What I found as a great satisfaction and challenge was to "observe" and "participate" in the children's social world. I will call this a "forgotten world" because even though there is a child in everyone of us we have far too much merged our selves within our conventional adults context forgetting at times what it is like to be a child.

A forgotten world

Being a participant observer in children's social world includes somehow different processes than the ones described above. I am an adult and that makes a big difference in being involved in a social world that I do not literally speaking belong: the world of the children. As an adult I tried to enter this world with a lot of presumptions some of which turned out to be beneficial for the formation of relationships. Firstly I did not underestimate children's ability to be sharp in their criticism. Even though they might not yet have constructed solid ideological positions they are full of emerging ideologies to which they hold on and test them under different situations. In the same way as they test their emerging ideologies I believed that they were going to "test me" in order to figure out some issues- crucial for them- that will influence any further

interaction. There were not only my basic physical characteristics that were going to affect my interactions with them but the intrinsic assumptions that they hold about adults in general.

The basic physical cues were translated in their eyes to definitions and assumptions encompassing sociological functions for both sides. But children have to "cue into the adults' world" as Davies(1982) has noted, by experiencing a contextual framework already established by adults. They rely on the adults world but in the same time they reflect, test and interpret upon the already existing structures. Their conception about me as an individual was influenced by their conception of the structures within which I was acting and the position I had. The presentation of my self and the position I had within the educational setting here are of a high importance. As Hargreaves (1972) points out:

"the concept of position and role are bound together by definition and one might use the term position-role to refer to the whole complex, the position itself and the behavioural expectations attached to it" (p. 71).

Thus I assumed, and I tried to test and qualify these assumptions, that children would endeavour to figure out some basic answers to the following questions. "Where do I stand?" What was my role? How close am I to teachers? Can I be trusted? Do I value them and their opinions? How do I show that I value them as individuals? Am I one more boring adult? How far can they manipulate me? What do I want from them? I found this particular element very important. Children try to figure out throughout their childhood what the adult-teacher, parent-wants so as to provide them with the desired answer even in cases were they do not really believe it. This is a good way to avoid any further complications with for instance, the "powerful teacher".

However, children differ from one another. Davies (1982) claims that through her involvement with children she found that being a child is more significant than belonging to a particular country, age group or social class, and that children in

Australia share their culture with children in Britain and North America. I do agree that in children's culture to be a child is significant, however, it is significant to be aware that this culture includes a variety of different histories. Children's culture consist of all these different histories that children bring into it.

It seemed unavoidable that if I wanted to understand children's definitions of situations in which disabled children were included I had to approach children's world from their own point of view. I also wanted to learn from children aspects of our society. I did not find it difficult to be included in children's activities and to create relationships with them. The way I presented myself and the way children perceived my role helped form the creation of positive and warm interactions. I explained to them that I was a student and I came from Greece to discuss and learn about issues of friendship, what children like and enjoy in their school and what they don't like. I showed them that I was interested in what they wanted to tell me. Additionally, there were a lot of characteristics that differentiated my status from the teacher's status. I found this differentiation highly important as it helped to minimize power in our relationships. Consciously I tried to minimize clues that would have been perceived as me being a "spy" by transferring information revealed by the children to the teachers.

My status as a student, my age, my involvement in their games (skipping, playing football, singing), my difficulties with the English language, my ignorance about things that children perceived as easy, my willingness to be taught by them (teaching me British games, explaining what certain words meant) all helped to establish a good relationship with most of the children. Further, a sharing of experiences was involved in our informal conversations. I was responding to their questions regarding my personal life, my experiences in Greece, my relationship with Greek children, my likes and dislikes about the British culture and so on. They seemed to be fascinated of the idea of a traveller coming from another country to listen to them. They were willing to offer me explanations about why certain things are the way they are "here in Britain". "You know we are wearing a uniform because here in England ... Do

Greek children wear uniforms?" Sometimes I was overwhelmed by information that even though was not directly relevant to my topic I was eager to learn about.

I assume that some of my personal idiosyncrasies contributed something in these relationships detaching my role from the role of the teacher. Some children wanted me to help them in the class sometimes without the teacher's notice. In these situations we were building a "conspiracy", a secret, that we were sharing and indeed I was happy to be involved in such conspiracies. However, they were also realizing that I was not always the "adequate" person to help them as I was offering different ways of completing the task than the ones demanded by the teacher. Some other children wanted to chat with me about their opinions and feelings regarding relationships with children of opposite sex, some other about the difficulties they encountered within their families.

A lot of times I was losing the sense of when I was a researcher and when I was just playing and chatting with children. However, these chats proved to be very significant. Sometimes more significant and more revealing than both the more formal individual and group discussions I had with them. They provided me with an opportunity to infill and explicate observational material that were incomplete and ambiguous. Through these chats I was "checking for accuracy by pressing points, seeking evidence, . . . playing devil's advocate, seeking contrary instances (Dean and Whyte, 1958) and identifying further clues and indicators" (In LeCompte et al., 1992; p. 372). They also became the ground for verifying the questions I was going to ask within formal group discussions. They helped to alleviate some of the formalities and tensions involved in formal discussions. Actually, I got the feeling that the formal discussions were an extension to the informal verbal encounters we had at the playground. It became a principle that I would not initiate any individual or group discussions with children that I was not familiar beforehand in informal settings.

Finally, the interactions I had with children in the playground was the stimulus for conceiving and developing the idea of using a photograph during the group

discussions I was going to have with them. As I have written at the time in my field notes:

"Today I think I found how I am going to approach the issue of friendships with disabled children. What is my major anxiety? Not to differentiate any child and especially any child with Down's syndrome. But initiating discussions with children about their interactions with Peter in a more formal setting I am afraid it will have this undesirable consequence. But today the children themselves showed me a way out of this dilemma. As I was walking and thinking about these issues I saw Peter (a child with Down's syndrome) playing alone, alongside a group of children that they were his classmates. Nichola approached me and I risked to ask: "Why Peter is playing alone?". Such a simple question initiated more than fifteen minutes response. That is a clue! We had in front of us "a picture" with children doing something. In the picture there was a child with Down's syndrome. Pictures and the formation of images. . . Pictures and the construction of identities..."

But these informal more natural contacts were not without complications even though I admit that the best part, the most revealing and the most relaxing for me was when I was informally chatting with the children, and simultaneously observing them in a playground context. Davies (1982) in an analysis of how she found the process of building a "we" relationship with the children notes:

"It was not an easy task for me to comprehend the children's perceived world. Though they were more than willing to pour out their thoughts to me . . . and to talk to me, to understand these outpourings was not as easy as one might assume. . . In fact, the difficulties I had in comprehending the children's world, at times, amounted to culture shock" (p. 17).

I do not identify myself as having a cultural shock in my efforts to build a relationship with children. However, in a lot of instances I was feeling that I was not really "listening" to what the children were telling me. Listening here is not being used with the narrow definition of the word. It means to give to the speaker my undivided attention and put aside my own preoccupations. It rather includes notions of understanding and reflecting on the information and experiences expressed by the children. Reflecting back includes feelings as well as words. Some times it was difficult, especially at the playground, to fully concentrate on what the children were telling me. Other times I found myself probing for further responses and explanations,

showing to the children that what they were telling me "was not enough" or it was not the "right response". Thus, the conversation "rapidly degenerated into the game of looking for the 'right answers'" (Davies, 1982). There were other times where I was "imposing" my understanding and my conceptions on children's words and experiences. I do not claim that I had to empty myself for absorbing and understanding what the children were saying to me. This is rather a psychotherapeutic perspective on approaching people and their experiences. Also, I am convinced that emptying myself in order to absorb the other's lived experiences is not only impossible but meaningless. However, I wanted to put aside for a while my pre-assumptions and leave space in my thinking for children's thinking and then go back and reflect on it. A process that takes a lot of time, effort and interactions.

Finally, from these informal interactions an ethical dilemma arose; one that I had not anticipated. For some children I was "theirs". That is, some children considered that I was only their "friend" so no-one else was allowed to talk, play or share things with me. "Anastasia is mine, she is my friend". In their eyes talking or sharing with someone else was a betrayal from my side. My explanations regarding my behaviour of talking and being with other children as well did not seem to be sufficient. I assume I "lost" these children in the process. A dramatic manifestation of this took place with a child who had shared with me a lot of his feelings and experiences within the school. The child was under psychiatric therapy and he was not on good terms with his father, his teacher as well as the children at school. He told me that I was no better or any different from the other "bunch of adults". I assume he verbally expressed what some other children have thought but did not have the courage to express it in front of me.

The happenings, the perceptions, and the interactions that took place in the fieldwork were so many that in order to be presented they would need a thesis themselves. Here I tried to present and analyze some of them that I think are representative of illustrating what is being included within the "data collection" process. They show that as a researcher I was neither natural nor neutral. However, the

question that now arises and confirms the above statement, is where do all the above leave the observation technique as a "method"?

It has already been reported that observation is an art that demands, intuition, imagination, an exercise of our senses, relying heavily on "seeing" and listening (Erlandson et al., 1993; LeCompte et al., 1992). Forms of observation can range from very focused to unstructured. Within the observational tradition in educational studies systematic observations have been explicitly used, analyzed and criticized. "This approach typically involves the observation of large samples of teachers and pupils by observers using a coding scheme in which activities taking place at regular points in time or in particular time intervals" (Hammersley, 1986; p.xiii). Further and as McIntyre and Macleod (1986) claims:

"By systematic observation procedures we mean those procedures in which the observer, deliberately refraining from participation in classroom activities, analyzes aspects of these activities through the use of a predetermined set of categories or signs. This analysis may take place during the observation, or may be based on selective records such as audio and video recordings, or on transcripts of classroom discourse" (p. 10).

Actually there are over 100 systematic observation coding schemes currently available, focusing on various aspects of classroom interaction (Hammersley, 1986).

However, there is another form of observation approach within which the categories are not predefined but rather they are being developed during the field work. They rely heavily on the context, and the intersubjective interpretations of both the researcher and the researched.

This is not the place for analyzing and/or critically reflecting upon these two forms (for such and analysis see: Walker and Adelman 1986; McIntyre and Macleod, 1986; Delamont and Hamilton, 1986; Hammersley, 1986). The main principal of rejecting the systemized classroom observation, as far as this study is concerned, was based on the realization that this method was divorced from its social context. My

relation to the social context in which this study took place was deemed to be necessary due to a) the complexity of the questions which arose in figuring out what constitute attitudes within a network of social relationships, b) what constitute disability and c) my unfamiliarity with the educational system that I endeavoured to explore. I needed an open ended approach that would offer the flexibility for the method to be evolved as I was evolving throughout the research course and not "once accepted then to be taken for granted" (Delamont and Hamilton, 1986; p.30). In addition to the above reasons in taking the decision of not using a prespecified and structured observational techniques I was influenced as well by Walker's and Adelman's (1986) suggestions according to which:

"if research is to enter direct study of education in action then it is essential that the methods and the techniques used do not isolate the researcher from the situation under study" (p. 8)

However, this does not mean that adopting the unstructured observational perspective was unproblematic. The major dilemma I faced was related to the selectivity of the events and persons that were going to be under observation. The feeling of being unsatisfied derived from what Dunn (1991) has already identified:

"The principles or criteria by which researchers select some situations, events and people to observe in the field but reject others can never, in my view, be satisfactorily justified" (p.71).

This dilemma was not apparent at the initial phases of the study as at the time I considered that nothing was too trivial or unimportant to make note of. Issues of selectivity was not of a concern and that was justifiable in the view that I needed time to become familiar with the setting and the people involved. Purposely, I did not want to limit the scope of observations. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) highlight:

"In the early stages of the inquiry process the observation should be less-structured in order to permit the observer to expand his or her tacit knowledge and to develop some sense of what is seminal or salient (in Erlandson et al., 1993; p. 35).

Further Agar (1986) complements the above suggestion by claiming that:

"you can't specify the questions you are going to ask when you move into the community; you don't know what the range of social types is and which ones are relevant to the topics you are interested in" (p. 70).

However, the information I was obtaining was overwhelming and I realized that it was impossible to observe, record and interpret everything that was going on in a setting. This becomes even more difficult in cases such as this where only one person encounters multidimensional tasks. Unavoidably, I went through the pressure of the desire of "being in different places and confronting different participants simultaneously". As this was impossible, and given the nature of the memory as well as the need of the existence of some categorisation which help us to make sense of the world around us I started thinking of selecting particular contexts for observation.

The main principles which informed the choices of selection were: a) issues of accessibility and b) the presence of students with Down's syndrome. Thus, I decided to observe happenings at the playground, in the corridor, in three classes with children of different ages, the staffroom, some occasions where assembly was taking place, and three events where people from the community were involved (i.e. theatrical plays, summer affairs). Finally I went along with the children on three educational trips.

Selecting and defining the broad locations in which observations were going to take place did not solve the dilemma of deciding which particular events and why were going to be under observation and analysis. Even though I was looking for some observable actions I realized that

"human actions are actively constructed on the basis of complex processes of interpretation through which people make sense of the world. These processes derive from, but also act upon, perspectives which are developed in the course of social interaction (Hammersley, 1986; p. xi).

Thus I found it necessary the focus to develop and evolve over the course of the study being encouraged by Burgess (1982) suggestion according to which:

"once a researcher have some conception of the problems that are to be studied s/he can begin to limit his/her study to particular locations" (p. 16)

From a pragmatist perspective this suggestion means that the researcher is being continuously involved in a decision making process. In essence these decisions included priorities related to the way I had conceived the issues under investigation.

As it has already been stated (Chapter 2) social relationships and interactions in everyday life are key features when examining attitudes. Translating this statement in a more operational way I wanted to explore social interactions (including the notion of friendship) between non-disabled children and teachers towards children with Down's syndrome. Thus, initially I was observing every possible action in conjunction with its meaning (ascribed to it by me or the participants) that will offer me clues to figure out and understand the disabled child's position in relation to his/her context. In order for these observations to have meaning they were connected with other observations which would indicate how broader cultural constructions were reflected in social relationships that organize and produce such cultural constructions in the first place. To analyze these interactions I had to relate them to the broader circumstances of choice and constraints within which the events occurred. In practical terms there was a need to figure out who said what , to whom in which context, why and what were the consequences of this immediate action to its antecedents. Thus the action(s) could not be divorced from its specific social, cultural and even historical context.

During the process there were times that I was feeling "the danger" of observing certain patterns or cluster of situations especially the ones that were occurring frequently. A lot of times probably mechanically I was "seeing" these certain patterns and because they were occurring frequently I was focusing on them in order to understand them. In other times I was feeling that I had reached what I used to call "the point of saturation". That means there was nothing new that I could extract from the patterns that I was observing. Thus, I was under the pressure of examining of whether or not I was ignoring the rare events that might be significantly important because they

were rare or because they might contradict with the frequently occurred patterns. Additionally, I had to remind myself on "seeing" routines and "educational rituals" from a different angle. These concerns were demonstrated in various places at the field notes.

EXTRACT FROM FIELD NOTES

"One more school day. . . The same morning routine. It is 9.00 o'clock. The children with their books open are sitting on the carpet waiting for the teacher to finish the register. . . Do I keep on seeing the commonalities, the formed patterns? Should I change the corner from where I "see" things? Am I creative? Creative enough as Robert Williams said to his students at the "Dead poets' society" when he jumped on the table in the middle of the class "from here you see things differently, you see the world from a different perspective. Come on jump on the tables and look around you from this position? What do you see? . . ." How do children feel about this routine especially the ones who seemed to have one eye at the book they hold in front of them and another eye watching the clouds out of the window"

I found that keeping field notes and reflecting on the events was highly helpful. I relied on my note taking day after day and in various points I used extracts not only to feed back on what I was doing but to stimulate further action and thinking. It helped me to "put things into perspective", and to "live again mentally this time what I experienced some hours, days or months ago". When I was in the field it helped me to go back read what I had written, figure out with what I was unsatisfied and explore reasons for my dissatisfaction. It is due to these field notes that now I can discuss issues related to field experiences and reflect on how and why I used certain approaches. There are a lot of instances where I am surprised of how many things and situations written in the field notes have been forgotten. In a way I use these notes as someone will use a picture to go back on time.

By keeping field notes and reflecting upon them while being in the field I realized that participant observations were not enough in understanding processes beyond actions. There were numerous instances where I was writing events basing their interpretations on guessing or on drawing from personal experiences.

EXTRACTS FROM FIELD NOTES

I am surprised that Tom for the sixth time rang the bell 5 minutes before proper time while teachers went to classes 5 minutes later. That was not happening when I was a student. We were trying to find so many tricks in order to ring the bell after the scheduled time or we were praying so that teachers would be late. Is this a particular idiosyncrasy of the child who rang the bell? What do the other children think about it? Have they noticed it or what? I have to discuss this with Tom and with other children at the playground

I am totally confused with this class. Personally I feel that children are just hanging around without doing a lot of work or is that what they call learning by playing? How does the teacher feel about it?

Quite interesting! This is the only class where children are sitting in rows and columns. Children are sitting in a mixed pair pattern (a boy and a girl). This probably must be one way the teacher uses for promoting cross-gendered interactions (This interpretation was far apart from the one offered by the teacher and the children)

There are a lot of "symbols" in the above extracts that are not so overt as they seem to be initially. These symbols, imbued with interpreted meanings collectively constitute a culture and as LeCompte et al., (1992) state:

"Oftentimes, symbols that seem of the merest significance to outsiders are the ones most redolent with meaning for participants. Such symbols may pose some alternative cultural significance for an observer, enabling reasonable, but false, interpretation. The observer, therefore, must "wash clean" of cultural frameworks and understandings that might be imposed on the data from outside. The task then is to capture the meanings that permeate the culture as understood by the participants" (p. 354).

Even though I was not only observing but also talking with the participants while observing I found that participant observations were insufficient to provide me insightful accounts of what I was trying to explore.

There was a need for an additional approach which would focus on how participants make sense of the events and interactions I was observing, testing or expanding my interpretations. Additionally, there was a need to allow people to speak in their own words and to use their own definitions. Thus I started being prepared for more formal discussions/ interviews. On reflection, I found that both methods were indispensable, as one source complemented the other. I was also aware from other

reading materials that the interaction of both sources-participant observation and interviews- not only enriches them both but also provides a basis for analysis that would be impossible with only one source (Erlandson et al, 1993). In conjunction to participant observations interviews offered an opportunity for a combination of how things are and how things should be or have been perceived that they are by the participants. Thus I decided to proceed with individual discussions with children, and group discussions with them using a picture as an aid for initiating conversations and individual interviews with teachers. Sampling procedures of interviewing teachers were based on randomly selecting teachers volunteered to be interviewed. From the twenty four teachers of the school nineteen were interviewed (including deputy heads, mainstream teachers, resource teachers and child care assistants).

With regards to the children there was a criterion based selection procedure again on a volunteered basis. Children had to be educated in classes which included students with Down's syndrome. Additionally, children had to be in an age range approximately between 6 up to 11 plus years old. Children younger than six years old were not included for a variety of reasons. During the initial period of the study it was found that younger children did not have accumulated experiences of being educated with children with Down's syndrome. The nature of the topic was highly sensitive and complex to be discussed with young children in conjunction to the fact that I was in a lot of circumstances unable to understand discussions provided by children of such a young age.

Finally, a hundred and three children (51 girls and 52 boys) with an age range from 5 years and 10 months up to 11 years and 6 months old participated in formal individual and group discussions.

INDIVIDUAL DISCUSSIONS WITH CHILDREN

During the initial period of the study, sociogramms were administered to two classes -an infant and a junior class- with the aim of figuring out likes and dislikes as

well as the most popular or less popular students in a class. The sociograms were administered to all students in a class situation. Children were instructed not to put their names on the papers so as not to feel constrained of expressing freely their feelings. However, each paper had a code number associated to the name of the child. A list of all the code numbers were kept by the researcher in order to identify which paper belong to whom.

Later it was decided that sociograms were going to be replaced by a half hour discussion in a face to face interaction between the student and me in a quiet class without the presence of a teacher or of any other student. This decision was followed after reflecting on and analyzing the sociograms.

From a practical perspective of using sociograms the following issues emerged: In a class of thirty students there is a wide range of strengths and weaknesses on students regarding writing and reading. Some of them were faster on completing the sociograms while some others (especially children with special educational needs) needed help both on reading the questions, understanding and/or answering them. Even though in the later cases teachers willingly helped the students, I was not satisfied with the procedure as I did not know what was the effect on the students who received help. Certainly they could not answer the questions in their own time-pace and in a relaxed manner. It is also questionable whether these students felt free to express their feelings in the presence of their teachers especially in questions indicating feelings of dislike.

Additionally, the allowance of choice for the child to participate voluntarily was another reason to avoid administering sociograms in a whole class environment. I had introduced the idea of the sociograms with the teachers' help as a non-evaluative task that supposedly had to be completed by everyone; it was one of those by "choice compulsory" activities.

Analyzing the sociograms I was intrigued by other questions that the sociograms were unable to offer me any help. I obtained a general picture with findings such as: A

was a very popular lad in the class, B seems to be socially marginalized, boys do not seem to interact with girls and vice versa or certain cliques had been created. Further the findings revealed that 3 students wanted to work with the student with Down's syndrome, 27 out of 30 did not indicate any interaction, either positive or negative towards the student with Down's syndrome.

Even though the above type of findings can be of some value initially, they do not indicate much beyond the obvious ice-berg of interactions and of friendships. It was challenging to figure out how certain perceptions are being developed, what are the main sources of such perceptions, why certain children were socially marginalized or socially popular. It was like I had a skeleton which needed to be filled with flesh. It is recognized that the above issues are highly complicated and difficult to be explored. As Hargreaves (1972) demonstrated in his effort to explain some of the mechanisms taken place in the formation of interpersonal relationships:

"The central idea is that a person's self develops in relation to the reactions of other people to that person and that he tends to react to himself as he perceives other people reacting to him. That is to say, the self system is not merely a function of a person's manipulation of the environment, but a function of the way in which a person is treated by others. The self is a social product" (p. 9).

To understand the interactional complexities and the influence of the other in constructing a self identity I needed a more open and flexible contact with the children. Thus I approached each child individually and had a discussion with him/her which functioned as a platform for the group discussions while the main aim of it was to become more familiar with each other in this particular context of "talking" in a more "formal" situation.

The discussions, were not tape-recorded, however, after the end of each discussion I was making notes about these encounters. The discussion included mainly demographic and background characteristics such as name, age, brothers and sisters,

mother's and or father's occupation, description of themselves, favourite games, things they liked at school or they did not like, and best friends from a general perspective.

I found these discussions important not only because the questions were related to establishing details from the child's background but as Davies (1982) states such questions are necessary "not only in terms of the substantive information they might *lead* to but also in terms of the interactional process whereby the children and I move into a We-relationship" (p. 39). Further in these individual discussions I was introducing to the child what I was interested in and if s/he would like to participate with his/her friends to talk about these issues extensively in a group situation.

Timing was quite important as this approach can be characterized as time-consuming. The time-factor becomes more complex if there is a lack of good rapport with teachers. I was withdrawing each child at a time and afterwards I had in mind to withdraw groups of children out of the same classes. This can cause disorganization in the class and dissatisfaction from the teacher's point of view. There was a need for continuous negotiation in which teachers' decisions were respected. There were a lot of days that I was going to school to withdraw children but at the end of the day I did not, because the teacher felt it was not appropriate as s/he had to introduce a new topic or that the child was overloaded from work that had to be completed in the class. In these cases, instead of withdrawing children I was participating in the classroom happenings helping the teacher in whatever s/he wanted me to contribute. In other cases after withdrawing a child and completing the discussion I was going back in class with the child helping him or her to catch up with the task the other children were doing while s/he was having a discussion with me. On reflection, teachers were very helpful and there was a positive negotiation and understanding from both sides.

These individual discussions with children proved to be quite important in smoothing the transition from a dual interactional situation to a more complex one such as group discussions. Even though a lot of information was revealed during individual

discussions I thought of going further and exploring the norms and the cultural assumptions included within groups. Group-discussions provide the opportunity for the expression of diverse thoughts, experiences as well as consensus, and sets of beliefs that emerge during childhood originating from a more wider social spectrum. Additionally, group discussions offered me the opportunity to enhance the validity of this study as children were not only "talking" about their interactions but they were "interacting" among each other as well. As Davies (1982) claims regarding the group discussions with children that took place during her research exploration of the social world of the children:

"But the study does not deal solely with children's talk about their experiences. Because they came into the interview in groups they brought their social world with them and that social world became an observable part of the talk. They talked to me about their interactions and they interacted with each other and with me at the same time. The interviews were, in an important sense, not separated from life as the children knew it; they were life, brought into the interview room from the classroom and the playground." (Davies, 1982; p.2).

Group discussions provided insights into group norms and behaviours and they offered an opportunity to extend individual responses by challenging or "triggering off" ideas. On reflection, group discussions were very rich on observing how social interactions take place among children within groups with tensions, differences on defining situations and experiences, emerging ideologies, conflicts and or even agreements. However, group discussions with children have their own dynamics according to the "cluster" of members that participate in each group. Also, they have their own principles which are different from the ones embodied in individual discussions and it is to these principles that I would like to turn to now.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH CHILDREN

Thirty four group discussions each comprised of three students took place. Each group discussion lasted approximately three hours with some breaks in between.

The first questions which arose from the beginning of the group discussion were related to the composition of the groups, the form of the discussions and how equalization of power within these encounters could be achieved. In turn, these issues were related to the creation of a warmth and supportive atmosphere in which children could initiate discussions regarding the way they perceive their interactions with disabled and non-disabled peers. The topic itself was wide and included other subtopics such as the way each child perceived him/herself, the way s/he conceived the notion of friendship, the sources which informed their choices and the expression of the emerging images and definitions they had about disability issues and disabled people.

It is also important to mention, here, that from the initial group discussions, I realized that disability issues for some children was a taboo. An issue that they did not wish to talk about, either because they felt that the issue per se was "inadequate" or because they were not feeling comfortable in expressing their feelings and opinions. Responses such as "we are not suppose to say these words" or "it's no good talking about these things" were not rare.

To smooth out the process the first and direct concern was the way that the group was going to be formed. From my experience of working with children I was aware that the composition of the group influence the nature of the responses that individual children reveal. While a child in one group can flourish in another group situation can feel quite introvert, shy or "inadequate". I had to choose from a variety of ways with which a group could be formed; these include members of mixed or same gender, mixed or non-mixed ability, with strong confidence and verbal skills or with mixed verbal skills. From studies based on interviews with individual teachers regarding co-operative work it was found that a variety of opinions existed in regard to the best way of forming a group (Cowie et al., 1988).

Some teachers believe that a group will function well only if it is constructed by the teacher or if it includes a "fairly dominant child". Others feel that students should

have the responsibility for choosing their working groups and of allocating tasks according to their inside knowledge of what their partners are good at. Others feel strongly that learning to work across the sexes is more important than free choice of working partners. However, other teachers expressed fears that in a mixed-gendered group traditional role models may work to the disadvantage of both boys and girls. The girls are left to do the work and are exploited and the boys do not learn to participate and collaborate. In my view, in a classroom situation the teacher has the opportunity to use a combination of all the above different types of grouping. In a research situation, however, such a combination can become problematic especially when there is only one chance to initiate formal group discussions with children.

In this study the approach was to keep the pupils in friendship groups. Teachers opinions as expressed in Cowie's et al., (1988) study were supportive of this approach. As a teacher claimed: "this approach is based on the premise that individuals within group need to have some common ground if they are to work effectively" (p. 87). According to some other teachers:

"There is no point in causing problems. . . by trying to make certain pupils work together when they are not friends or they don't get on" (p. 87)

"With experience you get to notice that . . .they work far better . . .in their own friendship group" (p. 88)

Thus, grouping children on a friendship pattern could contribute in the creation of a warmth and supportive atmosphere. A further reason which informed this choice was highly related to the nature of the topic under investigation. Friends were going to talk about issues of friendship. This type of environment felt to be as highly revealing about the social processes underlying friendship dynamics.

However, this friendly environment even though necessary was not sufficient to solve problems related to equalization of power. The experience with group discussions

revealed in most groups there was a "dominant" and a "silent" student, or a student with better articulative skills compared to the other members. There were relationships of psychological dependency among some members, of "leaders" and "followers", as well as a mixture of degrees of confidence and self esteem.

Cowie's and Rudduck's (1988) studies and suggestions about "Co-operative Group Work" proved to be valuable in my efforts to maximize opportunities for every child within the group to feel empowered to express his/her feelings and opinions. Encouraging students to contribute, using occasional summaries to re-establish the balance of the offerings of other students in the hope of increasing their self-confidence, offering thinking time with repetitions, appointing members of the group in turn including the dominant child to contribute at discussion were some of the ways used to minimize the dominance of some students and increase the contribution of some others. I did not "press" students to answer or expound upon questions when they did not feel like it. Firstly, because maybe they did not have to say anything else or because when a student was in an indirect way pressed to contribute to the discussion when s/he did not want to, the stereotypical answer offered was either "I don't know" or "the same as Peter". Further and as Davies (1982) suggests pressures alter the nature of the discussion to a game of figuring out what I wanted to hear from them.

A further question that I want to raise now is related to the nature of the discussion regarding disability issues and friendships with disabled peers. That includes the problematics of discussing with children, or trying to explore their definitions about interactions with disabled people. There were two dilemmas included in the process of initiating discussions with children. How can children provided with the opportunity express the way they understood their own realities without an adult's imposition? Secondly, to initiate discussions about their actual relationships with their peers with Down's syndrome proved to be problematic. My anxiety was that by allowing children

to talk about how they perceive their disabled peers the later could be under scrutiny with negative effects on both disabled and non-disabled peers.

Regarding the first question I realized that it was useful to orientate the discussion along broad open topics allowing them to be further constructed by the children. In other words I had in mind what Ann Lewis (1992) stated when she reflected on her experience of interviewing children:

"They (children) were prompting one another with reference to things not known to the interviewer and this enabled individual children to amplify their responses . . . Their effectiveness may reflect the absence of the shorts of features (such as highly specific questions, and questions rather than comments) which diminish the quality and quantity of children's talk in conversation with adults" (p. 415).

In practise this happened quite often during our discussions, especially when children were referring to television programmes which included disabled children, when referring to teachers and subjects, to disabled people in their neighbourhood and how they met them and so on. However, at times I was "playing the role of being ignorant" which was relatively easy due to me being Greek so as to allow space for children to expound upon their responses as the following extract shows:

Jim: (Looking at the girl with Down's syndrome presented on the picture in front of him) She looks thick.

A1: What does thick mean in English?

Jim: She doesn't know sums.

Mathew: They don't know a lot of things like Peter (a classmate with special educational needs).

Jim: Like, em, handicapped.

Mathew: Yes, handicapped that's the word.

A: Handicapped? What is this?

John: It means like (pause) is someone who needs help from people, they cannot

Mathew: They need help because they cannot speak properly, they don't know their way round. Like you know you cannot speak like good English and like we cannot speak Greek so we need help

A: Oh I see so someone like me is handicapped?

All together: Nooooooooooooo

John: No someone like Ian (a child with Down's syndrome)

Mathew: Look you cannot speak English but you are not English but Ian cannot speak English but he is English, and he cannot say things but you cannot say things because you are not English.

John: Because you are Greek and you were born Greek, you didn't speak English.

1. A - Anastasia

Jim: But there are other people who are handicapped, like they had an ac.. acs
Mathew: Accident.
Jim: Yes that's it, and they are in a wheel chair they are handicapped.
John: They were born a bit early

In other times, children were saying things that indeed I did not know. For instance,

Helen:I don't like them when they are acting "cockey".
A: What does "acting cockey" means?
Helen: They are showing off.
Marry: Like when they have their friend and tells you I don't like you now I have a new friend now, nianianiania. ..(acting and imitating).

This type of conversation demands flexibility and in my view the ability of the researcher to bring the discussion back on focus when the children got carried away on other irrelevant issues. It took me approximately more than eight group discussions to feel comfortable with doing this. These initial group discussions enabled me not only to improve my skills on asking questions and listening, they also served as a platform of working out different approaches to initiate discussions about interactions with disabled children.

I wanted an approach which would incorporate the issue of relationships with disabled peers within the wider spectrum of interpersonal relationships. A device which the children would have to reflect upon and express feelings and opinions drawn from their everyday experiences. Something that would offer a stimulus for the expression of images and definitions about disabled people, without differentiating specific children as "targets".

It has already been mentioned that the first clues came from chatting with children in the playground: to use a picture so as to strengthen the continuity of topics under discussion. I was surprised of how many issues were interrelated with this decision. I personally began to "look" at pictures from a different perspective being interested about their social functioning both outside and inside a research context. I was also surprised to figure out how many images we construct, unconsciously, through visual means. But most of all I evidenced the conflict of becoming detached/objective

from this method. I was defining the field by the very picture I decided to use as well as by the way and the context I used the picture. I realized that, from the first moment when I had in front of me some pictures and I was called to "choose" one for the research purposes. Selecting a picture encompassed my ideologies about this visual means and my position towards disabled people. This seemed to be unavoidable and to eliminate some of the effects that my subjectivity may had in the research process in the following discussion I will critically reflect on my social position towards the use of a picture as it was developed throughout the research course.

A REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS OF USING A PHOTOGRAPH AS A METHODOLOGICAL TOOL

I began to realize that if for a moment we stand back to reflect upon our everyday environment we will realize that we are living in a visual society with mass media dominating not only our reality but the images of this reality as well. Photography is one of the many visual mechanisms that project and transmit information about the world around us. Photographs have been used for different purposes in various contexts. These include personal/biographical, artistic, journalistic, historical/documentary, anthropological, military, political, legal, therapeutic, scientific and educational areas.

The analysis of the role of photography in each of the above areas raises complex issues regarding the social construction of what we perceive as natural and normal. It reveals mechanisms that lead us to the formation and internalization of "individual" needs, concepts, values, and attitudes. It includes questions of interpretation, meaning and communication. "It encompasses the social practices, institutions and norms of a culture, providing information and expression that cannot be separated from our interpretation of any image" (English, 1981; pp. 12-13).

In my effort to explore internalized norms and values with the help of a photograph as a methodological tool I became aware of the existence of a complex system of connected relationships in which we act either as passive receivers or at other times as active participants.

Moreover, I realized that in educational attitudinal research there has been surprisingly little systematic evidence of the fact that the very methodological procedures of using a photograph constitute the topic directly. For instance, a bulk of previous research has been conducted by presenting disabled and non-disabled persons either on pictures or on videotapes in order to measure children's and teachers' attitudes towards disabled peers/students (Aloia et al. 1983; Bak et al. 1986; Gottlieb 1974; Siperstein et al. 1980; 1988; Kennedy, 1982). Even though the above studies contribute to efforts to understand some factors influencing the formation of attitudes, researchers have used their methodological tools as self justified, taken for granted objective techniques which lead to the discovery of truth. No trials, no errors! No double paradoxical functions. No relationships between the images presented on pictures and videotapes and the social systems which had created and used these images. In other words, no connections between the producers and their products or the way that these connections influence both the researcher and the researched in producing interpretations. Thus, I was desperately searching for other researchers' experiences that would offer me the opportunity to share the dilemmas included in the intersubjective realities that we create by using different methodological/ideological means in approaching social issues

The very method itself, the photograph, the way I used it, the context in which I used it, and the stories by which it was accompanied raised complex issues so that, in order to come to terms with them I had to place my "technique" in a socio-historical and cultural spectrum. Thus what I am concerned with here is to share some of the theoretical and practical implications that emerged from using a photograph of a disabled person for research purposes. What follows is an attempt to get to grips with

the social function of photography, its relation to the production of images and in turn its effect on our construction of disability interpretations.

Further, the main methodological dilemmas that I faced by using a photograph are going to be presented in an analysis of a) issues concerning the selection of the photograph, b) the rationale of using a photograph as a methodological tool, and c) issues for consideration emerging from the paradoxical function of photographs in a research context. Before presenting the methodological dilemmas of using a photograph in this research context it is important to present my assumptions/perspectives of the social function of this visual communicative material.

Setting the perspective

"We do believe that photographers are already in politics. This is because the images we make carry ideological messages which, cumulatively, help to shape people's ideas values and attitudes. If we are shown enough pictures of women's bodies or packets of Daz, then we could probably conclude that society has a value for such imagery. Equally, if we don't see certain aspects of society then we could conclude that their omission (if we even notice it) is because they are of no importance. In this respect photographers cannot be anything but political (Dennell, T. and Spence, J.:The Unpolitical Photograph? in Webster, 1980; p.146)

Since the day that the camera was invented in 1839 photographs, in addition to their aesthetic value, both then and now have been used as a powerful means of non-verbal communication. They project in a persuasive manner images, ideas and information in order to influence people's attitudes or even to control their reactions towards different social phenomena. It is not coincidental that "soon after the development of the camera all types of groups ranging from the representatives of the government to business leaders sought to exploit it in deliberate endeavours to influence the attitudes and the actions of . . . viewers" (English, 1981; p.1).

The question then emerge: "What are the sources from which this technological device draws its persuasive power"? and "If photographs are so political, why the

prevailing myth is that they are apolitical"? How can we explain the paradoxes that the use of photography encompasses, according to which: Photography has no language of its own but it has been used excessively for communicative purposes. In itself the photograph cannot lie but it has been used to deceive and misinform. Compared with other means of communication it is weak in intentionality but this weakness is its greater strength (Berger; et al., 1982; pp.90-97). Any analysis of the above questions and ambiguities can be achieved only if: *a photograph can be perceived as a means of expression in a social system in which history, culture, communication and power relationships are being inextricably connected.*

Historically, and up today, one attraction towards the photograph has been the capacity of the human being to freeze and capture the time by using a technological product. As English (1981) stated:

"although a person or event faded into history, its image remained to be viewed again and again, which kept precious memories alive and prevented their unique poignancy from diminishing with the passage of time (p. 6).

Capturing the time is highly connected with memories. In turn memories are alive in references to images of the lived experience. Every story and meaning accompanying the picture encompasses the dimension of subjectivity, a dimension that is not highly recognized when related to technological devices.

However, simultaneously another source of photography's appeal has been connected with its use of scientific inquiry. From this perspective photography has been valued as an objective scientific technical tool that has been used in medicine, astronomy, physics, topography and so on. This second use of photography was highly appreciated as it produced material benefits. The overestimation of the technological scientific utility of photography can be understood in relation to the historical-ideological systems in which the photographic production was developed. English (1981) inform us that "the material benefits of applied photography were enthusiastically received because the medium at its most fundamental level was also in

perfect harmony with the dominant intellectual current of the time: Positivism" (p.10).

He goes further by explaining that the prevailing belief was that:

"the camera simply recorded reality and provided factual evidence, conforming with the positivist concern to objectify nature into a system of observable phenomena capable of empirical investigation" (p. 10).

Thus the photographic production became an apolitical, technological, objective means of transferring information. In such an ideological framework subjectivity was imparted from the uses of the tool; even when socio-political agencies started to exploit the potential of this tool. Since the images and events presented by photography were highly associated with the 'true representation of reality' the main political function of photography "would be to communicate pure information that visualized a limitless number of subjects and themes" (English, 1981; p.12). It was the establishment of this myth that helped social agencies to transmit highly cultural, subjective and political messages as objective and true. In reinforcing this myth, the photographic productions use highly sophisticated, controlled and selective mechanisms which often aim to be received with little reflection.

What has not been distinguished is the different levels of truth that photographic production include according to the context in which they have been used. Berger and Mohr (1982) in their book *ANOTHER WAY OF TELLING* offers this distinction between the three different uses of photography, consequently the different levels of the truth they reveal. They claim:

"in fact, when a photograph is used scientifically, its unquestionable evidence is an aid in coming to a conclusion: it supplies information within the conceptual framework of an investigation. It supplies a missing detail. When photographs are used in a control system, their evidence is more or less limited to establishing identity and presence. *But as soon as a photograph is used as a means of communication, the nature of lived experience is involved and then the truth becomes more complex* (p. 98 italics mine).

It is the third use of photography that raises more problematic issues since this kind of communication encompasses the notion of culture. It relies to a great extent on

learned and internalized attitudes, norms and ways of interpreting socio-political constructions. It is this cultural language and this "range of unstated cultural assumptions that intrudes and indeed makes possible the communicative exchange of a photographer with an audience" (Webster, 1980; p.18).

The images that photographs create are drawn from already existing ideological and cultural assumptions and are transferred to the audience in such a "natural" way that the viewer absorbs both the image and the ideology in an unreflective manner. The hidden ideology excludes the need for critical reflection as what is being shown is already what has been culturally accepted, and what has been culturally accepted is being confirmed by what is being shown. When photographs are used in this way their function is to perpetuate and empower the already existed status quo.

Fortunately, "agreement on the meaning of symbols is by no means shared by everyone in our culture . . . there are generally sub-cultures in existence whose particular ways of seeing influences the process of communication and creates a dissonance between communicator and audience" (Webster, 1980; p.55). So the initial intention to project a specific message does not always reach its target as viewers may interpret the appearances in different ways. For instance, while an appearance from one person may be perceived with romanticism from the other it may be perceived with cynicism.

According to the myth of the objective function of photography someone would expect that photographed events or images would not include subjective emotions. In contrast, though, presented events are fully emotionally charged. Thus a picture alone is worth more than a thousand words. In even more complicated circumstances the emotions aroused by the photographed image are in contradiction to the written story accompanying the image. For instance, a charity organization may present a poster with two children with Down's syndrome followed by the caption "THEY DO NOT NEED YOUR PITY, THEY NEED THEIR RIGHTS". However, the way that the images are

being presented may have been constructed in such a way as to arouse feelings of pity. In these circumstances the viewer receives two conflicting messages. The emotional message will overtake the written one, not only because emotions are stronger than words but because the feeling of pity for "the disabled" fits the prevalent dominant values.

The above discussion shows that using a photograph as a stimulus for initiating discussions encompasses a variety of complicated issues. The methodological approach of using a photograph is connected to an ideological approach that influences assumptions regarding the selection of the photograph, the way and the context in which we use them. In turn all of the above elements contribute to the creation of images and the construction of realities.

Images and the construction of identities

An analysis of human interaction clearly involves a consideration of the ways in which persons perceive one another. As Hargreaves (1972) argues " our behaviour to others depends not only on their objective characteristics but on our perception of these characteristics, and it is these perceptions which in part create our opinions of them and our feelings towards them." (p. 31). The following stories expressed by two children in their effort to give meaning to the picture they had in front of them illustrates the above:

...Claire is 9 years old, she is tall with blond long hair, she is beautiful, nice and clever. She is good at writing and reading, she is good at science and maths. She has lots of friends and today she went over to Sam's house to play with her...Sam is 8 years old, she cannot talk and walk properly... Her eyes are going inwards and her face is flabby. She is a bit disabled. She likes reading but she reads special books...They are both smiling because they are happy. They enjoy their friendship. Sometimes Claire helps Sam to do things. . .Sam doesn't have lots of friends and she is naughty. . .I like Claire to be my friend, she is cleverer. . .she looks brighter . . .I will invite Claire to my party. . .[Why?] Because I like her hair, I don't know I just pick Claire she is older . . .(Hellen, 8 years and 2 months old)

or

. . . Claire and Sam are sisters...They have their arms around each other. They are sitting on the settee and they are talking. Claire is 10 years old and Sam is 8...Claire has lots of friends and sometimes she stands up for Sam because Sam is disabled and some people call her names...No Sam is not disabled, my mum is disabled. Sam is handicapped. My mum has problems with her legs but Sam has problems with her brain...She was born like that...Claire is nice but sometimes she is tough because her eyes are like that and she is tall. . .She is clever, she is tall, blond and beautiful . . .I like bloodies. . .I will invite Sam to my party because she looks kind and she smiles and she helps people...If I pick Claire than Sam won't have any friends. (Peter, 8 years and 11 months old)

The stories accompanied the picture indicated that there is more than one perspective of viewing the same issue (picture) based on different or similar grounds, assumptions, values and cultural systems. Thus, as it has already been mentioned, the images that photographs create are drawn from already existing ideological and cultural assumptions creating more than one "true conceptions and presentations of reality".

"We form impressions of other people when we meet them. We do this quite quickly and often on the basis of limited information. Which "bits" of information we use and which are the most important . . .and further to what extent our impression of other people depend on our relationship to them?" (Thomas, 1978; p.2)

It is one thing to form impressions of the other in an actual encounter with him/her and another thing to create a whole biography about the other when s/he is a static image presented in a picture. That means, that pictures in relation to the observer are given life. The use of a picture in attitudinal research has a double function. On the one hand the use of a picture can enhance our understanding of how the "visual image" of a static moment becomes dynamic and active when related to interpretations offered by the receiver. Even though "we sometimes feel that the assertions a photograph makes-its statement- are so subtle and ineffable that they cannot be reduced to words" (Becker, 1979; p. 101) we do use this visual language of the picture as a stimulus in order to make our statements about the way we perceive what we see. Going further "we usually inspect. . . a photograph with an eye to answering some general questions about social arrangements or processes" (Becker, 1979; p.104)

The creation of different general questions and the way we answer them is highly connected with our familial, social and cultural environment. This is exactly what I wanted to "extract" from the children when I introduced the picture to them. I tried to explore and understand what kind of information children select from the available data- the picture - and the way(s) they interpret them. I endeavoured to figure out the cues that for different persons become outstanding towards to which they make inferences. In other words I wished to find out "what questions the picture was answering to the children" (Becker, 1979; p.101).

However, on the other hand, basing my assumptions and conclusions, solely, on the expressed opinions of the children towards a snapshot can become quite misleading. Participants are called to express opinions and feelings about someone whom they have never encountered before in their everyday life. Whatever references they are going to make are based on some dominant cultural assumptions or on hypothetical suggestions. An example may illustrate what I mean by the above statement:

An 8-year-old child expressed negative feelings towards the girl with Down's syndrome presented in the picture. She built a story in which she neglected the girl on the basis of her physical appearance. However, when we started discussing her interactions with some of her peers it was revealed that one of her best friends was a boy with Down's syndrome. Participant observations and familiarity with the children convinced me that the participant child was actually sharing activities with her peer with Down's syndrome. After discovering the same discrepancy, in other discussions, between children's opinions and feelings about the girl in the picture and their opinions and feelings about their actual peers with Down's syndrome I became more sceptical about the way and the context in which I was going to use the picture.

Firstly, the picture can be misleading if the children are asked only to offer their opinions and feelings toward the photographed girls. What is missing is vital;

expression of opinions about the children's actual everyday interactions. As Firth and Rapley (1990) have suggested, experience changes people's expectations.

In the case where children expressed opinions only towards the two strangers in the picture the cue that became significant was the physique. "A positively or negatively valued physique and appearance can mean the attribution of other personal qualities and characteristics which follow the value direction of the physical variation" (Thomas, 1978; p.2) Thus, it is at least unfair for both the participant and the individual in the picture to value and be valued respectively in an artificial/superficial way. Additionally this finding raises important issues about the selection of the picture that is going to be used as a methodological tool.

Selection of the picture

It is inevitable that the way the person is being presented will somehow influence the response of the participant, at least in the initial phase of introducing the picture to him or her. The researcher shares the responsibility of a decision; that is, in what way does the picture lead the responses.

One of the main ethical dilemmas I faced during the period I was searching for the picture I was going to use for this study was the way that a person with Down's syndrome was going to be presented to the children. Down's syndrome is a visible disability and it encompasses not only disability stereotypes but exploits cultural stereotypes of physical beauty as well. Additionally there were two technical problems that impeded the finding of the "adequate" picture. Most of the pictures I had found presented people with physical disabilities. There were very few pictures presenting children with Down's syndrome and these pictures portrayed the child in an isolated way. Things became more complicated as I had to take into consideration issues such as the age and gender of the persons in the picture and of the participant children. Retrospectively it seems to me that every bit of the picture, even things that had escaped

my observation, were significant in children's eyes, who proved to be better observers than I was.

After the pilot process with three pictures it was found that if I wanted to keep the conversation in focus, especially with younger children, the picture should not present more than two persons. Otherwise, the children being fascinated by what they see can create imaginative stories involving not the target persons of the picture but the persons that they want to involve in their stories. These stories can enhance our understanding of the children's world but may be irrelevant to the purpose of the study. In addition there are limits to the time I was been allowed to keep children out of their class and their school activities.

For these reasons the picture which proved to fulfil the demands of the study included two female individuals, sitting together, smiling and having their arms around each other.

Cook (1971) and Argyle(1975) pin-pointed that the process of forming impressions of others is a complicated affair involving static elements- the face in response, physique, clothes, hairstyles, cosmetics etc.- and dynamic aspects such as orientation, distance, posture, gesture, body movement, facial expression, gaze and directions (In Thomas, 1978; THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD DISABILITY, p.6).The picture selected for the study included both static and dynamic elements and this inclusion was one of the reasons for presenting two individuals together. The facial expressions, the distance between the two girls, the gaze were carefully selected so as to project a "dynamic interaction" in a static snapshot. The images presented brought forward a positively orientated moment. Thus, the picture was not introduced to present or to emphasize an "impairment" but an interaction between a disabled and a non-disabled person.

Moreover, the picture was contextualized as it was presented to specific groups of children. These children were experiencing an academic environment in which they were being educated with children with Down's syndrome. Certainly, the picture would have had a different impact in a different environment . These were parameters that I took into consideration both prior to the selection of the picture and after when I tried to make sense of children's responses.

Some responses could have misled me if I was not aware of what were the "symbols" of the picture that became the stimulus and with what experiences they were linked in the child's mind, influencing his/her responses. Often static elements of the picture hide social values and in children's perception are linked with functional effectiveness, intellectuality and likeability. Thus, in a lot of cases I was probing for further explanations.

For instance, one of the two girls in the picture (Claire, the non-disabled girl) was characterized by some children as "clever", "brighter" and "older" than Sam (the girl with Down's syndrome). In some cases after probing it was revealed that children based their assumptions and expectations on a symbol, the watch, that indicates knowledge of time, that is an abstract and quite complicated concept to be comprehended by children. The fact that Claire was wearing a watch meant that she knew the time, thus she was cleverer than Sam who didn't wear a watch. The age of the children was important in relation to the way they interpreted the same symbol: for younger children a watch indicated knowledge, for older children, especially females, it indicated elegance.

If further probing had not taken place I would have remained with the idea that it was the disability signs which provoked such responses, whereas it was another symbol that transmitted social messages as well. There are a lot of such cues in a picture which follow the value direction of the external appearance (see: Chapter 7). Statements such as "Claire is bright because she is tall, blonde and beautiful" or "Sam is kind because of

her eyes" are not value-free. Such cues project unique socio-psychological functions that should be taken into consideration both prior to the selection of the picture and during the discussions about the context of the picture.

Finally, the principles that lied beyond the selection of the particular method were factors that influenced the selection process of the picture and its context. The ethical principle has already been presented above while here I'll focus on the research principles.

"Since pictures often contain a wealth of information it is not surprising that more than one true thing can be said on the basis of a single image. When this happens, it only means that we are asking different questions which deserve and get different answers"
(Becker, 1979; p. 106).

Thus the picture was introduced in order to provide the opportunity to the students to ask their own questions and offer their own answers instead of only the researcher asking predetermined questions. It became more challenging for all the members of the group to explore what they had in front of them. The children had to talk about two strangers and at the end of the discussions the persons in the picture were alive in children's imagination. Moreover, as they were responding to the picture they were simultaneously revealing some of the sources from which they had obtained the information they were offering.

A further research rationale for using a picture was the exploration of the "starting point" which children perceived initial encounters with disabled children. Initial encounters between disabled people and others do not start from a neutral point. As Thomas 1978 claimed:

"the disabled person has to deal with definitions of himself and his disability previously and independently conceived by others (p. 8).

The introduction of the picture offered the opportunity for an artificial initial encounter between the participant children and the disabled girl of the picture, so as predefinitions and preconceptions about a disabled person were revealed.

As the discussion was progressing there was a transition from hypothetical-fictional interactions to more concrete daily-based social encounters. This combination - hypothetical/fictional and concrete daily based interactions- became retrospectively the source of the following issue that was under consideration.

Reflecting on the transcripts I had from children's discussions it became evident that a picture of a disabled person brings forward a more negative perspective if compared to the perspective they had about their peers with Down's syndrome. This probably is highly related to the fact that the children came in contact with the people of the picture only once. The first was the last time as well. In their reality they had the chance to come in contact with their disabled peers on a daily basis. Thus, even though initially it was the appearance which influenced their reaction towards them, afterwards, there were other characteristics which became more significant (see Chapter 7).

What was missing from the encounter with the individuals in the picture was a second or even multiple chance for "an active search for confirmatory evidence" (Hargreaves, 1972; p.33) Perceiving people and making inferences about them is a continuous process in which a lot of changes take place from our initial assumptions. If that is the case, then what we have from the participant receiver of the picture is his/her initial reactions and assumptions about the other, thus we cannot talk about a process but rather about a static initial encounter. As Hargreaves (1972) stresses regarding the way we perceive the other people:

" we are prepared to make inferences on the basis of the most slender evidence that so many of our initial inferences about other people are misleading and sometimes completely false" (p. 33)

Contextualizing and triangulating the responses was valuable for increasing my opportunities for approaching and understanding the messages children revealed.

These messages were not developed in a vacuum-free context. Children's educational environment influences the formation of their emerging ideologies and their teachers are key features on influencing this environment. Teachers' ideology regarding education and integration as manifested in their everyday practices contribute to the social complexity of the way children perceive their interactions with their disabled peers. In a lot of instances (as it is going to be analyzed in a following chapter) children expressed opinions quite similar to the ones I was listening at informal staffroom discussions. There were two cultural clothes that children were wearing in regard to integration and they were quite similar to the ones teachers hold.

Teachers' definitions of situations become more outstanding than children's definitions due to the teachers' structurally more powerful positions. Children learn what is proper, right or wrong, accepted or not accepted, not only by interacting with peers but by interacting with teachers as well.

Thus in order to understand more the messages children revealed there was a need to connect them with the messages offered by teachers. I felt it necessary to explore teachers' philosophy of integration and their interpretations, images, fears and stereotypes regarding disabled children. What teachers endeavoured to transmit to children, what they thought they were transmitting and what messages they were both consciously or unconsciously transmitting was of a great importance. With these thoughts in mind I decided to proceed in more formal semi-structured interviews with teachers.

INTERVIEWING TEACHERS

Interviews with teachers lasted from one up to two and a half hours. Teachers were interviewed when they felt that they could spare some time for this purpose. Mainly I was interviewing teachers during break times, lunch times or when there was

an activity (i.e assembly) in which the teacher's presence was not strictly speaking necessary.

I refer to the encounters I had with teachers as interviews in contrast to the discussions I had with children. That is because these encounters were more pre-specified and I was relying heavily on the questions that I had constructed during the fieldwork. The degree and nature of structure that each encounter with teachers had, depended on how the teacher was feeling in relation to the interview situation as well as how s/he was feeling towards me and my role.

The main difficulty of interviewing teachers arose from the fact that while being interviewed they were called for another duty. So the interview had to stop and be continued at another day. Sometimes teachers had informed me prior to the starting of the interview that they could not spare more than ten to fifteen minutes. So each interview with teachers was taking two up to five weeks to be completed.

This, however, turned out to be beneficial. At the beginning of each interview session, for warming up reasons I was repeating what we had discussed previously. This brief repetition offered the opportunity to "test" my understanding of what had been previously discussed. In case there were any misunderstandings teachers elaborated on their responses. In other times these repetitions functioned as a thinking time which allowed greater reflectivity on the part of the interviewee.

The respondents knew from the beginning the purpose of the interview. I explained to them that I was interested in listening to their experiences (feelings, opinions, concerns, suggestions) regarding integration. All semi-structured interviews were tape recorded. Teachers were reassured that confidentiality and anonymity was highly respected. It was explained to them that the tape-recorder was used only for technical purposes originating from the fact that it was hard to remember afterwards the variety of topics under discussion. They were also reassured that it was only I who was

going to listen to the tapes and they were free to switch off the tape recorder in case they felt of doing so. There were only two teachers who switched off the tape recorder in some phases of the interview process.

Most of the interviews were semi-structured guided by a set of issues to be explored but neither the exact wording nor the order of questions was predetermined. Some questions referred to background/demographic characteristics, some others included experiences, feelings, opinions and values as well as knowledge about different situations. Finally questions including assumptions and/or suppositions were presented for further discussion.

The discussions were not "closed" when the interview reached the end. They were left open by suggesting that : "If anything else comes to mind that you think would be important to the study please feel free to discuss it with me" or "If you feel that there are some issues that you would like to discuss them or if you think that I was supposed to look at other aspects as well please feel free to discuss them with me". This proved to be beneficial because after these formal discussions some teachers during break or lunch time expanded upon what they had told me by offering every day examples and even some others initiated discussions about the nature of the topics that we had discussed. It was also beneficial because I could go back to the respondents and talk to them if there were issues that needed further clarification.

Reflecting on teachers' responses, in my view, sixteen out of the nineteen teachers could be characterized as "good-respondents". That is, they were able and willing to reflect on the topics under discussion. In the remaining two cases the respondents seemed not to be very talkative or their responses were quite "cut and dry". In both cases the respondents were functioning as child care assistants. During staffroom discussions they had expressed frustration and disagreement as well as bewilderment about their role, and their relationships with some of the mainstream teachers as well as their payment conditions. There were a lot of power and status

relationships involved and probably these respondents did not want explicitly to talk about these issues in an interview situation.

In one of the two cases the respondent told me that she was not "the right person" to discuss issues about integration because she was not a teacher and she was involved only partially in the education of students with special educational needs. However, what puzzled me was that the same person, who was monolectic during the interview sessions, in other informal circumstances even though I was present, was strongly engaged with issues regarding integration. It was from these informal conversations that I learned of her dissatisfactions, her concerns and her suggestions. Thus her responses during the interview sessions were unexpected. Additionally, from participant observations I had noticed how much effort and energy she was putting in teaching children with special educational needs. There were a number of explanations that I could find for this stance. Unfortunately, I did not risk to ask her about it and so the interpretation given reflects my understanding of the situation. Probably she felt much more comfortable and less threatened to express her feelings in the supportive small (the smoking room) group of teachers. As Pollard (1993) highlights, "because the staffroom is a retreat, it is a place where . . . concerns are often openly expressed . . ." (p.23). In other studies there are evidence of group of people or individuals who are hostile to the interview format. As Dunn (1991) explains when she reflects on the unwillingness of some people to be interviewed:

"The hostility, or discomfort grew mostly out of lack of experience of being an interviewee and was not, for example, characteristic of those who had played key roles in the organisation . . ." (p. 63).

Whatever the reasons were this case raised my awareness of how sensitive interviewing processes can be and that familiarity with the other person or triangulation of the responses are highly important otherwise the results may be misleading. This child-care assistant had to say a lot about her experiences but preferred to express herself in more informal, everyday situations and not within structured interviewing sessions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion this chapter was devoted to an exploration of some of the happenings during "the data collection" period. It has attempted to show that the researcher has a significant socio-psychological function both in relation to the methods adopted and to the information that she collected. The decision to approach the school from an ethnographic perspective deemed to be necessary due to the recognition that a cultural anthropological stance was needed in order to make sense of what I was looking for. While initially, this stance was highly related to my different ethnic background gradually after experiencing the web of social interactions that takes place in an institutional setting it took a different meaning. In order to understand the happenings I had to be involved in one way or another in the cultural context in which this study took place. Several of the interpretations were connected with questioning different everyday interactions surrounded by social assumptions. This included my role and ideological positions. In turn and in order to avoid imposing my interpretive schemes on the participants' experiences there was a need to use the methods selected in such a way so as to allow participants to construct the topics under investigation themselves. This, however, does not mean that I was far apart from defining the field. A methodological stance implies first and foremost an ideological stance towards the social function of knowledge and interpretation of social processes. A study is being constructed, scenes are being created and described, characters are being developed through interpretations and positions are being argued and or sympathized (Dunn, 1991).

The above presentation has endeavoured to show that the researcher is neither detached nor objective interpreting these two terms as being neutral and natural. She is entering the field with fears, anxieties, uncertainties and preassumptions which are evolving or even changing throughout the process. Her stance and the complexities of the context as well as the structural constraints influence the decision-making and the nature of the study. Sharing these processes can enable us to understand that there is no

such a thing as "the ultimate truth" but a struggle to make sense of the paramount reality (see Cohen et al., 1976).

The following chapters focus on teachers' perspectives and how they construct their working reality in which children with Down's are being included. This is the reality of everyday life within an educational setting in which a collection of people endeavour not only to make sense of it but also of their relationships and tensions between themselves and this reality.

PART FOUR

Chapter 4

SETTING THE SCENE: TEACHERS AND THE CHANGING CULTURE OF SCHOOLING

Before focusing on an analysis of teachers' attitudes toward the process of integration, this chapter will begin by exploring the way teachers experienced their job. That means setting the broader educational scene as this was experienced by the teachers who participated in this study. This discussion is deemed to be important for two main reasons. This is because, firstly, "any critique of teaching or teachers must endeavour to understand the working conditions and constraints with which teachers are attempting to cope" (Barton, 1987; p.247). Calls for teachers to promote more inclusive educational practices cannot be effectively met while teachers themselves experience conflicting constraints and expectations, insecurity and a general lack of encouragement. Secondly, almost every reference to integration was linked inseparably with the wider educational context within which this process was taking place.

Of course, issues concerning teachers and teaching have a very long history in the sociology of education, probably because they are the most visible aspects of schooling. Teachers have been at the centre of a plethora of analyses and their profession has been viewed from different perspectives. It has been argued that the general standing of teaching as an occupation, in contemporary societies, features an uncertain status of the teacher. This has often been associated with a lack of specific and explicit technical modes of operating within the profession of teaching together with the complexities involved in locating teachers within a class structure (Lortie, 1975; Ginsburg et al; 1980; Hunt, 1990).

However, what differentiates teachers from other workers, is that teaching, characteristically, involves various degrees of personal involvement, ideological commitment and investment of self (see: Lortie, 1975; Woods, 1981; Woods, 1983; Woods and Pollard, 1988; Pollard; 1992). Additionally, as Jenifer Nias (1989) has argued, primary teaching is a complex and skilled activity, calling for a highly developed ability to hold in balance a multitude of demands and tensions. She argues that to "feel like a teacher" is to learn to live with dilemma, contradiction and paradox and -at its best - to experience in their resolution the creative satisfactions of the artist. Because of these complexities and contradictions as well as the personal involvement and investment of self that teaching includes it is expected that the way teachers perceive the constraints within which they have to work would have a direct effect on them as human beings and as professionals.

Pollard's (1985, 1989) use of the notion of interests-at-hand provides a starting point for identifying, analyzing and contextualizing some of the factors that influence teachers' perceptions and feelings about their job. He adopted Schutz' (1970) concept of interests-at-hand to analyze from a symbolic interactionist's point of view the element of self as it affects and is being affected by everyday educational interactions. In his analysis of the social world of primary school, he found that the most salient point was teachers' desire to control their work situation, particularly with regard to how it affected them personally. He did so by focusing in particular on four facets of this concern: those of enjoyment, workload, health and stress, and autonomy. At the end he related these concerns to the maintenance of self image.

His analysis in regard to the notion of interests-at-hand is important for understanding "how priorities are perceived as classroom processes evolve" (Woods, 1981; p. 283). These interests-at-hand will be incorporated into this discussion, but they will be considered in relation to the way they are being affected by the current political and educational directives. The material in the following discussion is derived from asking each teacher to talk about the way s/he experienced teaching, about what s/he

liked or disliked. First I will focus on the source of satisfaction and enjoyment. Before proceeding in the following discussion it must be noted that most of the following responses originated from mainstream and not support teachers or child care assistants. This happened probably because mainstream teachers' interests-at-hand were affected in a greater extent from the new political directives as they were in the forefront of implementing them and they had to deal with a wider range of responsibilities. This does not mean that support teachers were not affected by the new circumstances but rather to a lesser degree and in a different way that will be explored in a following chapter focusing on integration/inclusive education.

Satisfaction

It seemed that being in contact with children, with all its difficulties, has become "a way of life" and has formed an important part of the identity of these primary school teachers:

"Well, let me speak as a person first, rather than as a school teacher. One of the greatest benefits for me of being a school teacher is the contact with the kids .. the laughter and the exchange of attitudes help to keep me young in mind."

"My main pleasure, and my main satisfaction comes from the contact with the children...I love it still and I would hate for anything to take me away from it. I love the contact with the kids and the laugh and the fun I have with them. It still makes my job a pleasure, still being in contact with the children."

"I like working with the children. I like the classroom environment. I would not like being an administrator because I like working with them [children], seeing them develop. I enjoy their company. It has become a way of life"

This was not unexpected as teachers' conception of their role cannot exist without the complementary role of pupils. Teachers' definition of teaching included primarily, being with children, building relationships with them, pursuing personal interests and contributing to the creation and/or development of identities. This last element was mentioned by the majority of teachers:

"I like to watch children blossom. I think its lovely to take someone who cannot write, cannot read, or is perhaps struggling at that stage and gradually see them progress and really blossom. I like the way the world

is open to them. They still have a sense of wonder around... *I think it's wonderful to contribute to the process*" (my emphasis)

I like working with children ..I find *it is very satisfying seeing them develop over the year, knowing that you have contributed to their development...*You can see how much they have achieved at the end of the year and you know I particularly like this age...generally speaking, they are interested in everything that surrounds them" (my emphasis)

Contributing to the development of identities offers power, pride, satisfaction and responsibilities to the contributor who proves him/herself useful and his/her presence as being indispensable. The internal pleasure stems from the assumption that the teacher is one more member of the group called "significant others" in children's lives. Of course teachers' perception of children and the way they think about children's performance is highly significant. It can be claimed that teachers view children as "incomplete entities" which automatically offers them [teachers] power and authority over defining situations and proceeding in practices based on these conceptions:

"...A lot of them would do nothing if left to it. They'll try to do as little and get away with it, you know. but if they'll be pushed they'll do it and they'll get something out of it at the end"

Power and authority is attributed to teachers (in relation to students) as all teachers have two basic sub-roles which they cannot escape: the roles of instructor and disciplinarian. For the moment I will leave this issue as it deserves further analysis. The essential point to be made here, is that teachers obtained satisfaction (intellectual and personal) out of the enactment of these roles which offered them the opportunity to be in contact with children and to contribute to their development.

The personal fulfilment and satisfaction, derived from these roles has also been found in Nia's study (1989) in which forty-five out of the fifty teachers involved saw themselves as "teachers" and went on to describe the way in which they were able to "be themselves", "be whole and be natural" through the enactment of their role. Nias (1989) further stated that: " my interviewees expressed very high levels of satisfaction with teaching as an occupation. Most when invited to name things they did not enjoy doing found it hard to go beyond mundane chores.." (p. 89). However, as Pollard (1992) stated: "these data[in Nia's study] were collected before the recent legislation and there

are good grounds for believing that the pattern might not be repeated today-as the Education Reform Act of 1988 starts to take effect" (p. 108).

Indeed my interviewees found it very difficult to identify any other source of satisfaction. Most of them reflecting on teaching as an occupation overwhelmingly, started talking about the things they did not enjoy or found difficult to cope with. The overriding affirmation was of the personal dissatisfaction, anger and frustration about the conditions within which they had to work and it is to this point I now turn.

Sources of dissatisfaction

Teachers' first interest-at-hand, *satisfaction*, seemed to be severely undermined. The part of the job teachers found attractive and satisfying [that of being in contact with children], was negatively affected and became extremely difficult to accomplish as they faced a transformation that demanded a re-definition of their roles. The increasing bureaucratic and commercial concerns as well as the increased significance of economic priorities in the social activity of teaching attributed to teachers the role of paid bureaucratic servants who were expected to "deliver the goods". But teachers had a great difficulty in seeing themselves as bureaucrats. A role which posed conflicts on their perception and actions and brought a lot of tension and dissatisfaction:

"I was not trained to be a clerk - I was trained to teach children. I never intended to fill in papers. I never did secretarial work. Now you have to write everything down. There is so much paperwork that it detracts from the job you are supposed to do."

"It has become more difficult over the years with the things you are expected to do which aren't really concerned with teaching in the classroom.."

"Teaching to me is about working with the kids, basically, whatever form that takes, but I've found lately, since the introduction of the NC, the amount of paperwork and administration required has increased and I'm spending more and more time doing administrative tasks rather than working with kids, which I think is the main priority of the job."

This point is evidently of concern to Sir Ron Dearing who in his final report reviewing the NC and offering recommendations for its improvement states:

"We must at all costs, avoid a complex, bureaucratic process which eats into teaching time and involves a great deal of administrative effort. Decisions to be made in the light of the present survey will need to give full weight to this issue" (Dearing Report, 1994; para.9.3).

However, in the present circumstances, teachers felt that the pressure they were under within the school day was enormous. It was creating a sense that no matter how hard and how committed they were, at the end of the day they had achieved little. The demands of systematic assessment and record keeping combined with the generally conscientious approach of the majority of teachers were tending to produce unreasonable and unmanageable workloads, making the job of teaching intense, and stressful (A finding supported by Campbell's et al., 1993 study):

"I find that it is so very demanding the whole time, physically and mentally. If you are feeling under the weather or a little bit off, you cannot allow it to interfere because you cannot step back and just relax for a few minutes, which I think you could do in many other jobs. You have to be on top every time and I find it very, very difficult to have a class as large as this and to keep them meaningfully occupied the whole time. I find that I work most evenings, come early in the morning and hardly get a dinnertime and it shows: by the end of term, I think I have used all my reserves. It is a very stressful kind of job, in a way, intensive."

"...it seems you have to do so many things with in so little time"

"...but the format with the files, folders and the attainment targets that we have to get to grips with as well. I suppose that has been an extra stress for teachers but, put that along with all the preparation that we are trying to do and all the extra work with new areas of study and the new emphasis on other areas of study, it really has become quite difficult the last two or three years, a lot more pressure, a lot more stress, a lot more physical work."

Thus, in addition to the first interest, teachers' second interest-at-hand, *workload*, was negatively affected. The range of tasks expected from primary teachers has increased. They were expected to: participate in meetings for in-service training and for inter-school liaisons; to systematically administer tests, marking and systematically recording results of each child for every subject at every term; to implement an

extended, confusing and over-ambitious National Curriculum, which was continuously changing; to come in contact with parents and build relationships of partnership; and, for conscientious teachers, to plan constructive, and meaningful teaching and learning activities. They had to accomplish all the above tasks, bearing in mind that the large size of classes remained while the number of staff had not been increased. In addition, there was no non-contact time with children, meaning that teachers had to accomplish all the above in addition or in between long hours of teaching.

Under these circumstances it was not surprising that in each interview I had with teachers the words "no time" dominated their responses. Also it was no surprise every Monday, to listen to teachers' discussions within the staffroom about how dreadful and depressing this day of the week was, and every Friday to listen to how exhausting the week had been. Listening to teachers' discussions I had the feeling that teaching was becoming a quite unhealthy job. Further, taking into consideration that the majority of teachers were female (especially in the infant area where this was true of all but one) then such a masculine business model, in which work, not the family, has the prime claim on worker's time, can damage female teachers' personal and social life (Campbell et al., 1993).

The issue of workload is important in every occupation but in teaching it becomes even more important as it is further associated with questions of commitment. Teachers' priorities were in conflict with the priorities imposed by governmental agencies; the first emphasized "real-teaching" which prioritized time for planning and for being in contact with children while the latter emphasized "service-delivery" and accountability which prioritized time for assessing, recording and reporting results. This contradiction was perceived differently by different teachers and feelings towards it varied in degree and intensity. However, teachers felt unanimously that devoting time to bureaucratic activities, was influencing the quality of their job, as such activities were beginning to take over from teaching. Record-keeping was at the core of dissatisfaction. Some teachers did not oppose the principle of keeping records, this was actually viewed

as good practice and it was an activity that they were already doing it, but they felt that the reports as there were so many were not accurate:

"..we have to record what we have done. It sounds like a good idea but it's very hard to do for each individual child and for each subject. We have to make thousands and thousands and thousands of ticks in thousands and thousands of boxes that are all supposed to be accurate and, because of the size of the job, it's not accurate."

Others, had strong feelings against record-keeping as they felt confused about the nature of the particular records they were expected to keep. The confusion of assessing and recording results, and the continued changes surrounding them made teachers feel that such activities were purposeless: "a waste of valuable time that should be devoted to teaching":

"In the National Curriculum you have to...well you're supposed to keep records of things that children have done and what level they've achieved and things like that [and] they keep on bringing out different sheets that you've got to fill in, so you're filling one in for a year or something and the next year they bring out one that they think is better, you know what I mean...Everybody seems to be producing their own. So each local education authority is producing what they think is the right one and the next year somebody else will produce a different one and it just gets too much...so in a way that tends to take valuable time up that you could be putting in to teaching..."

"..all these damn records and ticking off this and that and the next thing. We have problems understanding what the hell it means anyway...it is ludicrous really"

For some teachers a factor which generated negative feelings towards the principle of record keeping was the realization that such an activity did not constitute teaching and did not represent the reality of learning:

"...the majority of her [the teacher's] work is intuitive and has nothing to do with pieces of paper, ticks, crosses and circles"

"..it [the amount of record keeping required] is monstrous. It is terrible. Far more records to keep and the trouble is you stop teaching -most of them do not mean anything. There are far more extras that have nothing to do with teaching"

".. very often I find that a lot of the paperwork is a lie anyway. because you can say, particularly with children with moderate difficulties, you can say that this child has learnt this, and for that day [the child] might have, but tomorrow they know nothing about it and your job is to repeat and repeat, again and again. The paperwork doesn't justify the ends."

Despite the above feelings and opinions teachers spent a lot of energy and time in filling in the records. It is interesting that even though they found record keeping hard to do because: "I know from the bottom of my heart that nobody's going to take any notice of it anyway" or "nobody's going to take a blind bit of notice of them" they still devoted time to figure out what was the most appropriate way of "twisting words", or of "translating reality into jargon". Probably this happened because "of their training into an occupational culture in which a high value is placed on vocational commitment" (Campbell et al., 1993; p. 23). However, as shortage of time within the school day was one of the major problems for teachers, the issue of the "presentation of the reports" was called into question. As one teacher vividly illustrates:

"...why should I have to go through all these great descriptions of the fact that I am trying to teach him how to tie his shoe laces, and fit into this modern idiosyncratic jargon instead of saying "I try to teach this kid how to tie his shoe laces"... I mean I could do it [to go through all these descriptions] if I'd got the time, the energy and the wish to do so. I could find one of their loose ambiguous descriptions and say "well that is the sort of thing I try to do", but why do I have to do it? I have better things to do with my time...My personal feeling is that there are people in education who basically just want to justify their own position "

Teachers' opposition to detailed formal record-keeping based on a continuous judgment of children's progress focused more on its technical aspects than on the social consequences that such evaluation might have on children in terms of differentiation. Even teachers who were opposed to the principle of systematic assessment and record-keeping did so on the basis of its confusion and technical impracticabilities in terms of its implementation, validity and the workload that it imposed. A possible explanation for this is that during the year that this study took place, the pace of change was such that the teachers' main concern was not the social patterns which would follow the new directives but simply the implementation of these directives. It was evident that some teachers were totally confused about the way the new system was supposed to operate: "I couldn't tell you, to be honest. They [children with special educational needs] are meant to achieve within various levels but not having actually done the assessments, I don't know. I mean I don't understand half of it, well not even ten per-cent of it". Even a

year 2 mainstream teacher who was directly involved in standardized assessment procedures of 7-year old students, and was opposed to such testing, suggested that the testing procedures would eventually be abolished:

"We have this testing now that I don't feel is doing students any good at all. Most teachers know where their children are at, and yet we have to spend all this time on administrative work, administering and working out the tests, and, to me, a lot of that is a waste of my time, which I think could be spent in a more vital way.. They are so young to be tested. I mean some of them had only five terms in school and we are already testing them...And the government places so much stress on them [tests], and the parents are getting worried. Everybody is getting uptight about them. It is something new that is coming. I think it would probably be abandoned in a few years because it is too early for them [children] to be tested, but we have to go through the process and suffer"

Teachers' loose awareness regarding issues of differentiation was a feature of Abbott's et al., (1989) study (as cited in Pollard, 1992), according to which:

"clearly, vital equal opportunities issues are raised here but early findings on teacher implementation of assessment procedures from the PACE study do not show strong awareness" (p. 114).

Pollard goes further by stating that teachers had accepted the basic principles of teacher assessment probably because such teacher-controlled formative assessment was broadly consistent with child-centred philosophy and with the application of professional judgement. Responses such as "I mean we've always kept a lot of records and done things like that with the children that we teach, 'cause you need to do that.." or "I would say that all teachers are assessing children all the time, it's part of our professional responsibility. If you do a piece of work with a child one day, whatever that work is, if they don't understand it you modify it and do it again the following day. If a child achieves success at something you then go on to the next stage. So that's part of our role and always has been and always will be, the assessment of children", were not rare. However, three teachers, in particular, even though they did not express an opposition to the principle of teacher-controlled formative assessment, seemed to have strong feelings against the newly proposed nature, purposes and consequences accompanied both the systematic and the standardized assessment procedures:

"Well I think the government by introducing the National Curriculum led parents to believe that standards weren't high. By introducing the National Curriculum and assessment at seven, eleven, fourteen and so on we would raise standards. I don't feel that's the case....To actually formalize [the assessment procedures] that make some sense but I think very little sense for children that have trouble with work [and] particularly when you then start talking about comparing results among children from school to school, that's nonsense. What I'm interested in is what each individual is achieving, where they come from and where the next stage is going to be."

"You know that a school has to report on the performance of all pupils and I think schools are trying to be manoeuvred into competitive situations with other schools. So in terms of exam performance they have things like league tables so you can compare one school with another. I can see that some schools might be reluctant to take in children with special needs because they would not reflect well in the overall score [words missing] that are going to be presented to parents and the community at large. So special needs children don't really fit in well to competitive situations because in those terms they're not going to succeed"

"I think it's [the publication of results] terrible, dreadful, irrelevant and anti-educational. It doesn't reflect the skill of the teachers because there are other factors [coming in to it, such as] the catchment area, the parental support which varies according to which part of the city you are in. So it's irrelevant and I am totally against it...I just think it's part of the political [words missing] of the current government, the Conservative government.. Competition, free market competition and they try to apply that inappropriately to the educational system."

Standardized assessment procedures and competition among schools were enforced by governmental agencies with the preassumption that such activities will "raise standards". The emerging tendency was that teachers and schools should be valued according to the published results of pupils' academic achievement and teachers were being forced to lean towards that direction. Such political ideologies about education where the emphasis was on the product rather than the process seemed to have a conflicting effect on teachers' perception about their role. A role strain arose for some teachers either because the hierarchy of obligations dictating which expectation was to be accorded priority had changed or because they had had to accomplish two roles that were not compatible: responding to children's needs by teaching according to these needs and responding to commercial/competitive needs by teaching towards the tests. It is useful to bear in mind that "as long as teachers rely on examination results as the major proof of the ability to promote learning...preaching about developing the child's

interests will have as much impact on the teacher's perspective as does a light breeze on the Tower of London" (Hargreaves, 1972;p. 148). Some teachers -especially the ones who had adopted the more flexible child-centred ideologies- found themselves within a context where a shift in defining principles of professional commitment was emerging. Lets explore this further.

Throughout the years of working with children, teachers had developed certain teaching styles which were based on their definitions of what constitutes teaching and learning and had ascribed particular meanings to the notion of "good practice". In regard to teaching styles, it seemed that all but one teacher had, throughout the years of teaching, become more informal, more flexible and, due to the accumulative experiences, they had become more relaxed and confident. They had realized that teaching is a learning process in which changes take place according to the dynamics of the school, the dynamics of the class, the social elements that children bring into learning and the societal demands and expectations. Approaches to change included trial and error, testing different methods and approaching children from different perspectives.

Some of the teachers, especially the ones with more than thirty years' experience, saw themselves going through a transition of altering their approach to teaching. They had started with fairly rigid and formal ideas about teaching but in the light of experience, they had come to the realization that teaching is very complex and includes a variety of social functions within it. These teachers, felt that under the new circumstances they had to "turn back" to the more traditional ways of teaching:

"I think when I first started teaching I felt that it was my job to [convey] to children certain bodies of information, sort of what is a fact and knowledge, rather like I'm being asked to do now for the National Curriculum. But I think, as time went on, I realized that it wasn't my job to hand over great wadges of information, ...so it [my approach] became more child-centred as time went on and now the National Curriculum is going back away from child-centred work, *which is unfortunately very depressing*"

"When I started you had to teach in a certain way. You were sitting in front and talking to them and following books. Now my approach is

much more informal and it is geared much more to the children's needs. In the past, they were grouped according to their ability, now they are much more mixed, mixed abilities, mixed ages and there's much more individual work...[but] I think they are asking us to go backwards."

The essential point of contrast was not so much on the emerging change of teaching styles but on the values underlying what was perceived as a "progressive" and what was perceived as a "traditional" way of teaching. This difference has been clearly identified by Rowland (in Bates and Rowland; 1988) who argues that to subscribe to student-centred (or to subject-centred) learning is to affirm a set of values rather than to believe that a certain technique or set of techniques are the most efficient means of learning. It is the exploration of these values that shed light on the contrast between teachers' own conception of their role and the new political conception of the teachers' role. The problem is that, like many basic concepts in the human sciences, the concept of role lacks any clear definition. However, Hargreaves (1972) notes that "role refers to prescriptions about the behaviour of a person occupying a given position, a set of guide-lines which direct the behaviour of the role incumbent or the actor. Roles consist of sets of expectations" (p. 71).

One of the basic guide-lines that tended to direct teachers' behaviour was that the social and personal elements that children bring into learning are of a high significance and thus they have to be taken into consideration in structuring learning and teaching activities. Most of them were aware that different children have different social histories that impinge upon learning. They were also aware that broader social trends are changing and that children are being affected by such trends:

"I think it's not only me who has changed but children have changed as well. They have much more knowledge, they travel a lot, they are interested more in general knowledge, they are more sophisticated. They are not more mature, they are not more grown up but they know much more. They are much more aware of the world around them, they have more stimulus from their environment, like the media.."

"All children are different, aren't they?[and] they all present different problems, and I think, looking at it from my point of view, generally speaking we have these days a different type of problem to what we had when I was first teaching. Now, family relationships are different to what they were. There are a lot of children from homes where parents have been separated or been divorced and those are presenting a whole new

range of problems that we did not have when I was first teaching. Divorce and separation were very rare, so, that I think it has created a certain amount of problems..."

"...now family units are based mainly on both parents working. There used to be a great worry about having the key and going alone back to the house. It was a great worry for society because these children were on the street and today, even though it is still happening, people are not getting worried so much about it...I don't think that it is anybody's fault. I think it is following the economic and financial pressures that this society puts but there is a lot of lack of security for these children. Maybe very young teachers may have a different opinion because people's points of view have changed but.."

Teachers' awareness of the wider social trends and of the more specific social histories accompanying individual children tended to influence the way they perceived the functions of teaching:

"..there are a lot more problems with children [the new generations of children] that are coming in [to school]. There are many more family problems, emotional problems, behavioural and social problems that make our job harder, and we have to deal with them. I mean, if you are talking about teaching children, you cannot just teach them in isolation and impart knowledge. If you are talking about developing the whole child you have to take into account all the problems [and] it is getting harder and harder to do so"

"..so when children are coming here we must devote quite a lot of time just to settle them in socially. Otherwise, you cannot really teach. They have to feel comfortable in their surrounding before you can start imparting knowledge and developing them as people"

Their perception of good practice included efforts to integrate the child's cognitive, social, personal and emotional development within the structure of teaching. This approach to education as a means of developing the "whole" child rather than just parts (i.e.intellectual aspects) was associated with the structural characteristics of working within primary education [as compared to secondary]. Within the primary context, teachers are coming into contact with children of a very young age, having full responsibility for a whole year within one class, being responsible for all subjects and for the social and personal development of children.

Thus, they argued that at the core of teaching is the ability to contextualize learning. This involves making learning interesting, which presupposes the construction of activities which will attract and involve in a meaningful way the children in their classroom. (This was of great concern as it affected not only children's

experiences of schooling but their [teachers'] interests-at-hand as it has been shown by Pollard, 1992). This, however, demanded not only being aware of children's needs but being involved in the creation of a curriculum which will be flexible enough to respond to these needs and will be appropriate under different circumstances. These ideas were vitally important to these primary school teachers and shaped their commitment and beliefs in educating children:

"..you respond in different ways to different children and you find ways. I mean, you have to think of what is best for different children. Every year your children are different; they've all got problems; they all have strengths and weaknesses. You just have to work accordingly."

"...well, our approach is very child-based. We start off with children, the interest of the children in a particular class and you build your curriculum around those interests, but now..."

"..I've learned that there are no hard and fast rules. Each child is an individual and children respond to different people and different work in different ways and I think one of the skills of being a teacher is finding out what children enjoy. Yes, I'll use that word- *enjoy*. It's not a word you often hear in education but you have to find out ways in which children enjoy working, 'cause I think if people enjoy what they're doing they will learn better...So I think there are no hard and fast rules and it's basically getting to know the child and what situation that child works best with"

"The best way to teach children is through things that they are interested in. If they are interested in something, if you can extend that, they will learn far more. Now the NC.."

A child-centred pedagogy had shaped teachers' ideological commitments, revealing an influence of the Plowden Report's ideology according to which:

"At the heart of the educational process lies the child. No advances in policy, no acquisitions of new equipment have their desired effect unless they are in harmony with the nature of the child" (Para 9).

The term "child-centred pedagogy" is quite abstract as an ideology and it can vary in the degree and nature of its implementation. Previous studies have suggested that, even though the report was influential, fully-developed child-centred practice was comparatively rare in classrooms as teachers dominated to a greater extent than envisaged by Plowden (Bennet, 1976; Galton et al; 1980 as cited in Pollard, 1992). This was explicit in one teacher's response towards the way he structured his class:

"I was trained to all these ideas of, you know, discovering for themselves and experiencing things and, you know, working at their own pace and developing their own little personalities and all this nonsense. Now that's all out of the window and I've ended up teaching them much in the way I was taught. In other words, you sit down, you get on with it, you do what you are told (laughing). And I find that they respond better to that because they are given a clearly defined outline, what they're supposed to be doing, where they're supposed to be going, what they're supposed to produce at the end rather than all this airyfairness.."

It was noted (from participant observations) that this was a teacher who differed remarkably from the rest of the teachers in his teaching styles in being much more subject-orientated, formal and traditional. However, we have to be careful when rigid dichotomies are being used (such as child-centred versus subject-centred, progressive versus traditional, formal versus informal) to reflect on teaching practices and styles in relation to effectiveness. As Hargreaves (1972) notes " 'traditional' and 'progressive' are examples of the ill-defined labels we attach to different role conceptions within the teaching profession" (p. 75). That happens because there are different role conceptions of teachers working within various segments of educational systems. Teaching styles do not match such dichotomies but operate in more complex patterns (Berlak et al., 1981). Perhaps a more useful distinction is the one offered by Wolcott (1977) between teachers and technocrats. This is a distinction between those who focus on the development of the child whether by traditional or progressive methods, and those who tend to serve dominant social groups by preparing students to be effective operatives within established systems of production. It seemed that teachers had to cope with a transformation which tended to focus more on the element of technocracy.

Even previous to the introduction of the Educational Reform Act (ERA), it was evident that teachers invariably sought to control their students, direct their activities and were also occupied with teaching the basics of language and mathematics, together with other conventional areas of knowledge and skills. (Delamont et al; 1986; Hunt, 1990; Pollard, 1992). However, under the current climate the transformation seemed to take place on "**the nature of controlling**" both the teaching and learning activity, as the following discussion indicates.

All but one teacher interviewed seemed to be influenced ideologically by the more enabling and egalitarian philosophy of child-centredness. Their definition of what constitutes "good practice" confirmed Pollard's argument according to which:

"The Plowden Report encapsulated values which were vitally important to many primary school teachers in terms of their commitment and beliefs in children - the ideas of public service, of caring and nurturing, of responsiveness to need and of support for the disadvantaged... Such ideas formed an important part of the identity and sense of "self" of many primary school teachers" (1992; p. 108).

Within this context, teachers claimed that an important part of their role was to identify and develop areas of interests around which the majority of children's work could be organized. This necessitated the integration of subjects, and space for negotiation, but, most important, flexibility within the classroom, teacher's autonomy and involvement in creating the curriculum, a broad definition of the notion of learning and the provision of adequate time. The majority of teachers identified these elements as interdependent constituents of teaching and learning in primary education as their main concern was to match the curriculum with the diversity of learning patterns that children exhibited. These elements seemed to be the practical consequences of the more general philosophy of the 60's and 70's concerning the aims of primary schooling according to which "whilst there was an acceptance that education ought to equip children for the society into which they will grow up, a school was not seen merely as a teaching shop" (Pollard, 1992; p. 106). As a consequence, "a hallmark of the effective curriculum was taken to be its flexibility and responsiveness to children's interests, a way of working which placed great faith in the professional judgement of teachers in its implementation" (Pollard, 1992; p.106). Teachers seemed to enjoy the faith shown in them even though they had to deal with a number of other parameters such as large size of classes, children with a wide range of cognitive, personal and social needs, and resource constraints.

Currently, a shift in the aims of schooling, is taking place whereby education is being associated with market forces, which demand schools to respond to industrial needs while the children's needs are being reformulated in a period of intense political and economic intervention. The educational activity is viewed as central to the development of productive efficiency and schools are in the process of becoming more effective in the development of human capital and in the production of commercially usable knowledge. According to the way a teacher viewed this situation:

" There's always a debate in education about whether we should be educating children so that they can perform well in their working life, economically, you know, teaching kids skills that they will need in their occupation and there is another group, another school of thought, which says, "No, what we should be doing is educating children to be better human beings and to be more aware of the world and more environmentally aware, more tolerant of sexual differences and racial differences and we should be bringing children up in schools to be top-quality human beings'. My philosophy is both, not one or the other. We can do both. We can educate children for their job and for life. What's wrong with having clever, technologically skilled, scientifically aware, kind, honest, tolerant people? We can have both. But I believe that the wind is blowing strongly in one direction. We're being encouraged all the time to go for the first kind of person. I think the attitude coming from the government and the people who pay for our schools is more and more that we should educate children for the economic good rather than the social good"

The emphasis on productive efficiency, as the main aim of the educational process, has had a number of consequences for teachers and teaching. One of these consequences has been the newly introduced educational centralism which is characterized by the introduction of a National Curriculum. The central attempts to standardize teaching by the introduction of the National Curriculum preceded its mechanization. As two teachers strongly put it:

"the whole point of being a teacher is to decide what the children need to do, and now the NC is telling you what they have to do, so you don't need a teacher really, you just need a robot"

"I think the teacher who doesn't enjoy her work cannot do it. If you are a teacher and you just come in and say "do this and that", you are not teaching anybody. *You have to be interested*. That's why there has been a big problem with morale in teachers"

Attempts at standardizing teaching within a primary school context had a strong impact on some teachers' feelings towards the new political directives. This might have

happened because previously, within a primary context [as opposed to a secondary context], external constraints (such as uniformity imposed by the requirements of the syllabus of an external examination) had been rare. This meant that a great variability was to be found in regard to curriculum context among different schools which was based on teachers' autonomy in the creation of the curriculum. Pollard (1992) has shown that the protection of *autonomy* was an important concern for teachers and constituted their third interest-at-hand.

In the new circumstances, teachers felt that they were losing autonomy. They now found themselves within a transformation in which the "licensed autonomy" or the "loosely regulated autonomy" (Williamson, 1981) from direct state control that they had enjoyed in the past was becoming a "tightly regulated autonomy". The legislative imposition of the National Curriculum and the framework for its delivery represented a serious curtailment of teacher autonomy. This transformation brought further dissatisfaction:

"Up until about two or three years ago, until the introduction of the national curriculum, what I particularly liked about teaching was the range and freedom of choice of the kinds of things you could do. So I particularly chose primary schools and middle schools because you were not restricted to syllabus in the same way that you are in a secondary school where you simply prepare for examinations. In a primary school there used to be much more freedom about what you did and how you did it. But now that's changed a lot because of the government's National Curriculum that has been imposed on schools so some of the things I used to enjoy about teaching have now gone out of the window, have now been removed...now there is a great pressure, pressure on your time, there is no time to, sort of, pursue personal interests with the children"

"I like working with children. You are fairly independent in what you would like to do. Well, the National Curriculum spoiled that now. That's why a lot of people have left..."

It is revealing to explore a bit further the assumptions that were used by governmental agencies in justifying such a transformation. Teachers' ideological commitment to more child-centred education was under attack, and teachers were to be blamed for declining of standards while their professional judgment was under assault from a number of conflicting criticisms. The contradictory element was that while the extent of progressivism in teaching styles can now be

seen to have been substantially exaggerated, governmental agencies claimed that progressivism was rampant (Hunt, 1990). This argument was used, in a politically exploitative manner, as the basis for centrally monitoring and controlling teachers and teaching. Paraphrasing Pollard's (1992) statement, it would not be an exaggeration to say that currently teachers find themselves facing a new political "challenge", within which one of the "hallmarks" of the effective curriculum was taken to be its rigidity, restrictiveness on both teachers' and children's interests, and a way of working which places the minimum faith in the professional judgement of teachers. Teachers were presented from different sectors of the media, as being ineffective and non-professional. One of the aims of such criticism was to demoralize, and publicly underestimate teachers and their professional judgements:

"..teachers have been de-professionalized. I think most teachers feel that the media and the government have [words missing] that we've had so much power taken away from us. We've had awful things said about us and now we have to be told what to do...so I have very strong feelings about the whole thing really"

"I think parents have very much been led to believe that teachers don't know what they are doing."

Some teachers revealed anger and frustration because of the criticism directed at them from different quarters and because of the practices imposed upon them:

"I like to be able to teach, full stop, without having additional pressures from the government, from the media, from people outside telling me how to do things, that I am not doing them right, that I ought to change it...I really feel that we are getting a lot of outsiders telling us what to do, who are not involved actually in education at our level. I really find that very hard indeed."

"What really irritates me is all this crap that we are inundated with from the Government. The NC, records, assessment, appraisal, you name it.."

For other teachers a factor generating anger towards the new imposed directives was their perception that "the people who live in these ivory towers who designed the NC they have never been into a teaching situation or they may have been but they have totally forgotten all about it because they have been divorced from teaching and they

don't understand what we are trying to do." There were a number of reasons that lead teachers to the creation of such perceptions and they are now going to be further explored.

The majority of teachers, who participated in this study, were not opposed to the principle of having a National Curriculum. Some teachers wanted a National Curriculum which would alleviate some of the difficulties included in decision-making as to *what shall be learned*, a constant concern throughout their teaching experience. They wanted guidance and a basis of reference to reflect on their own practices and make sure that they offered breadth and they secured balance:

"Personally speaking I've always found the part of the job that was most difficult was deciding what to teach and I was hoping that the National Curriculum would help me in deciding what to teach, but actually it made it many times worse"

"I think a good teacher will carry on teaching in exactly the same way as he or she always has done because children need teaching according to their own individual needs not according to a curriculum that's been imposed from above for children who haven't got special needs. But I'm sure there are teachers, and I'm probably one of them, who would have benefited from a curriculum *to the extent* that it made us think about breadth, made us sure that we were not getting too concerned with reading or with numbers or whatever, that we are making sure that we incorporate computers or technology or geography or history at a very basic level"

Two teachers welcomed the introduction of the National Curriculum either on the basis that it offered structure to learning or because they felt the need of becoming more reflective on the range of curriculum areas they were previously covering. However, their responses were not assertive especially when they associated the curriculum with the education of children with special educational needs (a topic that is going to be discussed further in a following discussion):

"Well some of the benefits are to be that it's [the NC] going to ensure that all children experience a range and a depth of curriculum areas which I suspect they weren't doing in the past, because it had been left to teachers to select what topics they were wanting to do, what they covered, what they didn't cover. I am sure there are children at the end of their school career who've not had a range of understanding, a range of knowledge. I suppose for children with special needs they too will now be exposed to a larger range of curriculum areas so that might be the case. I don't know. I think that would be a benefit ...I haven't thought

about this in depth for special needs children because I don't actually teach any in my class".

"...it's difficult to say [the benefits of the introduction of the NC] because the NC gives structure to learning...Yes children [with special educational needs] should have access to the NC, if we agree that we have to have a NC, but there's a whole lot of work that's needed to enable those children to have access to it. You can't just say "Well that's the NC, they've got access to it because they haven't unless people are prepared to restructure all these steps ..[and] it's the teachers of those children that have to put those extra steps in without really any formal help..."

From participant observations, it became evident that a lot of time, work and thought was devoted to the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers endeavoured to adjust their practices to the demands of the curriculum and vice-versa. Throughout the process, however, they faced enormous difficulties in doing so and a large number of concerns dominated their discussions within the staffroom and within the interview context. The emphasis of concerns varied from teacher to teacher and different teachers were focusing on different aspects of the curriculum. Some teachers were more concerned with the prescriptive nature of the curriculum or its technical impracticabilities associated with the pace of change and its presentation. Other teachers were more concerned with the lack of integrity among the different subjects that they had to teach:

In a primary school you tend to do, especially if they are young... you take something that is happening, let's say in autumn, so in autumn you have to cover some natural science, some ordinary science, some English, some maths, shapes, and all that will link together. Now, with the NC, each document has been done separately to all the others. I mean you can integrate them but it is much more difficult to do so. They never thought about linking it...It's not like secondary schools where you have to teach geography and you teach geography only, where we have to link work together"

This concern was expressed by a number of teachers who thought that both the content and the form of the National Curriculum had little bearing on the "primary culture" and the characteristics of learning when this is associated with children of a young age. They found it overwhelming, over-ambitious and hard to match with children's requirements. Some teachers, especially in the infant section, expressed the view that the curriculum was either "irrelevant to the primary school context" or difficult to be implemented:

"I think that the primary level has hardly been considered. I think that a lot of the NC has been arranged from secondary aspects and it has just been pushed down to what they considered to be a primary level. We do feel that a lot of the NC... I mean, they thought "Oh what should they know when they will get to 16?". They have done it and then they moved backwards from that. So they think "OK, at the primary level, they should be doing this, this and this and, really, I think it is of no relevance to children... Like in Arts they [children] have to study other painters and recognize other painters by the time they are at seven. It seems hopelessly wrong to me. Lots of children in seven just draw a face and things like that and to have to recognize somebody's masterpiece...oh I think it's so ridiculous.."

"Sometimes, the areas of the curriculum that I think pose the most problems are things like, Arts, P.E [physical education] and technology. The way it is written down, it's very difficult to interpret and to find something appropriate for the children to do"

From participant observations in three classes, it was noted that teachers did not teach Art as a separate subject. Art-activities were integrated in a number of broader tasks associated with several subject areas (such as geography, history, natural science), with social events, or for assembly presentations. Art was integrated with different seasons of the year, with different celebrations, different out-door activities and so on. However, the pressure of the NC, with its subject-orientation, emphasis on science and technology, the vast amount of information that teachers were expected to transmit to children and the pressure of time tended to force teachers to spend less time on activities related to Art or in incorporating art within some subject areas. (A finding supported by Osborn & Pollard (1990) who found that teachers were attempting to increase significantly the classroom time spent on Science and Technology whilst less curriculum time was reported as having been spent on the Arts). There is a possibility that some teachers were more concerned with technology as they became aware of their weakness in this area:

"Some areas of the curriculum are easier to implement than others. One thing is that teachers are not so experienced in some areas, lets say Technology, as perhaps we are at, lets say Maths and English. So, in some areas, we ourselves learning which in that situation you're always finding that perhaps you are lacking in confidence yourself; so it is hard to put it over to the children"

"I find some subjects more difficult to teach than some others like, for example Technology."

Additionally, teachers greater concern on teaching Science and Technology at the expense of other subjects such as Art reflects the influence of the new political ideologies which prioritize some subjects as superior than some others on the basis of their applied economic productivity. Further the strict rationalism included within the suggestions offered by the NC can be used for explaining the difficulties teachers encountered in their efforts to teach this subject. This rationalism can be used also to explain a number of other difficulties teachers encountered. First teachers had to deal with suggestions that had little relevance to the circumstances in which they work. The following quotations indicate the difficulties derived from imposed suggestions that give emphasis in developing parts of the child and not his/her whole personality which includes his/her social and personal development:

"...I mean where does it say in the National Curriculum about not thumping every time you pass somebody or not calling names, not having a battle about whose pencil it is? The teacher's job ...they should teach how to blow their noses and how to tie their shoe laces, put their clothes on, you know all these are part of education."

"There is certain work that must be done, that must be covered. Now we are halfway through and I think we managed to keep up, luckily. We managed to get some of this extra work done but I know I have Christmas coming up. We have Christmas plays and cards to make and decorate classrooms. Well, it has not been considered, in the NC, all the work that has to be done before Christmas."

In addition to the above the curricular requirements which reinforced a restrictive notion of learning, including the transmission of vast amount of information, a restrictive image of the ideal child and lacked flexibility bore little resemblance to the primary teacher's view of learning:

"..you cannot do things...you cannot repeat things, and going over and over. You need to do this with kids; but you don't have time to get back. Their [creators of the NC] idea is that once you've covered it, it's there for good. Well it isn't. It needs reinforcing. It needs going over and over and over but you just don't have the time to do that. That short of thing irritates me. There are, in every class, two or three [children] who are able more or less to keep up with everything as the curriculum sets it out, but that leaves all the rest to often hang in a complete flounder because you just don't have time to do it in the depth that they need to have it

done. So in the end, you gonna end up with er...them knowing less because you can't cover it in a sufficient depth... It is ludicrous.

"Like, for instance, Peter. He cannot fit in anything like that. He cannot fit into the class. We cannot teach him like that. He needs flexibility within the class and the NC does not allow much flexibility. Children like Peter, they need to develop ideas that they've come up with. So if Peter is interested in something and he needs to work in the work he's interested in, now, if you work on that he will learn. If he had to follow the NC he would have to do so much work each day that most of it he will just turn him off."

The prespecified framework of the National Curriculum which sets out the order in which children will learn has seriously failed to take into consideration the large sizes of the classes and the diversity and difference in the learning patterns that children exhibit (an element that, as we are going to see in a following chapter, greatly affects inclusive practices). Matching the curriculum with the children's diversity, which for the teachers of this study was the core aspect of teaching, had become even more difficult to accomplish:

"The biggest difficulty is matching the work to the individual's needs, the individual's abilities, because we always teach mixed ability classes so you get a big spectrum of ability. It is important to produce work that is suitable and matches the abilities for this range of children and that's the biggest single challenge; 'cause if you don't get it right you get all types of problems and anxieties from the children and all the rest of it..."

This difficulty is of a high concern to teachers because keeping their classes in order by occupying children in a meaningful way reflects their ability of "being good at the job". This is their

"best defence against criticisms which could adversely affect teacher autonomy...Being good at the job is also a means of satisfying other concerns such as obtaining enjoyment and managing stress and workload, and it also relates to gaining the respect of colleagues" (Pollard, 1992; p. 28).

In other words their performance in class influences their self- and professional-image and thus it is expected to be negatively orientated to whatever constraints will endanger their image of "being a competent teacher".

In summary, the above discussion focused on the way teachers perceived the conditions within which they had been called to work. This included the way they felt

that their interests-at-hand (such as: satisfaction, workload, and autonomy) had been affected by the new introduced political directives. The overriding affirmation revealed by teachers was personal dissatisfaction, frustration and anger about the conditions within which they had to work. For the majority of teachers, teaching did not include the same degree of enjoyment and fulfilment that they had experienced in the past, as they felt called to fulfil different and conflicting expectations. Maintaining their principles, values and standards they believed in had become a complicated process, which included tensions and an extreme amount of physical and mental fatigue. They found themselves within a context where a shift in defining principles of professional commitment was emerging. They felt called to become the service deliverers of a Curriculum that had little relevance to the practicalities of the circumstances in which they worked and bore little resemblance to their views of what constitutes teaching and learning.

The recent economic and political changes were tending to have a negative effect upon teachers' morale and motivation. These two elements, are highly significant under the current circumstances in which teachers' felt that they had to intensify their efforts so as to preserve a balance between the demands of political and market forces and the demands of children; demands that are difficult to reconcile.

The teachers interviewed, however, despite their expressed dissatisfaction, were still in the profession and it can be assumed that to secure continuity and survival their approach to teaching will carry a degree of compliance so as to adapt to the new circumstances, even though the type, mode and nature of that compliance will vary from teacher to teacher. The teachers' quality of being "adaptable" and the ability to be "sensitive" to the environment within which they have to work help teachers to accommodate and retain a sense of professional identity. In turn, the formation of teachers' professional identities is being influenced from the different kinds of cultures of teaching. These teaching cultures "comprise beliefs, values, habits and assumed ways of doing things among communities of teachers who have to deal with similar demands

and constraints over many years. Cultures of teaching help give meaning, support and identity to teachers and their work" (Hargreaves, 1994; p.164. For an extensive analysis of the cultures of teaching see Hargreaves, 1994).

The educational activity can be seen as a dialectical interplay between structural/situational constraints and teachers' ideological commitments. This interplay is similar to what has been called the overlap between the teacher and the educational contexts. Within the teacher context, the emphasis is on the teacher's routine, the daily contact with pupils within the classroom and all the practical activities that surround it. This is the highly pragmatic world, the world of "is" rather than "ought to be" (Keddie, 1971). It includes teachers perspectives on what is or, is not possible in given circumstances, and teachers strategies and techniques for achieving goals (Pollard, 1992). This context influence and is being influenced by the educational context which is represented by commitment, idealism and a continuous effort to implement equality of educational provision (Pollard, 1992). The educational context includes paradigmatic strategic orientations, and views about "how things would be in an ideal world". Thus, these two contexts are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they overlap, and one affects the other in the teachers' everyday world. The assumption underlying such a view is that individuals are not "taken over" by cultures. They can both contribute towards and be influenced by them in a dialectical process (Woods, 1983). In this sense teachers can become policy-makers within their environment, a role that attributes to them power and responsibilities. There has been a growing realization that "the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement...Teachers don't merely deliver the curriculum. They develop, define it and interpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get" (Hargreaves, 1994; p. ix).

In view of the above, I will explore this dialectical interplay focusing on the process of integration with a specific reference to children with Down's syndrome. However, before embarking upon capturing and presenting teachers' attitudes towards

the integration of students with Down's Syndrome, some clarifications are necessary. A main theoretical (methodological) principle underlying the majority of conventional attitudinal studies is the importance of the specificity of the attitude referent group. This has been highlighted by Gottlieb's et al., (1976) argument according to which:

"...people who are mentally retarded(sic) vary greatly on any number of characteristics that could influence attitudes towards them. A valid appraisal of attitudes towards mentally retarded (sic) persons, therefore is dependent on a precise description of the population that is the focus of the attitude expressions. Accordingly, a recent review of the literature indicated that a primary reason why the attitude data cannot be easily synthesized in a meaningful fashion has been the failure of investigators to describe precisely the referent about whom subjects are asked to express their attitudes...In circumstances where no descriptive information is provided, it is difficult to determine subjects' conceptions of a mentally retarded (sic) person; consequently their attitude expressions are difficult to interpret" (p. 376)

This is not the principle underpinning the reference of this study to children with Down's Syndrome because such a research/ideological principle perpetuates a number of disablist assumptions. Firstly, it implies that the impairment of the individual is the ultimate source for generating attitudes, with little reference to the social contexts within which attitudes have been developed in the first place. Thus it decontextualizes attitudes as being apolitical, asocial and ahistorical (see Chapter Two). Secondly, by using the disabled person as the main reference point in exploring attitudes we focus, unreflectingly, on only one side of the disability relationship. This is towards the disabled person with little reference to the behaviour, roles, and perceptions of "the others" as representatives of a socially determined disability relationship (Finkelstein, 1980). Thirdly, such a principle perpetuates the dominant tendency to explore the attitudes that people hold towards the individual who has an impairment with little or no reference to the social restrictions which are imposed on the individual. Finally, by implying that the problem resides within disabled children/people we promote a certain conceptualization of the problem which hinders attempts towards the creation of an alternative way of both thinking about and acting on issues of disability.

As Finkelstein (1980) argues, "Whether one sees attitudes as being associated with something in the individual (the impairment) or with the social situation has a profound influence on how one interprets the results of research" (p. 6). The starting point of analyzing and interpreting the material gathered from the fieldwork was the exploration of the practices and ideologies that hindered or promoted the creation of inclusive education. From this perspective, teachers' expressed attitudes towards the integration process served as a means of identifying institutionalized ideologies and practices within which certain attitudes have been developed. Thus, the expression of attitudes was perceived as a social phenomenon, a "communicative act", which is context-specific and culture-bounded (see Chapter Two). Contextualizing attitudes within the social world of the people under investigation necessitates bearing in mind that:

"Researchers should clarify why they consider a response to be positive or negative, and... they will not be able to do this unless they discover why the person responded in a particular way. . ." (Quicke, 1990, pp. 105-106)

In efforts to clarify why teachers were responding in certain ways, it became evident that discussions about teachers' meanings and feelings towards integration could not be separated from their understanding of educational policies, the practices of schools as institutions and their attitudes towards the notion of difference/disability.

Within this context the rationale of using children with Down's Syndrome as a referent group initially was fundamentally created out of the complexity and the nature of stereotypes embraced in expressed attitudes towards these children (see: Rynders et al., 1980; Booth & Statham, 1982; Booth, 1985; Morss, 1985; Buckley, 1985; Stratford, 1985). As Tony Booth (1985) argues:

"People with Down's Syndrome are subjected to two sets of prejudices; those concerned with their distinctive appearance and those about their relative incompetence. Theories of racial degeneration have been linked to the perception by some that they look 'Mongolian'. They have been barred from schools because they look 'handicapped'. They have all been viewed as severely mentally handicapped despite a wide spread of abilities, and insofar as they

have been regarded as mentally handicapped, they have been prey to all the prejudices that attach to that label too" (p. 3)

However, throughout the fieldwork and during the process of analyzing teacher's responses, it was evident that integration is a complex notion regardless of who was to be integrated. The complexities involved within integrational practices and ideologies often influenced teachers' attitudes towards this process regardless of whether they were referring to a child with Down's Syndrome or to a child with dyslexia. Some common patterns, concerns and principles applied to the integration of all the children with special educational needs educated at the Yorkshire school. For this reason, the discussion at the following chapter unfolds mainly around the issue of teachers' attitudes towards integration while, whenever necessary, there is a particular reference to children with Down's Syndrome.

Chapter 5

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE INTEGRATION PROCESS (WITH REFERENCE TO STUDENTS WITH DOWN'S SYNDROME)

DEFINING INTEGRATION

To begin with I will focus on the way teachers define the notion of integration. This will offer us a starting point for discussion as definitions allow for the creation of a dialogue and offer an ideological framework within which persons make sense of cultural, social and political phenomena (see: Chapter One).

The Yorkshire school has approximately, four hundred pupils. For the last seven years an integration policy had been implemented by the creation of an 'Integrated Resource' which catered for forty students with special educational needs. According to the school's official prospectus:

"The school has an integrated resource for children with moderate learning difficulties. Children come into the Resource on a Statement of Special Needs. The aim is to enable children to live and work with children from mainstream school. They will be found therefore, in any classroom working with the class teacher supported by a member of the Resource staff or one-to-one with the Resource Staff or in a small withdrawal group. Occasionally children are totally unsupported in the mainstream classroom. Whole school involvement, teaching and staff (teaching and non-teaching) are part of an educational process whereby the acceptance of these children in school leads to their acceptance in society as a whole"

Integration, officially, was perceived as an educational process which will enable children with moderate learning difficulties to live and work with their peers. The stated ultimate aim was integration reaching to the wider community. Teacher's responses, however, suggested that integration both as an idea and as a practice did not share a common meaning. It rather meant different things to different teachers and often it meant different things to the same teacher:

"To me integration means many different things and it means different things for different children, so I don't really think we can have a blanket rule and say "this is integration at the Yorkshire School"

In the main, teachers offered a definition of integration by referring to "special needs children" as belonging in a different pedagogical category which had to be incorporated within ordinary classrooms adding as a prerequisite that the child could cope with the established educational routines. From this perspective integration was connected with its applied form within an educational environment without, however, being defined in terms of pedagogy which will involve changing teaching practices to make curriculum content more accessible to all children.

"I like to see them [children with special educational needs] in the class working with other children at their level, doing basically what the mainstream students are doing as much as possible. Now really that would mean that they weren't on a group of their own, that they would be actually sitting with mainstream children doing similar work. But I find that by this age the gap is too wide for them to be integrated for most academic situations."

"..the children with special needs working along-side their mainstream peers, but obviously having their own teacher to work with...I think that some children can be O.K in this school provided that they can cope with the type of integration we offer"

"[The way I understand integration is] that the children with special needs are fitted in with those who are normal, and are able to mix and work with mainstream students side by side. There are certain times that you have to withdraw them for certain things, but it's nice to see them in a classroom. It's just acceptable."

"I think it[integration] would be a model where the children with learning difficulties would work in the classroom with mainstream children in every situation that is appropriate for them to make progress"

"I don't think we can always say "This is the correct model, this is the model we will use for integration". What people have got to be able to do is look at the children that they've got and think "Well, at what level could we integrate these children and what's the best way of doing it?" It might be that integration means that when a child is older there is a greater degree of withdrawal. It depends very much on the child and on what the school can offer"

For other teachers integration had a wider definition and it was associated not only with the microcosmos of the primary school but with the macrocosmos of the wider society. The following responses reveal how complicated the idea of integration was especially, when continuity did not exist. Further as the following examples

illustrate "for teachers, what goes on inside the classroom is closely related to what goes on outside it" (Hargreaves, 1994; p. ix). This relationship and its impact on integration, as well as other educational processes, takes different forms in different historical contexts. However, it is particularly acute in a period influenced by market ideologies and government interventions.

"Real integration should take place with children in the neighbourhood schools, - to go to their local schools, so that the child plays with children in their road, goes to school with them, is educated along side them, goes home at the end of the day. Certainly with our children they have a dual role, they have different friends out of school than in school."

"Children are being integrated at a younger age and then it breaks down at secondary level. I don't think it should break down. I think the danger is that people won't adapt, the kids have got to fit the system, not the system fit the kids"

"Integration? Well, I would like to know what happens to, how can I say, our kids when they leave secondary school. Because at one time there used to be placements across the city for them to go for work experience and things like that. Now I believe they are closed down and I just don't know what happens to them. So it seems to me a lot of hard work that has been put in during the school years is suddenly just dropped and finished with and the kids are then out in a wider society and they've got no aid, no support and they are very much left to their own devices... As far as I know I think I've taught probably, perhaps thirty five kids and as far as I know only two have got jobs, which is worrying isn't it?"

Other teachers, influenced by the constraints within which they had to implement integration, were quite suspicious about "the real motives" underlying the movement of integration as this was presented by governmental agencies. The following responses illustrate that stated policies of promoting integration were perceived by some teachers as rhetorical artifices:

"It was presented to us that these children would gain from being integrated with the mainstream children, both socially and academically....It was claimed to be the answer to all sorts of problems, the way forward and all that. But the cynical side of me says that it is just a method of cutting costs. You know it is cheaper to put them all into one building.....If it's been done genuinely to try and integrate them into society as a whole, then it is a good thing and you know it should continue. But I suspect the motives of the people in power are different than the ones they claim"

"I think if I am honest, integration to some degree is special education on the cheap"

"I think that it [integration] will eventually end...Now the trend is to get more and more children in, and we are always under threat because of financial pressures and I think all the time being pressured to increase the number of children we have and I know they'd like to reduce the amount of teachers that we get to deal with these children...You get even more children to a school like this and then what are you doing? You put them in a separate room? ...If Andrew [support teacher] was looking after these children in a separate room he'll probably look after eight or nine, so you can get more children into a normal school and call it integration but the only time they are going to be integrated would be at play time. So they can close all these special schools down and put the children in ordinary schools but, without back-up, you can only put them in their own group - you know, put more kids in which is cheaper"

Teachers' visions of integration (that could be implemented in an ideal world) were interfering with "realities" which were constraining not only from a materialistic but from an ideological point of view as well. Both of these latter words are important and their meaning is going to be explored throughout this discussion.

At this initial point of the discussion it is important to mention that teachers' attitude towards and understanding of integration was anything but clear-cut. The material obtained from the fieldwork was very rich in meaning and insight but at the same time extremely conflicting and confusing. In dealing with the tensions and conflicts I encountered in making sense of teachers' responses, I was theoretically helped by Apple's (1993) analysis with regard to the politics of common-sense in which he explains how elements of ideologies of groups in dominance become truly popular. A central point of Apple's (1993) work is the importance of connecting our analysis with the real life-experiences of the people under investigation. This proposition was felt to be crucial in understanding teachers' conflicts and confusion surrounding their perceptions and actions towards inclusive practices. This is especially so, in an era where ideas of civil equality are shaped by market forces.

According to governmental claims the introduction of the National Curriculum, and the directives by which it was followed, promote the entitlement of children with special educational needs to a broad and balanced curriculum. However, to assume that the above stated claims reflect the realized social and academic curricula for children with special educational needs is to ignore that "policies tend to present directions

which are couched in unproblematical terms with little indication that they are compromises between many sets of ideas, needs and interests (Mousley et al., 1993). Also is to ignore the major social changes in both attitudes to disability and pedagogical practises that have to take place if laudable rhetorics is to become reality. Exploring teachers attitudes is extremely significant because "..the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement" (Hargreaves, 1994; p. ix) as s/he is in the forefront of implementing stated policies within constructed educational realities. As Mousley et al., (1993) have stated "it is difficult to develop policies which define "what will be" without careful consideration of "what is" in terms of history, beliefs and attitudes".

In light of the above I will approach the analysis of teachers attitudes towards integration from the perspective of curriculum design. Being influenced by Apple (1993):

" I do not approach the issue of curriculum design as a technical problem to be solved by the application of rationalized models...rather...I conceive of curriculum as a complicated and continual process of environmental design. Thus do not think of curriculum as a "thing", as a syllabus or a course of study. Instead, think of it as a symbolic, material and human environment that is ongoingly reconstructed. This process of design involves not only the technical, but the aesthetic, ethical, and political if it is to be fully responsive at both the social and personal levels." (p. 144).

Within this symbolic, material and human environment the way teachers identify different children is of great importance as it shapes how they interpret and interact with the pupils that surround them. The understanding of differences in achievement and classification of pupils has been submerged in the routines of teachers' work and thoughts and frequently there is no call for teachers to articulate them (Carrier, 1990). However, extensive explanation and identification of children with special educational needs occurred in teachers responses towards the way they defined integration. Teachers focused heavily on the individual child in order to justify the amount, the quality and the nature of integration that was taking place. So, among other things, integration was

strongly presented as being about "resource children". The cultural understanding of the concept "resource children", its contradictions and different sets of expectations affected teachers' attitudes towards integration. In turn, the cultural understanding of the emerged concept "resource children" was shaped by a number of institutionalized constraints - including structural, personal, ideological, and material constraints.

INSTITUTIONALIZED INFLUENCES IN PERCEIVING "RESOURCE CHILDREN"

Within the school environment at the infant level there was a separate room called the Resource room. This was the place where children with special educational needs were educated when both support and mainstream teachers decided, for a variety of reasons, to withdraw children from ordinary classes. Four support teachers,(two of them part-time) called Resource staff, were attached to the Resource and their main responsibility was the education and the care of "the resource children". From participant observations it was noted that children with special educational needs spent almost half of their day within the Resource Room.

At the junior level there was not a separate room called Resource room. Instead, there were a couple of free-rooms which were accessible to all students in case activities had to take place outside of the main classrooms. The general idea was that the five support teachers (two of them part-time) could occasionally, use these rooms when they felt that the children had to be taken out into smaller groups to pursue academic or other activities. From the perspective of physical integration it was noted that in the junior level less withdrawal took place than in the infant level.

According to both mainstream and support teachers at both the infant and junior level, the general philosophy behind integration was that they should support and educate children with special educational needs *as much as possible* within mainstream classrooms:

"We decided that there was no way that we were going to run the Resource as a unit and have them in a separate building or in a separate room and say "These are the children with learning difficulties and this is such and such a body"....The philosophy was that, as far as possible, we would support children in mainstream classrooms. So we started off on the basis that, all the children are part of the mainstream class, that they are on a mainstream class register, they are in such and such a body's class rather than in the unit or in the Resource...We started working from the mainstream classroom that the child belongs to..."

However, while in one class, children were educated for almost the whole day within an ordinary class, working with or mainly along-side their peers, in another class children were mainly withdrawn for the major part of the day and in a further class children were withdrawn only when the teaching of specific subjects was taking place within the ordinary class. This variation indicated that what was considered "*to be possible*" varied from teacher to teacher:

"I think that it [integration] never intended that children should go into the classroom all the time"

"The idea [of integration] is that if they are in this class they are no different from anybody else. If they [children with SEN] are in my class, they are my class and I would do everything I can, to help every child. So if Paul [a child with Down's Syndrome] is in my class, then he is just like everybody else. He's got his own problems, his own worries and it's up to me to try and get over those"

"I would have them integrated in such things as games, P.E, Music, Art and I would remove them from the room for Maths, English, Science, History, Geography - the more academic things"

Even though the above responses indicate that teachers' ideologies and commitment influenced at least the amount of time that children were to be educated within ordinary classes, teachers themselves claimed that the amount, the nature and the quality of integration was contingent upon the characteristics exhibited by different individual children. According to all the teachers, one of the main criterion of defining

what was considered possible and beneficial lay in some inherent characteristic of the child per-se:

" I think it depends upon the individual child a lot. I think Peter [a child with Down's syndrome] was a very bright boy and he integrated very very well. He could play on the carpet with the other children, without any adult's help, and he used to play outside as well, just as one of the normal group. Mari, [a child with Down's syndrome] keeps a little more to the outside. She goes with other children but she is not actually playing with them. She is playing alongside rather than inside the group. I noticed Ryan [a child with Down's Syndrome], has just started to integrate and I am absolutely amazed. I did not think that Ryan would ever do that, outside the playground. So I think it depends on the children themselves"

"Now in my class there are six of them and I think only two of these six, who are what I call true moderate learning difficulties, can gain something. The other four are quite severe learning difficulties and there are at least two of them who, you know, have a lot of other problems. They gain nothing from being mixed in with the rest of the class for everything. But the problem is that its thought to be ideal for them to be integrated for everything, which I do not agree with"

" One of the main difficulties of implementing integration is their behaviour and this depends very much on the individual child"

"Over the years the children that we've got, have come with a wider variety of problems and perhaps deeper problems. For instance, the first group of children I had, there were three children, two girls and one boy and they could all read when they came to me. They all had some knowledge of number concepts, their language was understandable and they could understand you when you spoke to them. Now, if I just compare that on a rough and general basis to some of the children I am working with now: one has got severe language problems. He has a speech therapist but even she admits saying that she's not going to make a lot of progress with him. Another one again has got language difficulties both in expression and understanding. So I think that has affected the way that children are integrated in this school. I would say that integration was done on a hundred percent basis when I first came. The children could cope with that. I could cope with that - in fact a teacher [mainstream] could cope with that. They [children with SEN] had the abilities to cope with integration on a hundred percent basis. Now I've found the children find it difficult to remain for the whole day with mainstream peers, they need time out just to relax. I feel they need time out for specific teaching to be undertaken. So I think, you know, basically integration within this organization has changed in those ways.."

Teachers responses revealed that too much of integration relied on children's personalities. They found that lately more children with special educational needs were being integrated into ordinary school with more and complex difficulties. The majority of them, especially mainstream teachers, tended to be negatively orientated towards

what they perceived as a "trend" of integrating children just for the sake of integration, ignoring the complexities that these children can bring into teaching.

Some of them thought that an ordinary school was not the appropriate place for some children with special educational needs to be educated. One teacher had developed a polemic stance towards "the new fashion of integration" and as he bluntly put it: "you've got to be really-really insane before they will actually put you in a separate school." Such attitudes were based partially on teachers' beliefs that some children with special educational needs (especially students with Down's Syndrome), due to their "deficiencies" could not be educated together with mainstream children.

One of the core pedagogical elements which seemed to remain unchanged was the focus on individual children in justifying exclusive practices. Often many teachers used phrases from the government policy documents such as "whenever that is appropriate for them [children]" in defining educational practices. At the same time, however, such a focus seemed to present a number of other complications which were revealing in terms of what was actually happening from the perspective of *policies-in-use*.

The official school document stated that "the school has an integrated resource for children with moderate learning difficulties". Teachers had accepted this description as being necessary for obtaining resources that would enable children to be educated within the school. However, tensions arose in their effort to understand where exactly the distinction should come between every pupil's own special needs and the special educational needs of a "sizeable minority" group of children called "resource children". Teachers' confusion and tension in defining the terms "moderate learning difficulties" and "special needs children" which were used interchangeably, reflected the influence of the ambiguity and non-specific nature of the Warnock definition of "special needs" (which has been incorporated both in the 1988 and 1993 Acts). A support teacher found

it hard to define integration as he was puzzled with the notion of "moderate learning difficulties":

"I think there's always been a problem defining what is a moderate learning difficulties child. Still I've not come across a satisfactory definition. I believe that all children have got learning difficulties. I mean all children, all people have got needs whatever they may be. I find it very difficult to define and to categorize some needs as special. I mean, those needs and those difficulties change with time and with situations. That doesn't make anything any easier. That makes the situation more complex and more difficult to understand."

A mainstream teacher thought that by differentiating and over-emphasizing some needs as special, justice was not done to the rest of the children whose needs were ignored. It seemed, however, that under the pressure of structural constraints she had accepted this "ordinary injustice" as forming an element of the established pedagogy:

"I've got children in the mainstream that have got difficulties of their own, and I would like them to have a bit more time and attention that the support teachers are able to give to the special children. I know that my poorer mainstream children would benefit so much if I was able to give them more of my time or if another teacher was able to give them more time. They would benefit so much and yet they cannot have it [time or attention]. They just have to have only one teacher for all of them. *I regret that but that is how it is.*" (my emphasis)

Teachers trying to specify the ambiguous term "special needs" created a number of categories. Firstly, children with special educational needs were differentiated by the rest of the children and were referred to as "the special children" (as the above quotation illustrates). The reduction of some children to a bureaucratic entity in this way became its own justification for treating the members of this category as a separate group. Within this group, children were further categorized as "special needs children in terms of behavioural problems", "special needs children in terms of emotional problems", and "special needs children in terms of 'genuine' learning difficulties". However, this further categorisation did not solve any of the complexities encountered, not only because different children did not fit into such painstakingly made categories but because different teachers had different and contradictory perceptions about the same children, as the following responses illustrate:

"I think the biggest concern is this: I think first of all the definition of a child with learning difficulties is important. I know that the children that come here are not special needs children in terms of behaviour. Now if we're having special needs children with behavioural problems that would be totally different, a totally different kettle of fish. I don't think it would have worked nearly so successfully."

"Well I think that if they were all genuine moderate difficulties, in other words they were just academically slower than the other kids then, yes, I think that they [children with SEN] would gain from being with the mainstream children. But so many of the kids that come through here, supposedly just moderate learning difficulties are in fact behavioural problems and have got any other sort of problem as well.."

One way of explaining the above contradiction has been offered by Mercer and Richardson (1975) who pointed out that "handicap" is a cultural category which implies that those identifiable as "handicapped" will vary according to people's cultural orientation. This suggests that there is a potential for confusion and conflict when people try to talk about a so called 'handicapped' person. It also suggests that what was "possible to happen" in terms of integration was influenced by the way different teachers perceived and identified different children. At this point, it is relevant to note that some teachers held a negative attitude towards the integration of children with Down's Syndrome, as these children according to teachers' perceptions did not fit within the definitions they had ascribed to the term "moderate learning difficulty":

"I know some of the staff think that none of the Down's children should be in. Under the definition of our unit, I don't think they should have been in because I think that mainly the other children could fit more accurately to our unit. You see with our definition of the unit we expected moderate learning difficulties".

The majority of teachers strongly appealed to the within-the-child difficulties (as we are going to see throughout this discussion) in justifying their views. It was often forgotten that children were evaluated on the basis of whether or not they could fit into prespecified definitions, the formation of which was highly influenced by institutional demands and practicalities. The following responses illustrate some of the institutional demands that had influenced the construction of "the resource unit" on the first place:

"Well, you have to take responsibility for seeing children before they come to the resource. Seeing if they're of a level that fits into our criteria"

"The other thing of course is numbers. You cannot integrate too many children into one classroom at any one time. If you do that integration breaks down, or becomes meaningless".

"I think given that we haven't got enough resources and we haven't got the staff, we have to choose the children very carefully to make sure that they are children that can cope with this sort of integration.

"...Downstairs [at the infant level] we have four staff so having them [children with SEN] in four classes it is common sense that they will either be supported or withdrawn. If you have them in five classes somebody will have to do without support which is not possible... We may have a lot of children in one particular year group we may have none in another year group, so we have to sort of balance out how many we can cope with, within each class. Also if they did move up [to the junior level] perhaps they wouldn't have room in the classes upstairs. We have to juggle with numbers ourselves otherwise it can be very over-burdening. Like perhaps in the downstairs department we may have 20% of the children and upstairs they may have 80% of the children, which wouldn't work" [So some children with special educational needs did not move upstairs on a specific year because of these constraints]

"There are certain criteria...about the kinds of learning difficulty children we get and the number of them. We have to be very careful and look at the amount of support and the back-up we have for the mainstream teachers...."

A selection process was taking place as to which children could be integrated within the school. That process was mainly based on whether or not the children could fit into what the school could or could not offer. Teachers claimed that selection and right placement were among the most difficult, complicated, and extremely important processes:

" The process of placing and moving children is so complex. I think that the placement of the children is so critical, it's really the basis for the whole integration."

In cases where problems arose due to "wrongly-placed" children the source of generating difficulties was to be examined only from the perspective of material resources. Thus, children were becoming the "scapegoat" of a complicated situation:

"We had children who were wrongly placed because we could not meet what they required. We haven't got support... If you get a child who perhaps has been wrongly placed or finds it difficult to come to terms in being in a mainstream situation it is very very hard to cope. Everything seems to revolve around this child, and one child who perhaps is being particularly difficult to integrate can actually upset the whole feeling of the class, which may be in itself a difficult class. So integration can fall down because if you have one child who perhaps has more difficulties it means that you have to withdraw more which is not fair to the other group of special needs children who also have to be withdrawn as well."

Selection, placement and resources were among the major concerns of teachers. These concerns were amplified as more and more was added on to existing structures and responsibilities of teachers' job. Simultaneously, little was taken away and still less was restructured to fit the new expectations of and demands upon teaching children with special educational needs. The fiscal crisis made it nearly impossible for the school to have sufficient resources - especially at the infant level - to meet all of the goals they were expected to meet. Teachers decisions and children's education was heavily based on a number of givens which brought a lot of complications within the process of integration and reinforced the development of resistance in including children with special educational needs in ordinary classes.

"When we were to have the Resource in the school we were promised a lot of things that never really came. It did sound that the staffing was going to be really very very good. We were also told that we were going to have smaller classes so that the special needs could be integrated into a small class. But when you are getting classes up to nearly thirty plus the special needs children it [integration] falls down really.

"But I would not want too many of them [children with Down's Syndrome] at once. I think one or two each time is enough to be integrated in the class because there are the other unit children as well, and it is very tiring. I have so many other children with difficulties and behavioural problems and policies do not help.

"The main problem is that we don't have a lot of cover, we don't have a lot of staff. If we got the staff we'd be alright but you see downstairs we are running the 20 place resource on 1.5 teachers and 1.6 support. What can they do? I mean, in terms of quality with the children. You can work it out but there is no quality and the children are very very young, they need support. I don't think it's fair for the children and for the staff...Sometimes they are integrated on sight not integrated in the classroom.."

From the perspective of support teachers:

"I think there's going to be some kind of reaction from mainstream colleagues who are going to say "We cannot cope" or "We do not want these children in our classes anymore" I feel that is starting to happen already...so that's one concern"

"I mean quite rightly most mainstream teachers feel they've got a difficult enough job, particularly with the national curriculum and everything, without having to think about special needs children as well. I can see why they might actually resent the children being in the class. I can see why these children are being viewed as an extra burden..."

Given the constraints within which integration was supposed to take place teachers particularly focused on the individual characteristics of the child in deciding whether or not children could be included. Given that pedagogical structures had not changed towards the direction of inclusion, the focus was on whether children could fit or not. Given that the focus on the within-the-child difficulties had become an internalized form of pedagogy teachers' orientation was leaning towards modifying children's characteristics. From this perspective teachers revealed two major concerns in regard to integration that were associated with the within-the-child characteristics: their behavioural difficulties and their cognitive disabilities. A further exploration of these two concerns, can shed light on how institutionalized structures influenced and shaped teachers' attitudes towards integration.

One part of the child: behaviour in context

It was indicated above that different teachers had different perceptions of the same children. At this point, however, I would like to stress the fact that children's behaviour seemed to be of a high concern and the majority of teachers associated the notion of "special needs" with the existence of behavioural problems, even though they were aware that some mainstream children exhibited greater behavioural difficulties than some of the children with special educational needs. The association was so strong that "special needs children" in teachers' perceptions implied "behavioural difficulties" even in cases where teachers did not have any actual encounters with specific children. This association was even stronger when children with Down's Syndrome were

concerned. In terms of their use of language, for some teachers children were not seen as having behavioural difficulties but as being behavioural problems. Teachers' resistance into including for the whole day "resource children" in ordinary classes was based on the argument that children needed a lot of individual attention and a lot of one-to-one contact due to their "unpredictable" and "disruptive" behaviour. Children's behaviour was a key issue in discussions about integration:

"They ["resource children"] are disruptive to everybody else and so neither side [mainstream and "resource children"] gains. I think if they can be separated out and their behaviour sorted out, if that can be sorted out, and can be modified then it's fair enough to be mixed with, you know, ordinary kids"

"There are disadvantages [of integration] and one of the things is that they do take a lot of time, especially if they've got behavioural difficulties. If they have learning difficulties they can integrate probably better but the children that have behavioural difficulties as well as intellectual difficulties, they need so much individual attention"

"I can certainly adjust to their level of ability easier than I can adjust to children with behavioural difficulties"

"One of the main difficulties of implementing integration is their behaviour and this depends very much on the individual child"

From this perspective children's behaviour was being held as a key determinant to the amount, quality and nature of their inclusion within ordinary classes. Let's explore this argument further. First, teachers' strong association between learning difficulties and uncontrolled/unhibited behaviour was no surprise. For example, many people associate learning disability with erratic and uncontrolled behaviour, with instability, unreliability and even cruelty, violence and impulsivity (Carrier, 1986a). This association can be explained within the historical development of special education, its socio-political aims and the popular assumptions that it created among the general public (see: chapter one). Secondly, it indicates that initial encounters between a teacher and a child with special educational needs did not start from a neutral point. Definitions about children with special educational needs had already been constructed previously and independently of any encounters with these children and had been highly influenced by the negative social connotations that the term "special needs" implied:

"I'd no experience with children with special needs...when the boss [head teacher] said we were going to have an establishment of a forty-place resource in our school...and it would be called an integrated resource with children working as far as possible in a normal classroom, I thought that it was going to be a disaster..."

The association between "special needs" and "uncontrolled behaviour" was a part of broader well established social assumptions which tended to be more negative in relation to children with Down's Syndrome. The existence of such pre-constructed assumptions was evident in teachers' responses about how they felt when they were first called to teach children with Down's Syndrome:

"I didn't have any experience [of children with Down's Syndrome]. I was very apprehensive. I didn't know whether I was able to teach them because they seemed as though they would be awkward and not co-operative. They looked like they were not going to be co-operative with the teacher. But I was pleasantly surprised really after establishing a relationship with them"

"I never had Down's children before. They were the first ones I came across... I was quite apprehensive before they came into my class. I have heard all the stories of Paul. He was the first one I had in the class, and I've heard of how naughty he could be when he wanted to be a naughty boy and I thought "Oh Dear"

"Peter, was the first Down's syndrome child I taught. I was quite apprehensive at the beginning of the year actually as I was told about all sorts of problems with his toileting, and behavioural problems. I was a bit apprehensive of how he was going to be in a class situation...but in fact he settled down ever so well"

"Originally, I was very apprehensive about teaching children with Down's syndrome. From what I had understood, Down's children did not live for a long time because they had a lot of complications with breathing and a lot of them used to die at a young age.

Definitions of children with Down's Syndrome were based mainly on pre-assumptions of what the children could not do and had influenced teachers initial encounters with these children. This can partially explain the resistance of teachers in agreeing at an initial phase to include and educate children with Down's Syndrome. Through interactions with these children, teachers found that a lot of their understanding was mainly based on prejudices and, as we are going to see in a following chapter, a number of myths were demystified in teachers' perceptions. However, the association of "resource children" with the notion "behavioural difficulties" seemed to have been

maintained for a number of other reasons closely related to the educational activity. I would not like to imply that children's actual behaviour is of no concern. But focusing solely on children's behaviour does not take us very far as behaviour takes meaning only in relation to the way teachers perceive and evaluate it. Mehan et al.,(1986) has clearly shown that "instead of attending to behaviour in isolation, teachers are attending to action in context" (p. 80).

The way teachers perceived different children's behaviour has to be viewed within the traditional educational pattern: that of typification and categorisation. Of course, the process of typification is a broader life phenomenon in which human beings understand things by naming them and thus to name, categorize and label things and/or persons is an inherent part of understanding them (Hargreaves et al., 1975). It has been found that typologies are used by teachers to help them operationalize definitions of the situation and simplify the educational activity (Wood, 1977; Wood, 1986; Pollard, 1992). Within staffroom discussions it was noted (from participant observations) that teachers' use of typification was strongly based on evaluative strategies and projected how teachers thought students should be organized and disciplined. Within staffroom discussions teachers' conception of the different types of children was based not so much on cognitive but on social terms and behaviour. Within such discussions children were characterized as "obedient", "a riot" "pain in the neck", "introvert", "shy", "with weird behaviour", "naughty", "acting like a baby", "having girlish behaviour", "mature", "co-operative", "lazy", "disorganized" and/or "organized". Teachers build their expectations upon such typologies which become stereotyping social categorisations. These seem to be fundamental to teaching practices as they act upon and respond to each student accordingly.

In turn, the process of typification and categorisation as well as teachers' concern and focus on the behaviour of children with special educational needs has to be viewed in a wider context as being part of a more general traditional concern: that of keeping order within a classroom situation. It was noted (from participant observations) that

teachers were highly concerned about minimizing the sources of disruption and often they were using different mechanisms to do so. Because the disciplinarian sub-role was so central a task in classrooms, behaviour on the part of pupils which threatened this role was perceived negatively by teachers and either was discouraged or even punished - in the case of children with special educational needs often withdrawal from the classroom was used.

In every class observed teachers felt that they must be in control. To be in control means

"that the teacher must be able to make the rules of conduct and obtain conformity to these rules by the pupils. When the teacher is either unable to impose rules and/or attain obedience to them, s/he is said to have failed in his/her disciplinarian role, for the pupils are out of control or undisciplined - masters of the situation" (Hargreaves, 1972; p. 144).

Rules were applied to all children including children with special educational needs. As a mainstream teacher put it: "they [children with SEN] need to know that what we [teachers] say is what we expect to happen".

Keeping order, maintaining the rules, and fostering obedience had become an inherent characteristic of the educational activity. It was noted that teachers devoted a lot of time in negotiating disciplinarian tasks with their children. Participant observations confirmed Pollard's (1992) argument according to which:

"Teaching the children and 'keeping them under control' are not undertaken just because that is what teachers are committed to doing or are expected to do: they are also undertaken because it helps the teachers to "survive" and defend their concerns in the classroom" (p. 34)

Of course teachers' personalities, the way they perceived their sub-role as disciplinarians and the way they resolved discipline tasks differed from teacher to teacher affecting the organization of their class and in turn affecting the nature of integration.

However, the daily educational activity was based on certain routines that mainstream teachers expected children to go along with. Most of these routines, including the rules applied, were taken for granted as self evident and indispensable in promoting the educational activity. Children had to conform to these routines whether they accepted them or not. Different educational routines encompassed different sets of expectations. Children were expected to reach these expectations and "behave properly"; the last word being defined by teachers in relation to specific contexts. The same routines and expectations applied to all sorts of different children, including children with special educational needs. Whenever children with special educational needs did not conform to these routines, the tendency was to judge the child's behaviour and to assume that to be able to conform was a beneficial social skill:

"They have to adapt to our mainstream routine and this is a real advantage, instead of being sheltered in a special school where everything would have been catered for them"

"Well, there are a lot of social benefits really. They have role models. They are learning a lot. Clair, for example, she is in Mrs O'Neill's routine most of the day. She does not always understand, when she is sitting on the carpet, what is going on, I mean, not always, but she copies the other children. She is learning to conform"

"I think its good that they actually learn that they must understand instructions....they learn some rules"

"They [parents of mainstream children] are afraid that their child will copy them [children with SEN] whereas of course what we are hoping is that our children [with SEN] are going to copy the good role models. So we try to explain to the [mainstream] children that these children [with SEN] are behaving inappropriately because they are not so well blessed as them and we hope they are going to understand"

Conforming to the rules, and copying "good models of behaviour", was viewed as a social benefit because in teachers' perceptions it was associated with raising expectations for these children. It was a social skill to be learned for coping with life. Learning to live within the wider community necessitated, in teachers' perceptions learning to conform to the rules and realities imposed. However, support teachers especially were more aware that children with special educational needs had to conform within an educational reality where the "whole time table is geared to the mainstream

children." Support teachers, working closely with children with special educational needs and trying to respond to their dynamics were more understanding than mainstream teachers when children did not conform to the established educational routines. They were aware that the routines which children were asked to cope with were not designed with them in mind. Thus, support teachers, in explaining why some children exhibited "disruptive" behaviour, instead of focusing on the child, often referred to alternative sources associated more with the established curriculum and its inherent expectations. This realization was not without tensions as support teachers seemed to be the mediators between children with special educational needs and mainstream teachers:

"Sometimes you feel pressure because you feel that a lot is expected from the children and that is difficult for them. You want to protect them from that and yet they've got to get used to relating to the mainstream teacher and do as they're told. It's not easy for them because we are asking a lot of them. You have got to make them behave for the mainstream teacher and then at times you feel that you can quite understand why they are not always conforming. But you have to keep them conforming because you don't want to upset the mainstream teacher. Your job is to see that your children are conforming...Quite a lot is expected from them but then again they have to learn something living in this world."

"Well, I fear that there are a lot of problems for the mainstream teacher...I mean, I can understand why special needs children can be disruptive in the middle of the story. It must be hard for them to be expected to listen to the teacher talking to the mainstream children or reading a story which does not correspond to their level.. They find it quite difficult to listen and the teacher finds it difficult to pick up the pieces and continue..."

"We have enormous expectations of them in terms of conforming and at times we can understand why they do not conform"

"I think we try not to make it stressful but the reality is we do have enormous expectations. For instance, there's an expectation that they will sit through an assembly that they don't understand a word of or they will perhaps have to sit through a story time when the story is beyond them and that is quite stressful for them. Maybe stressful is the wrong word but, at times, our demands can be seen to be unrealistic. But then again within the context of integration you say: 'Well the other mainstream children are perhaps listening to the story and they are getting something from the story hopefully. The resource children might be getting something on a different level in terms of learning to be part of a wider group'. So it might appear at first sight that somebody could look at a child and think 'What on earth is that child doing in there?' The environment is totally inappropriate for him but in fact we're talking of a child developing another skill even if that is learning to conform and to

cope with what they are going to have to cope with really. ..I think that is one of the major dilemmas of integration. You cannot be perfect as a teacher, you know, it is extremely complicated...and at times you are powerless to do anything about it"

Further, other support teachers in explaining why children's behaviour was targeted and defined as "disruptive" referred not to the behaviour itself but to teachers' attitudes towards teaching:

"I suppose certain teachers would not want them in their classrooms because they use certain carryings on and they don't want to be disrupted because occasionally you can be disrupted by one of our children...I think it takes a lot more work and it is very much harder [to teach children within ordinary classes] but, if you can get it to work, it is very fulfilling and it depends on the teacher, basically, if she is a good enough teacher to be able to cope with all the different things."

"Well, inevitably when you have these children in the class you get a higher level of noise certainly because they find it difficult to do certain things ...[and] if they are sitting next to the other children even if you give instructions the noise rises...But it depends very much on the attitude of the [mainstream] teacher...I mean different teachers have different ways of working. This year I find it very enjoyable to work with Carol [mainstream teacher] because she is co-operative, we share ideas..she doesn't mind so much about the level of noise...Last year I found it difficult to work with Roy because of his way of working..he found it difficult to interact with another adult and he couldn't cope with the certain amount of noise that you inevitably have to cope with when you have these children in the class."

Most of the support teachers indicated that one of their roles was to facilitate the disciplinarian role of mainstream teachers' even though at the same time they realized that in doing so too many changes were expected from children with special educational needs. As a support teacher put it, "I think the danger is that people won't adapt. The kids have got to fit the system, not the system fit the kids." At the same time, however, support teachers, from their interaction with mainstream teachers, had realized why some mainstream teachers tended not to be able or not to want to cope with behaviour that was not responding to the rules imposed within ordinary classes. One answer to this question was offered above by the two support teachers who indicated that mainstream teachers' attitudes and abilities "to cope with all the different things" were key determinants in promoting or hindering inclusive education. However, the tendency of mainstream teachers to focus on the child's behavioural difficulties in justifying

exclusive practices has to be viewed within the wider context within which the teachers had to work.

It seemed that teachers could hardly cope with any type of behavioural disruption under the circumstances within which they had to work. On the one hand, teachers had to deal with large-size classes of thirty to thirty-five children. These were mixed ability classes with a wide range of abilities. Every class included children from two year-groups meaning that one class had, for instance, year three and year four children. This type of classroom composition demanded the provision of more diversified programmes and had implications in terms of classroom discipline. Let's listen to a teacher's voice in describing her experience of being in a mixed ability class of thirty-one children:

T: ".it can be very difficult. I have to plan thirty one individual programmes but because this is impossible I do work in groups. We have five groups so I am planning for five different areas and levels... Planning should be very, very carefully thought through. The basic thing to remember is that everybody has got some strengths somewhere and that you've got to sort of work on those [strengths]. You have to praise children for what they can do, and then give them the confidence to do things that they can't. The less able children do need so much time and that's where the frustration comes in because there is so much you could do and you know it, but you cannot do it with the numbers that we have in a class. You need extra help because in a class of thirty it can be very difficult to share your time because the children at the top end of the spectrum need a lot of help in furthering their education. It's not right to assume that they will just go on. They need direct teaching as well as the less able children. It can be very hard not only in planning the work that they are going to do but in planning the teacher's effectiveness with each different group or even with different sorts of children. It is very weary, very tiring, because there is such a terrific regime amongst the children.."

Even for a teacher such as the above, who found it "challenging" and "rewarding" to teach children with a wide variety of abilities, being in a mixed ability class of thirty-one children was difficult and tiring. In addition to the above demands stemming from mixed-ability classes, teachers had to deal with a number of complicated social issues that children brought into school. As we have already noted (see: setting the scene) increasing numbers of children were coming into school with

more and more social problems, different and more complex than the ones teachers had to deal with twenty years ago.

On the other hand, as it was indicated in the previous chapter (see: setting the scene) teachers' work had become increasingly intensified, with teachers expected to respond to greater pressures. Pressures derived from three main sources: first, governmental claims for accountability which had raised demands and expectations of teachers and had required more record-filling and paperwork; second, demands for "raising standards" and implementing a centrally regulated curriculum which, according to teachers, was "rediculously confusing", "over-ambitious" and perceived children as mechanical absorbers of vast amounts of information; and third demands from fiscal constraints. All of these pressures tended to produce extremely long working hours. Comments such as "It seems you have to do so many things within so little time", " You don't have time" "It is a very stressful kind of job, very intensive", " I come early in the morning, I work most evenings, and I hardly get a dinner time", "My job has been made many multiples more difficult", were among the most frequent comments teachers made within the interview context and within staffroom discussions. With such a workload, teachers were under an enormous amount of stress in efforts to fulfil their increasing obligations. Such working conditions had a great influence on their willingness and ability to cope with demands deriving from inclusive educational priorities. The teachers' priority tended to be "how they could best manage their time" while at the same time responding to what they felt were their obligations towards the children. As a consequence of this context, mainstream teachers often claimed that they could not cope with "resource children's" behaviour and they were transferring the responsibility of educating "resource children" to the support teachers claiming that their priority was the education of ordinary children. Including "resource children" in ordinary practices was viewed by some teachers as an "extra burden" and "resource children's" behaviour was used as one of the reasons why these children could not be educated together with

their peers. This practice was justified by the teachers' fear of spending too much time with "resource students" to the detriment of other children in the class:

"If they [children with SEN] start to become important you feel that the mainstream children are losing and that is when I find it really difficult"

"If they [resource children] are not taking it [attention or time] from the special teacher or whoever is with them they are demanding it from the mainstream teacher and that is where you feel "Oh, my dear". I have the mainstream children and, you know, a lot of them, they have special needs, they need so much help, and you have thirty of those children and then you have to deal with the others as well. I mean, there is the time involved when they [resource children] need you and you don't have time...[but also] there is the physical thing, because you get tired. You try to devote so much of your time and energy to the mainstream children and there are so many things to do with them that you really cannot afford the surplus energy that needs to go to the special needs children"

"They [mainstream children] get a lot of work in a short period of time. It is difficult. We have to cover more things now and that means we cannot get into some things, so you skip over things quickly. You have to do only one lesson about something instead of doing three or four lessons. So somebody like Peter [a child with Down's Syndrome] who is causing distraction has to be withdrawn because if the class is going to be distracted in this one lesson they are missing out. There is no chance to repeat things again and again."

Some mainstream teachers had to work hard in accomplishing what they felt were their obligations, often feeling guilty at not being able to do so. Guilt is a key notion here. As Hargreaves (1994) so powerfully reminds us in an analysis of teaching and guilt, "guilt is a central emotional preoccupation for teachers...[however].. while guilt is a deep personal trouble for many teachers it should also be remembered, that within many of our personal troubles reside compelling public issues" (p. 142). In his analysis of understanding and interpreting some of the emotional dynamics of teacher guilt, Hargreaves associates guilt with the way the work of teaching is organized and structured. Exploring the different strategies teachers adopt to deal with, deny or repair this guilt, he suggests that:

"Teacher behaviour that is excessively guilt-ridden and guilt-driven can become unproductive and unprofessional..In many cases, teachers' behaviour can degenerate into exit, burnout, cynicism and other negative responses as they attempt to cope with the intolerable burdens of guilt that are imposed from without and that evolve within"(p. 150)

One such guilt-driven opinion expressed by some mainstream teachers, was that "if children [with SEN] start to become important you feel that the mainstream children are losing". This tendency originating from the intensification of the job of teaching in addition to other tendencies (such as: the tendency to separate the social from the academic aspects of learning and the tendency to conceive of education as mainly a mechanism for imparting knowledge) was making the commitment to inclusive education more difficult to maintain. The following response is a clear example of the way the above tendencies encouraged teachers' practices to be more exclusive. It is indicative of why some mainstream teachers focused on the child's behaviour in justifying exclusive practices:

W. For the other children, to be honest, I don't think there are any benefits. It [integration] shows to them that there are different types of children and this is a sort of education but the problem is what kind of education do we offer? Educationally, it would have been better if they [children with special educational needs] were not here [in the school] because they cause disturbance and the other children tend to confront or to help them; so they get more distracted. I think, academically for the other children, it would be better if they were not here. I mean, if you look at these units you will see that they are at schools that are not in the better off areas because the parents of the other children will start complaining. Even myself, I've talked about it with my wife, if it came down to my children being in a class [which includes children with special educational needs] I would object to it because, to be blunt about it, on occasions it interrupts their education. Now, socially, they will learn that there are other groups of people around them. It depends on what your philosophy of education is. But for NC purposes, no, these children have to be withdrawn...[because mainstream] children get a lot of work in a short period of time. It is difficult. We have to cover more things now and that means we cannot get into some things, so you skip over things quickly. You have to do only one lesson about something instead of doing three or four lessons. So somebody like Peter [a child with Down's Syndrome] who is causing distraction has to be withdrawn. Because if the class is going to be distracted in this one lesson they are missing out. There is no chance to repeat things again and again...I mean a lot of the ordinary children cannot go along with it [NC]. They just turn off when there are difficult items. I think some ordinary children don't know what is happening, they need the old fashion way when there was time to get into something and follow it up so that they can get interested in something. I suppose there is somebody who has worked it out somehow but it seems you have to do so many things with so little time."

Within these structures, children with special educational needs were in danger of experiencing a higher degree of differentiation. The above complexities in teaching were further coupled with a strong deficit-medical approach of perceiving "resource children". Even in cases where teachers perceived themselves as being committed to integration and held positive views about the benefits deriving from inclusive practices, they seemed to have been influenced by the well established and popular medico-psychological approach to children. The exploration of the teachers' second concern associated with another "part" of the child, that of his/her cognitive disabilities, is revealing in terms of "how ideas arising from the practices of 'special education' were being imposed on the integration process, limiting teachers' visions of educational opportunity for all" (Mousley, et al., 1993). The reinforcement and perpetuation of such ideologies can be explained only in relation to the ordinary institutionalized educational practices within which integrational practices had to be developed.

Another part of the child: cognitive disability and "specialization" within context

It was mentioned above that teachers, through the process of typification, had constructed a mental image of every child in order to facilitate the organization of their classes. When teachers were asked to describe the children in their class, it became clear that each teacher had a highly evaluative mental image of each child in both social and cognitive aspects. According to Mehan's et al., analysis (1986) such mental images can be viewed as the product of an interaction between the characteristics of the children and the cultural categories that the teachers bring into these interactions. In all the four cases teachers ascribed favourable comments to children who were close to what they perceived as an "ideal" image of the child. Often the ideal child was one "who is easy and a pleasure to teach" as compared to children "who are difficult to teach". In all the

four cases children with Down's syndrome were perceived by mainstream teachers as being difficult to teach:

"He's a Down's Syndrome child as you know.. I find it quite difficult to teach him. You can never quite trust him...you can never leave him unsupervised; he will do something silly. He had some problems in the yard, he tended to do stupid things like going on to the school's roof and you had to watch him all the time. I think he matured quite a lot when he was in our class...Now as far as strengths are concerned, well I have to say I can't identify any, sorry I cannot think of one.

In addition to the behavioural characteristics of the child, a further criterion for deciding what was possible to happen in terms of integration was the way teachers perceived each individual child in terms of his/her academic abilities/disabilities. It seemed as Sharp and Green (1976) have suggested that even "the notion of child-directed learning is related to the categorisation of the pupils via the control problems presented to the teacher in an open fluid context" (p. 121). It has already been mentioned that teachers' biggest concern was to match the curriculum with the wide diversity in learning patterns that children exhibited. This was a major concern as it affected the performance of their second sub-role: that of being an instructor. The way teachers performed this role influenced the way they performed the disciplinarian role and vice-versa. Each teacher interpreted and performed this role differently according to their personality, background, training, attitudes and needs. However, a common pattern was revealed in the majority of teachers in regard to teaching children with special educational needs. Often the name of the child in a common usage of language was replaced by a medical/psychological and even a bureaucratic label. It was used not to depict one aspect of the person's body or skills but to define their whole personality. Expressions such as 'Down's children', 'moderate learning difficulties children', 'resource children', 'dyslexic children' and so on were among the most common labels used for describing a child. Language was dominated by the deficit medical model to such a degree that often within the interview responses the word "children" was omitted and replaced by the above labels. Thus children were "the specials", "the special needs", "the Down's", and "the moderate learning difficulties" . Most of the previous responses

cited in this analysis are indicative of this dominant tendency. The following are some further indication of the above social phenomenon:

"Ryan Thornton:an MLD with a great many problems.."

"Peter Palmer: an MLD, Down's Syndrome, needing a lot of help, working in one-to-one in class with all sorts of problems"

"Sara Russell: A dyslexic child who cannot put words down, with great many problems in spelling"

The language most teachers used in describing a situation or a child seemed to be in contradiction to their perception of being positively orientated towards integration. The following responses derive from two teachers who had commented positively about integration:

"I don't think it is, I am going to be very provocative at this point, I do not think that anybody in the right mind thinks that special needs children can come into mainstream, do everything that the mainstream children do in a modified curriculum, even that, I think is pie in the sky because the work is not suitable. I mean we were always taught, when I was in college that the work should fit the aptitude of the child and it should always be in context with the child and the context of an MLD is not the context of a mainstream child. You've got a child who is eight years old functioning at three and a half years old. How can you expect even in your wildest dreams that you can take the child into mainstream and modify the work so much. That child, and I don't say that for every time, but even with the work being so modified, how could it be in context with that child? Not even in your wildest imagination; the child is not ready for that situation."

If you ask me whether they are benefiting at the moment I would say two of them are and the third isn't, because he's not ready for it. Well, at least I think that's why he's not benefiting. I think two of them are benefiting enormously because they've got reasonable social skills and an awareness of what's going on and so are actually learning from the other children. Whereas the third one is too delayed really, has got very little language and hasn't really got the social skills..."

This approach to children tended to reinforce teachers' perception that in order to facilitate the process of integration they needed support from special teachers who often were assumed to have extra knowledge and skills:

"You need a teacher who specializes in special needs children...who is able and qualified to work with them"

"I know that kids with special needs can't succeed in a normal classroom except with very special support"

".. we need people in the school [support teachers] with expertise, who can help children with difficulties.."

"You've got to have adequate and specialized staffing; that is the main thing. When Mrs Rose [support teacher, with specific training qualifications in the area of special education] is with the children it works very well but when Mrs Collins [a child care assistant, without any formal qualifications-an ex-professional photographer] takes over she is not quite as good. We tend to go more into craft work, so it is less academic work"

On first sight it might be argued that lack of special training was a reason for mainstream teachers to feel insecure about involvement in teaching children with special educational needs. Indeed, as the above responses indicate, some teachers presented this as being the case. This can be understandable as the popular image has been that specialized qualifications are important in dealing with the children in question. In fact, most of the people involved in the area of special education are assumed to be "experts" and/or specialists. As Mousley (1993) notes "even teacher training institutions continue, through the provision of 'special settings' and 'appropriate' professional courses to imply that these children have educational requirements which cannot be met by ordinary classroom teachers" (p. 66) Within this context the principle that good teaching practice is good for every child regardless of levels of ability tends to be forgotten . However, there is another side to this story.

The teachers in this study were aware of what constitutes "good practice" but, under the conditions they had to work they could not cope with facilitating "good practice for all children". Exploring further their responses, it became evident that they needed support from "special teachers" not because they felt professionally incompetent to teach children with special educational needs but because due to the intensification of their job they needed another adult in the class to help them with what they were expected to accomplish. Support (specialized) teachers were indispensable, not due to their specialization, but because they alleviated the mainstream teachers' workload. In this case, the argument of specialization was used by mainstream teachers as a reason for obtaining support, and by support teachers as a reason for enhancing their status and justifying their professional existence. In regard to the first case, the following

responses indicate that support teachers were indispensable to integration because of the practical help they offered to mainstream teachers in reducing some of the "plus" requirements. In some cases, support teachers were to withdraw potentially "disruptive" students or deal with them in such a way as to ensure the smooth functioning of the ordinary system:

"There must be someone to remove the resource children and get them out and let the mainstream teacher and children go on"

"You need another teacher, really, who can work with them 'cause the range is too much for one teacher to cover realistically within such large classes"

"I wouldn't like to do it [integration] by myself. It would have been impossible. You cannot do it by yourself...I cannot imagine my-self doing it without support...if you have another teacher than it is easy to happen and if there is a distraction [from children with SEN] the other teacher can take the child out and work out the situation"

"It [the existence of support teachers] is absolutely essential, unless there is an activity like story time which, if they do not have behavioural difficulties, they can be in and then I am supporting them as well."

In regard to the second case, the following responses, even though they present different aspects and concerns of the way some support teachers perceived their role and position, are indicative of the nature and status of their job:

"..we are, if you like, guests and that works in various ways, depending upon the mainstream teachers' expectations .."

"I always feel like a guest in the classroom. I always feel that I've got to be aware that our children..the [mainstream] teachers are very good with them, I don't say anything that, er, .. but I feel that I am a guest in the classroom and I have got to give back all the time...I don't like the children to disrupt the rest of the class. I always feel that I have to do extra things to make up for the privilege of our children being in the classroom. [Mainstream] teachers are very good but I do give them back a lot as well..."

I also think that the mainstream teachers want a lot of training on what we [support teachers] are trying to do because I don't think the mainstream teachers understand what we are trying to do"

"..career structure for teachers within an integrated resource is very difficult. You are, at the moment, neither a special school teacher nor a mainstream school teacher. You fall between the two and, in terms of moving on or looking for promotion, people are never quite sure where to move on to. I think that has implications in that people are coming into integrated resources, perhaps as a great commitment to integration, but where does their career take them then? The salaries aren't the same

as working in a special school. Colleagues here if they were working with the same children in a special school, would be on an allowance for doing so. They don't get that allowance, nor do mainstream teachers get any enhanced allowance for having these children in their classes"

From all the above responses, it seems that the same ideologies and concerns employed a hundred years ago for the development of special education were being used currently in referring to the development of "integrated resources". These findings support Mousley's (1993) argument according to which "integration had become very much a resource issue and teachers demanded retention and extension of those very factors which characterize special schooling - withdrawal areas, training of teachers in specific responses to different categories of children and comprehensive resourcing based on assumed needs" (Mousley et al., 1993). The following are some further responses in supporting the above argument:

"Well, I think that people who are expected to educate children with Down's Syndrome ought to know a lot more about the Syndrome. I mean, I was reading it up from books but I could have preferred to have been prepared by an expert than by a book"

"I don't think we should go back to special education but my idea [of integration] is a modified special educational system. In other words having the child in the community of the school and when it comes to the point where what the mainstream children are doing has nothing to do with what the MLD are capable of then it is necessary to have a suitable place so as to be able to withdraw the resource children ...at any time."

You've got to have room to withdraw the children at times when you need to, even when it is withdrawing some of the mainstream and some of the others [resource children]. There have to be places that you can take them"

"It sounds very well in theory, this integration, but it cannot be done on the cheap. It's got to have a lot of extra funding and mostly I think the funding has to be for staffing"

Given that little was restructured to fit the demands of teaching children with special educational needs, provision was still perceived from its materialistic perspective: that of resources and staffing. Such an understandably strong pre-occupation made it difficult to approach provision from the perspective of pedagogy. Additionally, such an emphasis on resources and extra support staff further differentiates resource children from their mainstream peers. One support teacher

expressed concern about the current tendency of referring and labelling children, who could previously cope in ordinary classes, for the purposes of proving a need for extra support:

"I think teachers, because of the pressures that they've got in a class of perhaps thirty students, understandably, (I am not criticizing mainstream teachers at all, but children who traditionally in the past might have gone through a mainstream school and eventually succeeded.) I think now there is going to be a great temptation to say "This child isn't achieving. I'm spending an enormous amount of time with this child and I cannot afford that. Therefore, we'll have to statement him and find out where he is at". The statement is being used to get the children some extra help. Now that's not wrong in itself. I am not saying that the statementing procedure is wrong. What I'm saying is I think that the knock- on effect of the National Curriculum and the pressure it puts teachers under will be that more and more children are statement, perhaps at a very early age. I think there had been a tendency in the past in this school to say "We will give this child a chance. We will try. We will make allowances for the fact that this child had a lot of absences through ill health. We will perhaps make allowances for the background initially. Now I think the tendency is to say "This child is difficult. We will start statementing procedures" because, you see, that takes a long time in itself and special educational needs is almost becoming a growth industry..."

The above teacher was concerned that an increasing amount of children were going to become "resource children", not solely because of the difficulties that they presented in teaching but because mainstream teachers, under the new working pressures, will resist offering children a second chance. This teacher's concern acquires significant importance in relation to the following finding. Often, the process of differentiating some children and focusing solely on "deficiencies" had become such a strong institutionalized practice within the educational activity that not only had it shaped consciousness but it was reinforced through the patterns and routines of everyday life. Some teachers had internalized and accepted, as a self-evident truth, that some children were "resource children" mainly because they had "special needs" and vice-versa; an assumption which made difficult the exploration of alternative factors that deemed some children to be "resource children":

"If they [children with SEN] could work at the same level with these [mainstream] children, and they could behave in the same way and they could do all these things, they wouldn't have statements on them."

"..you cannot reason totally with resource children. Because they are resource children, they do not understand it."

"...they are not going to score [at SATs] much. In fact, they would not have been special needs if they could score as high."

"I mean our resource children are not supposed to have behavioural difficulties but, because they are resource children, they are forced to have behavioural problems. I mean if they perform to a level below their age level it manifests itself in frustration and behavioural difficulties."

The overriding affirmation was that often the teachers in this study tended to treat educational difficulties as brute facts, as "natural objects". From this perspective children, according to some teachers, were in the "resource unit" or had to be in a "resource unit" because of their inherent characteristics which were hidden beneath the surface of their actions.

A possible explanation that can be offered for the above tendency is associated with a pattern that was revealed when teachers were referring to children with Down's Syndrome, specifically. Teachers seemed to have two points of reference: the mainstream children and the "resource children". When a comparison was taking place between "mainstream" and children with Down's Syndrome, teachers found it hard to indicate any strengths of the latter. Strengths were mentioned when a teacher was comparing a child with Down's Syndrome with the other members of "the resource". This pattern was found in the majority of teachers' responses even with teachers that were aware that each child is an individual and has his/her own strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation was often based on comparisons and such comparisons led teachers to focus on the weaknesses rather than the strengths of the children with Down's Syndrome.:

"Now as far as strengths are concerned, well I have to say I can't identify any, sorry"

[at another point within the same interview]

"I think academically he is no worse than some of the other MLD who don't have Down's syndrome. He is better than some. His numbers are quite good, he counts and writes up to 10, he identifies shapes, he controls his pencil, he can put a story together"

"You hear them [children with Down's syndrome] read and you think they could do a bit of writing but they found writing very hard. Paul [a child with Down's syndrome] was a little more able but his writing was

far behind his oral work. That of course applies to the mainstream children but the gap is even wider with the MLD children. All children take longer [to write than to read] but the Down's children take even longer."

[at another point within the same interview]

I find that they [children with Down's syndrome] do very well with reading, because they seem to be able to cope with systematic route learning. They seem to have, the ones that I have taught, a very good capacity for remembering words, vocabulary for reading, retaining it and reproducing it. So I found with a lot of repetition, (and this really surprised me) I was going to be able to teach them to read. And I find that although some things are very hard to get into, once they get the hang of it they [children with Down's Syndrome] do seem to retain it ...certainly in reading and number work"

When the child was being valued for what s/he could do, teachers identified a number of strengths that they could build upon even if these strengths were expressed in a highly psychometrical way. However, it seemed that value-laden comparisons with what was perceived to be an ordinary and "normal" development had been a well established institutionalized educational activity. For instance, some support teachers found it beneficial to work within mainstream classes because they had the opportunity to "keep a balance" and to reflect on what an ordinary child could do:

"...Because I am in an ordinary school it's nice to be able to see children of an ordinary level as well because you can forget what ordinary children can do. And I think sometimes when you're teaching children with learning difficulties you loose track of what an ordinary child at that age is able to do. So the best think about being in a resource is that you've got the best of both worlds: You're teaching the children with learning difficulties that you're trained for but you've also got ordinary children around you to remind you what they can do and how they behave and you don't get cut off from them into a little world, a little special world. You get things out of perspective. You think [ordinary] children of that age can only do what your children [with special educational needs] can do and you forget what children who are of better abilities can do."

Ordinary ("normal") children were perceived as a model with the underlying assumption being that integration was a means for children with special educational needs to conform to that model. Teachers responses indicated that the process of integration was associated with the process of normalization. The process of normalization, however, has two distinct meanings. The first implies normalizing people and the emphasis is on meeting established expectations and modifying aspects

of the individual child. According to this view integration becomes a mechanism for conforming models of perceived normality or at its best on educating people, teachers and children to be encouraged to accept and tolerate those who deviate from normality (Oliver, 1992). The second implies questioning the concept of normality, valuing difference and understanding that a person becomes devalued not through his/her "differentness" but through negatively valued "differentness" which is contingent upon other cultural and social factors. According to this view, integration is not only about tolerance and acceptance but about rights and an endeavour to integrate differences (see: chapter one) The way teachers understood the process of normalization influenced their perceptions of the aims of integration and in turn affected their practical orientations.

Normalization within the process of integration

Here, the notion of difference is extremely important because a) it was a source of contradictions and conflicting perceptions and b) it seemed to influence the angle from which teachers viewed the benefits of integration. It seemed that teachers often vacillated between an ideology of valuing difference, a liberal humanist ideology of accepting and tolerating difference, and a practical perception which demanded conformity. The notion of difference had both a positive and a negative connotation.

Teachers' seemed to perceive children with special educational needs as different from mainstream children. Simultaneously, however, teachers claimed that they endeavoured to treat children with special educational needs in the same way as the other children so that they would not be viewed by their peers as being different. The aim of these practices was to encourage ordinary children to accept and tolerate children with special educational needs (the two words "acceptance" and "tolerance" were often used interchangeably). The majority of teachers strongly believed that one of the benefits [if not the main benefit] of integration for mainstream children was to learn that there were different groups

of people in society and they had to accept these people as being "normal". Thus, valuing difference meant accepting, tolerating, empathizing and sympathizing with people who are different:

"It's a massive advantage I think for the ordinary children in the classroom because they see that children with special needs are not physically different to them and when they [ordinary children] get out into society I am sure they'll have more sympathy, more empathy and treat the children with special needs, when they [ordinary children] are adults in a different way, in a better way than if those [children with SEN] had been isolated away from them in a special school. They don't regard them as oddities or objects of fun...they are remarkably tolerant and kind."

"They [mainstream children] are going to grow up with these children and they are not going to think that people are freaks because they are different. They are going to treat them as normal people which they are...Our mainstream children are very good with them. They have quite a lot of patience. They know that they [children with SEN] are different, but they are all very kind to them, they are quite tolerant".

One teacher was strongly orientated towards educating children to be kind and tolerant as this ideology was strongly reinforced by his religious commitment:

"Well, I am a committed Christian and I went to church on Sunday and the preacher was telling a story about Saint John who when he was in his nineties was still preaching. They used to have carry him up into the pulpit so that he could preach to the congregation. Every week he only used to say one thing, he used to say "Brothers and sisters love one another" and then he'd sit down. And the people in the church kept saying "Well we're going to all this trouble to lift you up into the pulpit, carry you up there and every week you say the same thing: Brothers and sisters love one another. What about all the complicated things in life?" and Saint John said "Well what else is there to Christianity. Love one another, that's all it is. That's it, there isn't any more, forget everything else just love one another." That's deep in my heart and basically I try to spread that by example, without being soft about it. Tolerance, love, kindness. I don't want those things to disappear from our society. I've an awful feeling they've been pushed out of our society and been replaced by selfishness and greed so I am trying my best to encourage kindness and tolerance"

Only one teacher seemed to be clear about the distinction between valued and devalued difference and instead of talking about tolerance, acceptance and sympathy she associated the notion of valuing difference with rights:

"I think that for those children who are going to be able to go on and lead a fairly independent life that it is extremely important that they grow up with "normal" children around them so that hopefully they don't grow up feeling 'I am different and I am not wanted' they grow up feeling 'Yes I

might be different but I am wanted, I am part of a wider group and I'm valued for who I am'. I think the school certainly has a role to play in terms of educating mainstream children that our [support teachers'] children, yes, might be different but they still are people who've got rights, who have got abilities as well as disabilities and who are members of this society."

For other teachers to be different meant "not being normal" even though there was a sense of guilt in using the word "normal":

" I think it's wonderful for the parents when the child comes into, I shouldn't say normal school, I know we shouldn't but we do. But sometimes it might give parents a false illusion that one day their children will be normal."

According to this perspective it was a matter of privilege and not a matter of rights for children with special educational needs to be educated in ordinary schools: "I always do extra things to make up for the privilege of our children being in the classroom."

Finally, according to another teacher's point of view, being different meant "not being as fortunate":

Basically [the main benefit of integration for the mainstream children is to realize] that every body is not as fortunate as they are. I mean, the main thing is to see that they are more fortunate than the other children. I don't think they understand at this age why they are more fortunate. I don't think that they internalize the fact that the resource children are brain damaged. I don't think that they appreciate the complexities but, it seems, they see that there are people who are not as fortunate as they are"

From teachers' responses it was indicated that there was an overriding attachment to normality: normality seemed to be an attribute that existed and could be defined. The underlying assumption that was taken for granted, was that everybody wishes to be normal. Being different, according to this point of view had a negative connotation, and was viewed as an unwanted attribute, which had to be tolerated and at best accepted. Children were valued not on the basis of their difference, and of who they were, but rather on their efforts to become the same as the majority of the other children: to become "as normal as possible" or to be viewed as "normal". Some teachers felt that their obligation was to treat all children as being the same, even though they were aware that different children had different needs and talents:

"They [the specials, according to the teacher's terminology] do watch how the children behave, and they do copy a lot. I think that the acceptance they [the specials] usually get from the other children is wonderful. To be accepted as a normal person not as somebody special, as somebody different. I think that is very important."

"...I think that this is how they [children with SEN] see it. That they need a bit more help....At this age, they do not feel that they are different or we do not treat them as different. We try to make them feel that they are the same as the other children."

"...therefore I, as much as possible, treat them [children with SEN] the same as [I treat] the others [ordinary children]."

In the process of understanding teachers' responses clarifying the meaning teachers attributed to the term "same" is difficult. There is always the possibility that teachers used the word "the same" as a synonymous to the word "equal" even though equal does not mean the same. The majority of teachers did claim that they treated children with special educational needs the same as they treated the mainstream students, however, that was not the case in practice.

In practice, there was a distinction between "the ordinary/normal" children and "the specials", ordinary classrooms and resource units, special schools and normal schools, "our [support teachers'] children" and "theirs [mainstream teachers'] children". This distinction seemed to be reinforced by the new political directives through the introduction of a National Curriculum based on pre-defined levels of achievement which tended to reinforce a particular image of the "normal child". The emphasis on distinct levels of achievement seemed to magnify and widen the gap between ability and disability. It strengthened the perception of the individual as an achiever or a failure. Also it gave stronger emphasis to the cognitive function of the child, in terms of an inherent genetic characteristic. The following exploration of teachers' responses and concerns in regard to the National Curriculum and its relationship to the education of children with special educational needs is useful in understanding policies (in use) and their effect on shaping ideologies.

The effect of national curriculum on the education of children with special educational needs: teachers' perspective

It has already been presented (in Setting the Scene) how teachers felt and thought about the National Curriculum in its wider context within primary education. It was indicated that teachers found it hard to implement the National Curriculum because according to them: a) it had little relevance to the practicalities of the circumstances in which they had to work, b) it bore little resemblance to their views of teaching and learning, and c) it was over-ambitious in regard to the amounts of knowledge that children had to and could absorb.

Each teacher was further asked to talk about the benefits deriving from the National Curriculum for the education of children with special educational needs within ordinary schools. Teachers expressed different feelings towards different aspects of the curriculum, and the majority of them focused on concerns rather than benefits. In regard to benefits, only one mainstream teacher speculated that the National Curriculum would ensure that children with special educational needs would experience a wider range and depth of curriculum areas than they had experienced previous to the introduction of the Curriculum:

"I suppose for children with special needs they too will now be exposed to a larger range of curriculum areas so that might be the case, I think that would be a benefit. But to be honest, I haven't thought about this in depth for special needs children because I don't actually teach any in my class"

One of the support teachers claimed that the National Curriculum offered structure to learning while two other [support] teachers felt that the requirements of "teaching by objectives" had been a well accepted and established practice in the area of "special education". However, the majority of teachers, both support and mainstream, strongly suggested that the requirements of the National Curriculum bore no relevance to the needs and the demands of learning for these children:

"Personally speaking I can't see any benefits for our children because the national curriculum does not take into account that our children are working and operating on different levels"

"Children need teaching according to their own individual needs not according to a curriculum that has been imposed from above for children who haven't got special needs"

"They [integration and the National curriculum] just do not come together at all. It is farcical to expect that special needs kids could begin to cope with the NC as it stands. When you reckon that special needs children are given an extra six months to catch up and (I think, I'm not sure about this, but I think) they'll have to go through the same tests as the other children...,oh,.. this is ridiculous"

"I do not think it is going to be relevant to children with special needs. There are areas like history, technology, geography that really have no relevance at all to children who have difficulties. I mean, even for the mainstream children. It is not relevant to them at this stage. We have children who cannot write their names and so to talk about history and geography when they are not in the stage of reading and writing their names is ridiculous. I think it is totally irrelevant. So for children with special needs I think it is even more so"

"The national curriculum ...has very little to do with certain MLD children"

The emphasis on pre-defined developmental levels strengthened the ideology of the "within-the child difficulties" and magnified the gap between what "resource" children could not achieve in relation to their mainstream peers:

"Some students [with SEN] are not able to work at the first level...The children working at the early levels are usually children in infant schools but our children [with SEN] are in junior schools and they're still not attaining those levels...Some of our children do attain level one and level two but we're talking about children of eight, nine, ten [years old] attaining levels which five and six year old ordinary children attain.."

Coupled with this, the pressures imposed on teachers by the demands of accountability to parents, put most of them under enormous stress: especially in regard to the negative consequences that the national curriculum, with its testing, might have on their relationship with the parents of children with special educational needs. The following responses illustrate how problematic the situation was for teachers.

"Well, really when I am testing them they all have to take a "W" which means that they're all working towards something. But even so, I do not think that the special needs will really get much further than "working towards" for years and years. So really the tests are not relevant to special needs children but they are doing it... It is stressful for the parents. I mean, they [governmental agencies] introduced this idea that children at seven years old should be doing this, this and this, and that they should be getting to level two etc. I think, that [it] will put the parents under a great deal of stress and anxiety, if they see that their child is not even getting to level one. I'm afraid that they could not understand

that we are working to their child's ability not to what the government thinks they should be doing"

"If I've got a child who's operating on a language level of eighteen months old, how can I possibly teach him something which is appropriate to a five-years old with a five year old's level of language? So the national curriculum has not been thought through properly... Instead of putting a child in a position of having to be working towards the first level all the time, I prefer to say that the national curriculum isn't appropriate for them "

"I think it can do a lot of damage....I think particularly for parents who read about the National Curriculum and feel their children should be following what the curriculum has set out.. It would be hard to explain to them that the curriculum isn't right for their children. I mean there are a lot of children with special needs who will never reach the first level of the National Curriculum right through their whole school career. They will always be working towards level one of the National Curriculum. I feel that no child should be in that situation. I think for those children it would be better if there wasn't a National Curriculum which forces them to work towards it all the time and never gets them anywhere."

"It's very difficult. If you keep saying to a parent "your child can attain level one in the National Curriculum", what happens the year after when they are still only attaining level one? It looks to people as though they've not achieved anything within that year or within their whole school career. But what they're [people] actually missing are the laborious steps that you have to take to achieve certain levels."

"Parents have heard this thing about National Curriculum, but they don't actually know what's included in it and so for the parents of the children who have got special needs it becomes even more difficult to understand, "why are they [children] never improving in any way?". But you see the children *are moving somewhere* but as things are, it's difficult to appreciate it"

"Parents see what a child at seven should be doing and they would like to know why their child at seven isn't achieving that...Now what we've [teachers] got to do is rejoice in the progress that the child has made and say "This child has made absolutely enormous progress. He's still functioning at this level but he is great. This is what the child has to do next, this is what he could do when he came into school". I think we have got to have a very positive attitude towards our children".

The above responses illustrate some of the consequences derived from the newly introduced Curriculum scheme where children had to be evaluated against pre-defined levels, which bore little relevance to their development and way of learning. Pressures for accountability may force teachers to focus on the within-the-child difficulties in explaining why some children fail in a system that provides "a legal entitlement of all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum".

Mainstream teachers' commitment seemed to be of a high importance on the effect that the National Curriculum would have on implementing integration. It was noted above that most mainstream teachers were committed in striving for the best of the children but that did not mean that all of them wanted or could work with all the children, including the "resource children" under the current circumstances. However, given that these children were educated within this ordinary school the pattern observed was that they had become a second priority children for some mainstream teachers and the main priority of support teachers. Such allocation meant that mainstream teachers could maintain a supportive veneer while taking the minimum responsibility for educating these children:

"Well I don't see a lot of their academic work. They come and show it to me occasionally and I usually praise them but I must admit it is in a superficial way because I have to do so many things with the other [children]."

"I think Mrs Evans [support teacher] can probably say a lot more than I can. I don't have a lot to do with their academic programmes, partly because they have their own teacher and partly because my numbers are so big."

Children with special educational needs were mainly included in activities such as p.e., music, story-time, craft, art, and at the infant level, play-time . In most of the other circumstances "resource children" were either withdrawn from the class or they were working as a small group with their own task and their own teacher, alongside, but not together with, their peers. From this perspective integration was another form of special education which was taking place within ordinary classes. However, from participant observations in three classes it was noted that all the three mainstream teachers with the help of the support teachers were integrating what they called "activity days" within the curriculum. Within the context of "activity days" the curriculum was modified in such a way as to promote "togetherness" among children, co-operation, mutual support, flexibility and engagement of all children in different sub-tasks which constituted one common theme. Within such activities co-operation and mutual support. in teaching all the children was observed at the level of teachers, both

mainstream and support. Within such educational activities an outsider could not differentiate who was the support and who the mainstream teacher.

Simultaneously, however, teachers felt that they had to follow the requirements of the NC where the focus tended to be more on individualized subject-orientated tasks. In these circumstances collaboration among mainstream and support teachers was to be found mainly outside of the classroom at the level of planning. Collaborative activities, were held by some teachers to be important in implementing the centralized curriculum reform and in promoting integration:

"I think a good special teacher will carry on teaching in exactly the same way as he or she has done....The main thing is to work with the class teacher and think "How can I adapt this subject and give it some meaning for our children"

"Well, we [support and mainstream teachers] have to plan together the sort of work that we are going to do. Although the resource children within the class aren't obviously working at the level of the mainstream children, we plan together so that they are doing a part of everything that their own peers are doing"

"No it won't affect integration because whatever *we* [support and mainstream teachers] would plan *we* would hopefully include children of all abilities irrespective of whether the NC lays it down or not. *We* have goals and aims for each child regardless of whether they are mainstream or resource children. One of these goals is to work to fulfil their potential. They may be way above the levels they [NC] recommend, they may be a long way below them. In that case *we'll* take what is being stated in the NC and *we'll* apply it to *our* children in *our* own class"

It seemed that the nature and quality of teachers' working relationships influenced the way the requirements of the National Curriculum were going to affect the education of children with special educational needs. As a mainstream teacher put it: "It [the relationship] can make it or break it [integration]. However, as Hargreaves (1994) argues "there is no such thing as 'real' or 'true' collaboration or collegiality. There are only different forms of collaboration and collegiality that have different consequences and serve different purposes" (p. 189).

Within the school particular forms of collaboration in different contexts were not without their problems and limitations. One informal form of collegiality was to be

found usually in dinner times when different support teachers working at the infant level gathered together on different days in a room other than the staffroom to discuss a variety of issues related to their work. This form of collegiality was evolved out of some support teachers' feeling that working within an integrated resource could be accompanied by a sense of "being isolated". This feeling was likely to have been reinforced by the lack of collaborative relationships that could be extended pervasively across the whole school. It seemed that within the context of this school teachers were divided into separate groups as belonging to the infant or the junior level, and to the mainstream or the resource sector. The formation of the above collaborative gathering among only infant support teachers can indicate the subtle division of teachers as belonging to different and separate groups. As an infant support teacher put it:

"Another fear I have is that there is a sense of isolation when you are working in an integrated resource...Integrated resources to me seem to be many different things. They all seem to work in different ways. You've only got to look at the way colleagues work in the middle [junior] school and the way we [at the infant] work. We work from the same seat and yet we work in a very different way"

It is likely that this sense of "separateness" between infant and junior teachers might be associated with the fact that it was only recently that the two schools emerged in one, being under one administration. Another possible explanation can be that most of the support teachers were working on a part-time basis and thus it was quite difficult to find time for extended and more essential collaborative activities. This element imposed some further complications and anxieties, especially for teachers who recognized that under the new circumstances planning was a significant activity in promoting integrational practices:

"Finding time to plan work with the mainstream teacher is difficult, especially now that I'm only part-time because I haven't as much time. I'm not here after school. I only work mornings. That used to be a problem but it's even more of a problem now because you've got to be able to plan what you're doing so you can modify it for the children with special needs."

Different forms of collaborative activities were to be found between a mainstream and a support teacher of the same class, at the level of planning outside of

the classroom. The time for such activities was determined by the two teachers and was squeezed into breaks or any other circumstances where the teachers' presence in classrooms was not absolutely necessary (such as: school assembly hours). Even though these activities were initiated by teachers they seemed to have obtained a more structured, routinized and functional character. Such collaborative activities were restricted in nature with teachers focusing solely on planning together curricular activities and/or sharing ideas, in a way which appeared to contribute little to their existing expertise and understanding. Planning was mainly restricted to the specific and relatively short-term task of developing modified units of work for children with special educational needs. Often "planning together" meant that the support teacher was following what the mainstream teacher had already planned:

"Oliver, the teacher I always work with is good 'cause he always produces things that he's going to do a couple of days before, so that I can make a modified version of it for the special needs children"

From this point of view collaborative activities remained at a superficial, functional level which limited teachers to proceed in more critical reflections of their practices and ideas in implementing the curricular reforms. Only in one case two teachers [mainstream and support] were working together not only outside of but within the class fostering each other to reflect on their practices. This form of collaboration was based on a recognition that teachers can learn from each other by sharing and developing their expertise together. As the mainstream teacher put it:

"It's a massive plus for me. It's a massive advantage for me because I've got another adult mind in the classroom that I can bounce ideas off and we can plan together and work together and sift out what's good and what's bad. It helps me to be a better teacher if there is another adult to criticise me when I need criticising and to encourage me when I need encouraging and similarly the other way round. We're always telling each other 'You've made a mess of that' or 'You did that well, we'll do that again'. So to have another adult mind is a great thing"

The two teachers had minimized the boundaries of their roles as support and mainstream teachers by viewing themselves as two professionals who were responsible for the whole class. From participant observations it was noted that children with special

educational needs were educated for the whole day within the ordinary class and withdrawal was kept in minimum taking place only when some children had to work individually with the speech therapist. As another teacher, referring to these two teachers, put it: "Like R...and M... they can have a completely different atmosphere in the classroom and because of that the situation of the two together is smoother". Reversing the teacher's comment, it seemed that it was the nature and form of collegiality that the two teachers had developed which fostered the creation of a "completely different classroom atmosphere". This form of collegiality which promoted joint and critical work between the support and the mainstream teacher at the level of classroom practice seemed to be a key determinant in promoting inclusive educational activities and it was to be found mainly within the creation and implementation of what was called "activity days". In the majority of other educational circumstances a strict division and separation of teachers' [mainstream and support] roles, priorities and responsibilities at the level of planning was based on a clear distinction of who was responsible for whom. This was associated with teachers' perception of integration as a process of incorporating in ordinary classes children who belonged to a different pedagogical category. Often it was claimed that a prerequisite for this process to be effective was the ability of children to cope within a mainstream environment. Some mainstream teachers claimed that it would have been more beneficial in academic terms if some children with SEN were educated in special schools. Such orientation was not without conflicting and confusing beliefs shaped by the old-fashioned and superficial "integration versus segregation" argument. It was indicative that within the interview context teachers focused highly on the social benefits of integration with little or no reference to its academic benefits for the children in question. Behind the exploration of this pattern, paradoxically, lies one of the reasons of why teachers despite controversial ideologies and practices were in favour of promoting integrational practices in the way these were understood by them.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN DEMISTIFYING MYTHS: PERCEPTIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

All of the teachers who commented positively about integration saw the major advantages of this process as being in the social sphere. Integration was perceived as a mechanism for promoting socialization between disabled and non-disabled children. Teachers claimed that integration broadened the life experiences of both mainstream and disabled children's by raising awareness of the former on issues of disability and by educating them to tolerate and accept people who were different from them, and by providing the latter with role models from which they could learn appropriate social and other behavioural patterns. These aims were thought to be a major benefit of integration for children and for society in general; "It was a lesson in life", as a teacher put it. Thus more emphasis was placed on the social interactional sphere than on academic provision for disabled children. Viewing integration mainly from the perspective of socialization, some teachers believed that the positive aspects of integration were to be found in the playground context where children had the opportunity to interact with each other with little reference to the possible relationship between these interactions and classroom practices:

"I've long believed that most of the work towards socialising the children with learning difficulties, including the ones with Down's Syndrome, is done by the children. The vast bulk of that work [socialization] is not taking place in the classroom; it's [taking place] in the playground because they play together"

Often, when teachers were referring to the educational aspect of integration (i.e content and delivery of the curriculum, and pace of work) and to classroom practices, they expressed the belief that children would probably benefit more, academically, if they were in special schools. However, the majority of teachers resisted the idea of "returning to segregated education" on the basis that the social advantages of integration outweighed the academic advantages of special provision (at special schools). This tendency led teachers to focus more on the social domain when talking about integration than the quality of the education that disabled children were provided with. Mousley

(1993), in exploring teachers' attitudes towards integration, found similar results. She argued that "placing focus on the social ...domain with little emphasis on academic possibilities is symptomatic of the beliefs teachers hold about disability; and reflects the typical curricula in segregated settings" (p. 66). It was evident, from teachers' responses, that integration was far from being viewed as an issue of equity, as it tended to be an issue of "moral sensitivity".

As Quicke (1990) has noted, moral sensitivity is a slippery concept. It can, however, be used to refer to the 'social feeling' that fosters motivation to engage in moral reasoning which is based mainly on the notion of concern for others. "This basic feeling or sense is logically prior to rational decision-making and provides the moral setting for the teaching activity" (Quicke, 1990; p. 10). It was this element of moral sensitivity, different in nature and degree among different teachers, which inspired them to be positive towards the process of integration. The following positive responses derived from teachers' perception of the social benefits of integration:

"I think it [integration] is all a bonus"

"I think the advantages [of integration] for [all] the children far outweigh the disadvantages"

"I think they [children with SEN] give us as much as they get"

" I think it's a two-way process: that the children in the integrated resource do offer the school an awful lot. They receive an awful lot back, perhaps they receive more than they give; but they do give an awful lot to the school"

However, the moral commitment of teachers to integration had remained at the level of providing access to an educational system with little questioning of its basic design. Thus, mixing with other children implied mainly mixing in the playground or in less structured academic activities while to be tolerated or accepted meant to be perceived as "normal". It was therefore considered crucial for disabled children to conform and to copy "models of good behaviour". Moreover, children were initially selected to be educated at the Yorkshire school if "they could cope with what the school offered", and "if the school was appropriate for them". They were included within

ordinary classes "whenever that was thought to be appropriate" and, with the same logic, they sometimes had to be withdrawn from ordinary academic classroom activities, often to "allow the mainstream teacher and children to continue with the lesson". These ideologies within the school context were representative of the ideologies included in governmental policies, especially in the Warnock Report which was thought by some to be a hallmark in promoting integrational practices.

Integration was a "good thing", a "beneficial process", "a way to go forward" on the basis that disabled children offered the opportunity for the other children to expand their social education and, in turn disabled children were offered the opportunity [and sometimes the privilege] of mixing socially with their peers within an ordinary environment. Such an emphasis on only the social and moral benefits of integration, often influenced by a charitable type of humanism, seemed to hinder an alternative way of translating this moral commitment into the issue of rights. It produced fruitless dilemmas which often tended to perpetuate myths and to restrict even further the aims of integration. For instance, parents of disabled children were presented with the following restrictive choice:

"We say to parents when they come to look around 'The setting is just to a certain extent a compromise. Do you want your child to read as quickly as possible [implying that this was the benefit of special schooling] or do you want them to learn to play with a group of children [implying that this was the benefit of integration]."

Such restrictive "choices" simplified the complex process of integration, created certain expectations at the expense of others and belittled the responsibility of the school to *educate all children*. Understanding teachers' emphasis on the social and moral dimension of integration, often at the expense of inclusive pedagogical curricula, necessitates an exploration of their own more general social experience (or lack of it) of disabled children/people.

All the teachers were asked whether or not they had any experience of people with Down's Syndrome outside the school community and/or prior to the establishment

of the integrated resource at the Yorkshire school. The majority of the teachers referred to their childhood experience and their responses were indicative of the marginalization, isolation and social ostracism that people with Down's Syndrome had experienced in the past. The majority of the teachers had grown up in communities where children/people with Down's syndrome seemed to be invisible. When they happened to be visible they were objects of "fear of the unknown":

"I remember as a child being quite frightened by a Down's Syndrome lad who lived near me. He was older than I was. I can remember having that certain fear of this chap because he looked so different to me. I didn't know what he was capable of and I think people of our generation still have that fear"

Another teacher, as a child, had heard from her parents about "this lady who had a Mongol child", while a third teacher had heard about how "unfortunate" the sister of his mother's friend was in having a "Mongol" child. The rest of the teachers claimed that they "never came across them at all". Children with Down's Syndrome were neither neighborhood children nor peers in ordinary schools. As a teacher put it in a mild way, the assumption was that "Down's Syndrome children, in the past, tended to be children who weren't expected to be in mainstream education." Teachers throughout their early socialization process had grown up believing that ordinary schools were not for children with Down's Syndrome. The same teachers some years ago were called upon to realize what previously had been strongly internalized as being unrealizable: to educate the children in question. Thus, it was no surprise that some teachers were hesitant and resisted the idea of including children with Down's Syndrome within ordinary academic classroom activities. Also, it was no surprise to listen to some teachers stating that initially they could not believe that they could actually teach these children to read and write or that they were surprised to find out that some of these children were "actually quite bright".

Many of the teachers, after interacting with the children with Down's Syndrome who were educated at the Yorkshire school, realized that most of the assumptions held by the general public (including themselves) were mainly based on prejudices. These

prejudices had, according to teachers, developed out of the "fear of the unknown" which had generated negative attitudes towards the children. The language that some of the teachers deployed in presenting these assumptions in regard to children with Down's Syndrome was indicative of the dominant language used by the general public when they themselves were children:

"They [children with Down's syndrome] were thought of as being idiots, cretins, imbeciles with no abilities and no skills...*I think a lot of ignorance surrounded these children.*" (my emphasis)

"People with Down's Syndrome were thought to be dull, boisterous, large, you know, people thought that children with Down's Syndrome were monsters purely from their physical appearance, even though some of them are very nice to look at...Even today, I don't think that there are a lot of people who may appreciate that some people with Down's Syndrome can be very bright. I mean, different children [with Down's Syndrome] have different qualities, but they [people] perceive them as all Down's Syndrome, like you know, put all of them together: they are all Down's Syndrome, they are all noisy, they are all loud, they are not all that pleasant to look at."

"Well, I didn't have any experience [of children with Down's Syndrome] outside the school. I am certainly surprised at what they can do. I did not think they were capable of doing so much and I suspect a lot of people just dismiss them as not having much intelligence.."

Another teacher compared the fear of disabled children with the socially cultivated fear towards black people. He claimed that lack of experience and awareness was the basis of producing assumptions which in their roots were nothing more than prejudices. Throughout his interaction as a teacher with Caribbean children, he realized how labeling creates prejudices, which once established are difficult to overcome:

"People with Down's Syndrome were thrown in institutions. They were being locked up. I think people were afraid of, you know, of them. I mean, we still have people who are afraid of Caribbeans just because of their physical appearance. I mean there are, mainly, older people who are frightened to death of Caribbeans or West Indians. I was working in a school where almost 80% of the children were Caribbeans. Some of them were among the nicest kids I have ever taught but, once they have been labelled, it is very difficult to change the ideas that follow because they have been stereotyped. I think we need much more preparation and understanding of what it is all about ..."

Throughout their own experience, some teachers learned that attitudinal responses towards disabled people were key determinants of their inclusion not only

within education but within the wider community as well. The majority of teachers strongly believed that the process of integration was the best way to overcome such prejudices. They believed that the school can play a vital role in educating the general public in overcoming the "fear of the unknown", when the general public is still young:

"I think the school can educate the public whilst the public are still children. You're educating the public simply because the pupils in the school will become the public."

Thus socializing and mixing with disabled people was held to be a great [if not the main] benefit of integration. It was the force of changing attitudes and a moral stimulus for teachers to continue promoting integrational practices. The following response from a support teacher illustrates what type of attitudes teachers were striving to change via the process of integration:

"I can remember a case when I went out into a cafe with the children [with SEN] one lunchtime. The children were able to select a meal, pay for it, go and sit down and eat it..our kids were great, they did everything really well. We also had one child with Down's Syndrome with us... Two ladies sat next to our table and all the time we were there they looked and talked and chattered and were obviously very disapproving. I don't know what they were disapproving of because our children had got better manners than they had. *It's that type of attitude that we've got to change, that people are no longer thinking that Down's Syndrome children are seen as children who are picked up in a minibus and taken to some kind of an institution..The [mainstream] kids here won't think like that. They will see our children as part of the school"*

Thus, in understanding why teachers focused so much in the social aspect of integration often to the expense of the quality of education that disabled children were receiving and in understanding why they were so strongly attached to the notion of normality and "models of good social behaviour" we should bear in mind Uditsky's (1993) suggestion, according to which:

"Exclusion and segregation were built on centuries of devaluation. Those of us who are parents and teachers have not grown up or been immersed in a culture where inclusion and friendship with persons with a disability is an ordinary and typical life occurrence" (p. 90).

The above social phenomenon in conjunction to the educational institutionalized influences in perceiving "resource children" (as these were analyzed above) have shaped teachers' attitudes towards the integration of students with special educational needs.

CONCLUSION

So far, I have attempted to locate the question of inclusive education within the wider educational context. The exploration and understanding of teachers' attitudes towards the integration process was grounded in the educational context within which these attitudes have been developed. In this way, the focus was geared towards the exploration of these institutionalized educational processes which seemed to have influenced and shaped teachers' attitudes and practices towards integration.

Teachers' attitudes towards the integration process tended to be conflicting and often confusing as the notion of integration did not have a single definition. Its meaning, was rather to be found in the context and purpose of its use, depending on several educational (im)practicalities. The overriding affirmation was that teachers' willingness and commitment in promoting integrational practices were highly influenced by the conditions within which they had to work; these conditions tended to made the commitment to inclusive education more difficult to maintain.

It has been emphasized that the degree of teachers' satisfaction was under threat, as the teaching activity was driven by concerns and anxieties arising from contradictory expectations. Coupled with a conscientious approach to their work, it tended to produce unmanageable workloads. The intensification of the teaching act, combined with the speed and changes involved, often led teachers to view inclusive priorities as an additional burden. Teachers were under pressure to accomplish what they were expected to, even though some of the expected requirements (such as bureaucratic and administrative one) were inducing the feeling of "wasting valuable teaching time".

Conflicting priorities were to be found as a consequence of a conflict among teachers' established views of "good practice" and the current commercial values which, increasingly, influenced educational decision making. Commitments to inclusive priorities were often in contradiction with the intensification of competitiveness surrounding the aims of education and teachers were frequently caught in a complex crossfire. They had to deal with expectations of implementing inflexible curricular mandates that had little relevance to the circumstances in which they worked and bore little resemblance to their view of learning.

Thus, on the one hand, children with special educational needs were in danger of experiencing a higher degree of exclusion even within ordinary classrooms, due to the intensification and mechanization of the teaching act, which reinforced a restrictive notion of learning and a specific image of children as absorbers of enormous amount of information. On the other hand, teachers had to struggle to avoid "fitting the children to the needs of the curriculum", which was becoming even more difficult in practice as there was an increasing tendency to reformulate children's needs so as to respond to the demands of a market-led educational system. These difficulties were compounded by the fact that the fiscal crisis made it nearly impossible for the school to have sufficient resources to meet all of the expected goals.

Within this context, integration was presented as being about resources and staffing. These elements were perceived as crucial in facilitating integrational practices and the presence or absence of them influenced teachers' attitudes towards integration. The dominant focus of the teacher on the materialistic aspect of integration was further reinforced as little was restructured to fit the demands of teaching children with SEN while at the same time more and more was added to the already existing structures and responsibilities of the teacher's job. The need of "support teachers" to alleviate some of the mainstream teachers "extra" responsibilities reinforced the perception that children with SEN (especially, children with Down's Syndrome) had educational requirements which could not be met by ordinary classroom teachers. This assumption was

strengthened by the popular image according to which specialized qualifications are important in dealing with the children in question. Within a wider context, it was indicated that such ideas, originating from the area of "special" education, limited teachers' visions of integration and promoted a particular approach to children.

Moreover, given that integration had remained at the level of providing access to an educational system with little questioning of its basic design (i.e. mainstream educational routines), the selection and placement of children with SEN were perceived as significant for the teachers. These processes led teachers to focus on the within-the-child difficulties in justifying not only their attitudes towards integration but the quality and the nature of the education children were provided with. Thus integration was strongly presented as being about "resource children" with teachers' attitudes being influenced by the way they perceived the children included within the "integrated resource". However, it was noted that teachers' perceptions about "resource children" were influenced by several complex institutionalized processes. Definitions of the "integrated resource" were contingent upon what the school could or could not offer.

Further, it has been stressed that different teachers hold different perceptions about the same children depending on the cultural categories the teachers brought into their interactions with those children. These cultural categories included social assumptions that were often taken to be as self-justifiable. This was highly related to teachers' tendency to treat educational difficulties as brute facts, as natural objects, a tendency which was influenced by, and in turn, reinforced a deficit medical approach in viewing children with SEN. From this perspective, the degree and nature of children's behaviour and cognitive disabilities influenced teachers attitudes accordingly. It has been argued that the generation and perpetuation of such concerns were linked with established ordinary educational practices such as:

a) the maintenance of the teacher's sub-roles (disciplinarian - instructor), which were sustained by the use of the typification process and the demand of children to conform to inherent educational expectations;

b) the existence of a strong differentiation of children as being "special" and "ordinary", which, in turn, was influenced by a differentiation of the roles and responsibilities of the mainstream and the support teachers;

c) the overriding attachment to normalcy which was associated with an establish pattern of creating assumptions based on comparisons among different children. These comparisons were intensified by the new curricular reforms which produced the "working and never reaching" ideology, strengthening in this way the gap between "normalcy" and "disability" and;

d) the extensive use of labelling, which reduced some children's identity to a bureaucratic and/or clinical entity. The reduction of children's identity in this way became its own justification for treating the members of these category as a separate group, and it was often used for the purposes of proving a need for extra support. This separate group, however, had to be incorporated within the ordinary educational practices. Thus from this perspective, integration was perceived as a process of normalizing children, with teachers using several phrases from policy documents in justifying their practices.

However, despite the above contradictions and complexities, the majority of teachers were positive in promoting integrational practices. All teachers who commented positively about integration saw the major advantage of it to be in the social sphere. Their positive attitudes originated from a recognition that integration was the best way of overcoming prejudices. This recognition was based on their experience of growing up in communities where disabled children (i.e children with Down's Syndrome) were either invisible or were targets of curiosity, pity and fear. They felt a moral responsibility to contribute to a positive generational change, to a more caring culture. Often, however, teachers' moral sensitivity was influenced by a charitable type of humanism at the expense of other educational/pedagogical benefits that could derive from the integration process. Thus, integration was strongly presented as a mechanism for educating mainstream children to tolerate and accept people who are different than themselves.

All the teachers placed a great emphasis on the social aspect of integration as they believed that peers' attitudes towards disabled children were key determinants of the inclusion of the latter group. The importance of peers' attitudes towards disabled children has been identified as a crucial social parameter influencing the nature and quality of integration within ordinary educational communities. In a lot of social contexts disabled children do seem to 'suffer' a measure of "social ostracism" (Thomas,

1982; p.3) and social isolation by their peers. By exploring peers' attitudes, we explore the social infrastructure of the school and the message children receive from their environment regarding issues of disability. It further sheds light on the complex process of how children/people make sense of their relationships and friendships with their disabled and non-disabled peers. In other words, it helps us to identify the degree of complexity of the social barriers necessary to be overcome for the development of a more inclusive understanding of communities. In the light of the above, the following chapters focus on children's perspectives toward the notion of integration and the way(s) they construct their socio-interactional realities with their peers (both disabled and non-disabled). This includes the relationships and tensions between themselves and the reality of their everyday socio-educational lives.

PART FIVE

Chapter 6

CHILDREN'S ACCOUNTS: THE COMPLEXITIES OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The integration of disabled children into ordinary classrooms has been based partially on the assumption that contact between disabled and non-disabled students will result in them having constructive relationships with each other (Johnson et al., 1981; Stainback et al., 1981). Social integration has been perceived as a step towards providing interactional opportunities between disabled and non-disabled children and fostering greater acceptance and new perceptions upon which to form opinions and develop attitudes (Sheare, 1974). This assumption has been the focus of an increasing volume of research over the past four decades which has been directed towards the study of children's attitudes towards their disabled peers (Miller et al., 1984; Siperstein et al., 1988; Shapiro, et al., 1988).

It has been reported that to a large extent the successful integration of disabled children depends on their acceptance by their peers (Quicke, 1985). Within that framework children's interactions have been viewed as an important factor in determining to what extent disabled children are going to be accepted (Siperstain et al., 1976). In turn, it has been assumed that the way a child "responds to his/her disability" can largely be shaped by the attitudes s/he first encounters in school and at home (Thomas 1982).

Furthermore, a commonly expressed suggestion has been that if the aim of any educational programme is to improve the quality of life for everyone then it is

appropriate to aim to enhance both social and personal responsibility (Kyle and Davies; 1991). Implicit in this process lies the influential role of the teacher as an educator (Hellenbec et al., 1991). This was often reflected in teachers' responses when they were talking about the aims of integration:

"..Integration for me ...[is about] helping children with special needs to be integrated into society as a whole, and, at the moment, into the class. But also for the mainstream children to recognize that there are people in society who need our care and our help and that we are all responsible for each other...This is how we try to educate the children: to be responsible members of society ..[and] ...I think, we all have to look and see that everybody has needs of a different nature and try to understand this.."

In the previous chapter it was indicated that the social aspect of integration - that of socialization between disabled and non-disabled children - was held by teachers as the most salient dimension of such a process. The social benefits for both disabled and non disabled children were perceived by teachers as the stimuli for continuing integrational activities (as these were understood and practised by them) despite the complexities and tensions involved in terms of their implementation within a rapidly changing educational context. Often teachers emphasized the social dimension of integration at the expense of the academic benefits for disabled children that could result from this process. Integration was perceived as an important mechanism for reducing prejudices by cultivating a social climate that would be generative of optimistic and positive interactions between disabled and non-disabled children:

"Hopefully, they [mainstream children] are going to grow up accepting and not being prejudiced against people that are different in colour or appearance."

"Well from the mainstream children's point of view I think it has been very beneficial that they are meeting children with special needs, children of their age, and perhaps as they grow older they would be aware that there are people in society who need perhaps a little bit more support. That is something that we (teachers) didn't have as children and there was a fear, particularly of children with say a physical handicap or Down's children, who ...perhaps ... we said 'Oh! how do we, er how do we react? How should we react?..' The [mainstream] children are growing up with them [children with SEN]. They are learning about them and hopefully after these progressing years they will have a different understanding of each other"

In a variety of circumstances teachers' beliefs and concerns were influenced by the perceived and/or expected consequences that their actions would have on the formation of peers' perceptions towards disabled children, and consequently towards the process of integration. Such concerns referred to different levels of interactional encounters which, however, were perceived as interdependent in their influence on the quality and dynamics of the interactions. Some teachers emphasized the importance of the professional/personal relationship between mainstream and support teachers, identifying such relationships as an influential "model" for mainstream children's interactions with their disabled peers:

"...If somebody joins the resource who I didn't get on particularly well with in a professional way it could cause difficulties - pulling in different directions [and] *those tensions are picked up by the children*. You've got to have this working relationship and *the children have got to see that there is a professional relationship [between a support and a mainstream teacher] and yet that you have some sort of give and take...*" (my emphasis)

"I think the special needs teacher should take the whole class sometimes, especially the speaking and listening part, so you've got the whole class listening to you and the children [with SEN] then feel part of the class as well...It gives me the chance to see that our special needs children have a good chance to shine at the speaking part [during news time]...*I think it is important for the children to see that you [the special needs teacher] are not just sitting in the background...*" (my emphasis)

Other teachers indicated that class organization and their intervention in the formation of the within-the-classroom groups were important for setting up frameworks in which interactions -both perceptual and actual- could take place:

"We try, in the classroom, if you get groups of children, you sort of put these children [with SEN] spread around in other groups of children...but often if mainstream children have to present neat work but these children [with SEN] cannot present neat work and maybe the mainstream children feel that they are sitting with children that were not of their choice, then we've got to keep an eye on that...They [mainstream children] have to learn that people are different and they have to accept and come to terms with it."

"...Like, for instance, if we are doing something like games with two groups we will make sure that the resource children will be split in different groups. So when, for instance, in P.E we play games or team games it doesn't worry [mainstream] children if they've got a child with difficulties in their team. They help them rather than say 'Oh, we don't want them because our team won't win'...Hopefully as they grow older

and older they will still keep that level of understanding and support that we are trying to instil here in a classroom situation"

In other circumstances, the 'pressures' of the ordinary children's culture were quite evident when teachers were talking about their perceptions of integrational practices. Peers' attitudes towards disabled children were of a concern to teachers and the development of positive supportive interactions among children was an aim to strive for. Despite, however, the great emphasis placed on the social aspect of integration, teachers could only offer some general assumptions in regard to this matter. As the following accounts illustrate, teachers' responses to the question of "how they perceived the social interactions between disabled and non-disabled peers" reveal the general complexity and diversity included within that issue:

"It's very difficult to answer, because I think in many ways young children change friendships so quickly that I would find it very difficult to say how our children interact..."

"They [children with SEN] actually go and play with other children...and the other children let them [but] they are not really bonded in special friendships. I don't think that our children [with SEN] really make best friends; do they?... "

"I'm surprised really how tolerant and how caring the mainstream children are, but I'm not sure whether it's a kind of patronizing relationship where the mainstream children sort of patronize the less-able children."

"That's a very difficult question ... I think that the interaction would be very variable, quite frankly, for all sorts of reasons.."

Sources of difficulty

Listening to teachers' responses, and at the same time trying to make sense of children's culture, I was becoming increasingly aware of an issue identified by other researchers who have been involved in understanding children's cultural meanings. As Quicke, Beasley and Morrison (1990) indicated, in their experience of understanding children's interpretive meanings of a curriculum project entitled "Teaching About Mental Handicap(sic) in Secondary Schools":

"...we (researchers) were constantly aware of the possibility that both we and the teachers knew only a fraction of 'what was really going on' amongst pupils" (p. 127).

At the same time, however, when exploring peers' attitudes towards the process of integration it involves an understanding of their attitudes towards their disabled peers which, in turn, cannot be separated from the wider childhood culture which constitutes an important part of the social context in which their attitudes are located.

Central to this culture is the meaning that children ascribe to their complex and often volatile patterning(s) of their interpersonal relationships. The exploration of children's meanings regardless of whether we are referring to relationships among non-disabled or between disabled and non-disabled peers is a complicated affair basically for two reasons. The first is associated with *the nature and the complexity* involved in forming interpersonal relationships. Hargreaves (1972) in his brilliant and in-depth analysis of interpersonal relationships in education portrays the magnitude of multiplicity involved in such relationships where the Self is a product of a person's interactions with Others. This includes the question of developing the other's-concept with all the assumptions, expectations and predictions involved within such a process (see also: Barnett et al., 1980; pp 65-85).

The second complicating factor is associated with the fact that *adults have difficulty in seeing children's culture* probably because children's culture is their own and thus "it is not intended for adults' ears" (Opie and Opie, 1959; p. 1). It is a culture which exists in its own right even though it is intimately related to and developing partly in response to adult culture (see: Davies, 1982). Despite this very important point it appears that often children's culture has been "miniaturized" by adults or it has been perceived as a "half-baked imitated version of adult culture" (Speier, 1976; p. 99). As Speier (1976) argues adults' commonsense understanding about children is based on such ideological conventions that view children as "defective social participants by virtue of precompetence or incompetence at behaving properly" (p. 98). Of course such a position is being reinforced by and reinforces the practical adult activities (i.e. of parents, and/or teachers) of child management. When we try to explore the social

context of children we are in the restricted position, by viewing them as adults in the making, of perceiving as futile, random and less-sophisticated, activities that for them include a high degree of structure and a complex purpose. For instance, in regard to the issue of children's friendships Gotmann metaphorically indicates that:

"Children when beginning to make friendships must co-ordinate their efforts with all the virtuosity of an accomplished jazz quartet"
(in *Bullies and Victims in School*, Besag .V. 1989; p. 76).

It is even more difficult to analyze, reconstruct and present the way children interpret interactive situations among each other without distorting their experiences. For this reason it is necessary to offer the theoretical context which informed the processes of making sense of children's responses.

The contextual framework for children's accounts

The position permeating this study is that attitudes are not merely mental abstractions anchored within the individual and uninfluenced by social situations and circumstances. As far as children's attitudes towards the integration process is concerned their expressed attitudes served as a means of exploring how the socio-political debate of integration has been transferred to and understood by the children. However, that seemed not to be sufficient in itself in identifying and explaining children's perceptions of and actions towards their actual disabled peers. Thus, and in order to locate attitudes to the specific social context within which they were created, children's expressed attitudes towards their peers with Down's Syndrome - and towards the notion of disability - became the second objective of this study. In this case their expressed attitudes served as a means of identifying the processes that impinge upon or promote the creation of more inclusive, positive and productive interchanges between disabled and non-disabled children in the school environment. In addition to exploring what makes these processes different from the ones taking place among non-disabled individuals I was interested in attempting to explore the origin(s) and nature of these differences.

The processes of interactions with disabled children were not taking place apart from the more general culture created and experienced by the 'ordinary' children - including their interactions with their non-disabled peers. Thus, the children were asked generally about the concept of friendship and the processes involved in its formation in the context of understanding part of their culture. This was deemed as a necessary first step before proceeding in understanding not only the processes involved in forming relationships with disabled peers but "why" and "in what way" such processes differed from the so called ordinary ones that take place among non-disabled children.

Central to this way of approaching the issue of interpersonal relationships between disabled and non-disabled children lies a certain assumption. I do recognize that I have drawn a subtle distinction between friendships among non-disabled children and friendships between disabled and non-disabled children. Some authors have based their approach to friendship among disabled and non-disabled people on the principle that "the way relationships are made, sustained and broken is no different for people with learning disabilities than for those without such disabilities" (Firth & Rapley, 1990). But if that were the case in everyday life there would not have been a need for this research. In a lot of social contexts "people who are disabled do seem to suffer a measure of social ostracism" (Thomas, 1982; p. 3) and social isolation. Interactions between non-disabled and disabled persons seem to encompass processes that are not always the same as the processes that take place within social/personal encounters among non-disabled persons.

At the same time, however, "if society rejects and excludes people with demonstrable differences, including mental retardation(sic) how can we explain individuals and social groups who come to accept, like and love others with the most severe and profound disabilities?" (Taylor and Bogdan, 1989; p. 22; see also: Perske and Perske, 1988; Gold, 1994).

These somehow conflicting ideologies were reinforced by children's accounts which projected the complexity of the issue and the divergency of views surrounding interpersonal relationships between disabled and non-disabled individuals. This fundamental conflicting framework derived from children's accounts was not a surprise for as Quicke (1985) has noted:

"Children's views reflect those of the culture in which they are located...Rather than adopting a romantic attitude about the 'natural' goodness of children, a more realistic view is to assume that attitudes towards disability and difficulty will be as diverse amongst children as they are in society generally" (p. 2).

However, a more difficult analytical task emerged. Taking into consideration the content and quality of children's reasoning for their responses inevitably meant moving into controversies and contradictions. Each child's account included a variety of contradictory arguments to such a degree that, at a first glance, their position seemed to lack any measure of consistency.

In dealing with the tensions and conflicts I encountered in making sense of children's responses I was helped by Quicke's (1991) critique of the 'universality of prejudice' thesis and its connection with education. A central point of Quicke's (1991) position in that paper is the significance of the argumentative aspect of life. As he maintains:

"Living within a tradition can often be a contradictory experience and our 'common sense' contains contrary elements which are widespread throughout the culture. Thus we are not only aware of points 'for and against', but often ourselves use contradictory arguments on different occasions" (p. 51).

This proposition was felt to be crucial in approaching children's tensions and contradictions surrounding their perceptions of and actions towards their disabled peers. However, the nature of analytical tensions seemed to be more complex in regard to the way of approaching the socio-cultural processes involved in forming interpersonal relationships as these were expressed by children - especially when such relationships included interactions between disabled and non-disabled children. One of these tensions

concerned the way of approaching the social dimension of each child's individual responses. As Hargreaves (1972) has noted:

"The tension between the 'social' and the 'individual' is at its most acute in social psychology, which takes as its central focus interpersonal relationships." (p. 7).

One way of exploring and understanding the meaning that each child attributed to his/her different interpersonal experiences with different peers was to approach the child's accounts from the perspective of "the individual's personality". In a lot of circumstances I was tempted to offer psychological individualistic explanations which at first glance seemed to be satisfactory. For instance, the majority of year 2 children claimed that they did not want to play with Mari (a child with Down's Syndrome) because she was 'messing around', she was 'naughty' 'thick' and/or 'daft'. In a year 4 class a number of children liked to play with Peter (a child with Down's Syndrome) because 'he was funny', 'kind' and 'he had a strong imagination'- attributes that children seemed to be in favour of. Thus, initially one way of approaching such accounts was to search for patterns of personality demonstrated by the specific children with Down's Syndrome in an attempt to explore the response they evoked from their peers, and their peers' perceptions of them. In other circumstances it was evident that some children who perceived themselves as more vulnerable in terms of self-esteem seemed to choose Sam (the girl in the picture with Down's Syndrome) as a friend on the basis of " I chose Sam because she might have wanted to be my friend. I didn't choose Claire - the 'ordinary' girl of the picture- because she might not have wanted to be my friend". In this case it was interesting to explore the relationship between personality and attitudes to disability, with the implicit assumption that attitudes are influenced by selective personality variables. Early workers in the field of prejudice have considered personality as the most important factor in the formation of prejudice (see Lynch, 1987; pp 32-35). Specifically, Frenkel-Brunswick (1948), investigating the relationship between personality and prejudice, found significant differences in the personalities of prejudiced children and adults. She and her associates concluded that "some people have what they termed an *authoritarian personality*, needing to dominate and feel

superior to other people in matters of racial, sexual, religious and political behaviour and beliefs" (In Lynch, 1987; p. 34).

Even though the above ways of approaching children's responses are of some value, and a reference to them is unavoidable in a study of interpersonal relationships, approaching such issues solely from the 'individualistic personality point of view' not only does not take us very far - as personality is an elusive concept and there are almost as many definitions as there are views about its nature - but it holds a number of dangers as well.

First, there is a danger of over-simplification by perceiving personality as a convenient segment separated from other concepts with which it is linked in a very complex way. Reliance on a predominantly personality based approach to the study of *attitudes towards disability undermines the influence of the norms and social settings on the shaping of perceptions and behaviours and, even more importantly on the shaping of identities.* Secondly, even though, at first glance, the above responses seemed to be an "individual" rather than "a social affair" a further analysis indicated that it was more revealing to explore what it meant to be perceived as having a "handicapped" identity and what were the sources of informing such perceptions. Finally, there was a danger of focussing on children with Down's Syndrome, searching for a distinct unitary pattern of personality associated with the medical classification. For instance, Foulke (1972) has shown how treating the personality of blind people as a unitary concept has led to much uncritical acceptance of the idea that there is a distinctive personality associated with blindness. He went further by arguing that blindness is more properly regarded as a set of situational variables, and the personality itself is too complexly determined to be accounted for by a single variable such as loss of vision (see Thomas, 1978). In the light of all the above, and being influenced by the work of Hargreaves (1972) I have attempted to link the "individual" with the "social" by approaching the issue of personality from the point of view that the self is a social structure which arises through

social communication with others within different contexts. In other words, and as Hargreaves (1972) has powerfully shown:

"The self is not inborn, nor could it appear in the individual isolated from his (sic) fellows. The self arises from the social experience of interacting with others. The self has an important reflexive quality: it is both subject and object. In interaction a man (sic) learns to respond to himself as others respond to him. He becomes object to himself when he takes to himself the reactions of others to him. He acquires a self by putting himself in the shoes of others and by using their perspective of him to consider himself...The organization of the responses of others is an essential part of the process of self development" (p. 11-12)

From this perspective, within a wider social context the 'culture' of a society is initially "bestowed" upon the child through what have been called "the significant others". Of course, the notion of "societal context" is an abstract field and the identification of linkages can often be problematic as socialization is not the complete responsibility of any single agency. Children participate, simultaneously, in different sub-social contexts such as family unit, educational community, peers' sub-culture, ethnic-cultural traditions, and, in today's society, the culture created by the media -all of which have a significant and often conflicting influence on the production of *the subjective value of one's own self* and of one's perceptions of the other's identity (see: the formation of actual and virtual identities by Goffman in *Stigma*, 1963; pp. 12-13).

However, focusing on the influence of the social context on the creation of identities implies the recognition of the ongoing nature of the constitution of Self and the nonunitary dimension of the human being. That does not mean that children were perceived as not holding a specific sense of their identity. It rather indicates an acknowledgment that they were positioning themselves within the discursive practices learned from the adult society in multiple and often contradictory ways. On the one hand as Davies (1982) pin-points,

"Children have little choice about adopting some elements of the adult world. Adults structure the world in ways that appear external and inevitable to children. Though children bring their own interpretations to bear upon these structures, and thus have a different view of them than adults do, they nevertheless experience

those structures as external and inevitable, and indeed in some cases, necessary for survival" (p. 28).

On the other hand, and at the same time, even though children rely on the adult world, as they have been located within structures designed by adults (i.e they are being taught the discursive practices through which they constitute themselves in that way; see: Davies, 1989) they are not merely passive recipients of the messages they receive. Within the relationship between the individual and the social structure I came to conceive of the child as an active agent recognizing for him/herself the way the social world is organized acknowledging, however, that language is both a resource and a constraint for them.

Bearing all of the above in mind the following discussion is about exploring some crucial issues included within the overused and often problematic notion of "social integration". The initial focus is on identifying children's position(s) towards the integration of disabled children. As the discussion progress it becomes evident that understanding children's position(s) towards the process of integration necessitates an understanding of their perceptions of, and actions towards, their disabled peers as these develop within the wider childhood culture. This constitutes the topic of analysis in the second chapter of part five by focussing on the realm of peer relationships, with an emphasis on the socio-cultural processes of forming relationships between disabled and non-disabled children.

THE ISSUE OF EXPERIENCE

One of the points which emerged from discussions with teachers was their lack of a first hand experience with disabled individuals during their childhood years, a fact held by some as a potential reason for the "socio/cultural shock" encountered when they were asked to teach disabled students. Further, it was suggested that the invisibility of disabled individuals in the community was a factor in the cultivation of a social climate generative of prejudices towards disabled people. Thus, the majority of teachers spoke

optimistically about a reduction in prejudice and a development of more positive attitudes towards disabled individuals in view of their perception that the children attending their school had the opportunity from a very young age to come in contact with disabled peers.

However, children's experience of contact was not limited to their school environment; it extended outside the school setting as well, even though the degree of directness and the nature of contact differed from person to person.

Some children were in contact with disabled individuals within the family context on an everyday basis:

"My mum is disabled. She cannot lift some things. She is like Stuart [a physically disabled peer], her legs are a bit weak and she has to use some plasters to help her"

"My mum and dad are disabled. My mum has something all over her right side and she has told me that sometimes she says things and she does things but she doesn't mean it, 'cause sometimes her brain is muddled up with what she's saying and doing"

"My mum is disabled. She has a problem with parts of her body"

"My mum is disabled. When she was born her bones didn't work very well and now she can't work"

Others mentioned disabled individuals who were members of the network of relatives:

"I have a disabled uncle. He's 20 and he has difficulty walking..."

"My mum's mum when she fell down she became disabled and then she was in a wheelchair ..."

"I have a baby cousin in my family who is disabled. They are twins and one of them is disabled. His hair can grow a little bit and he cannot walk"

A minority of children referred to disabled friends of theirs, other than the ones they had met at school:

"I have a friend and he has trouble with his eyes and speaking..."

"I have a friend who is veery big. Well, he's a kid but he's sooo big. Sometimes he rips his hair"

A number of children had come in contact with disabled individuals through friends:

"My friend's sister is handicapped. She has a problem with her speaking. She's not speaking properly and she cannot understand the questions...I don't know what is the matter with her. She doesn't know where anything is, like she knows how to write but she scribbles"

"My friend's cousin is disabled"

"I have a friend and his sister is like handicapped..."

"My youngest friend is disabled. He's the closest handicapped friend I have. He's Jordan and he's very young. He's five years old and I know him because I know his brother."

In the children's accounts the most frequently mentioned context for meeting disabled individuals was the neighbourhood:

"Close to my house there is someone who cannot speak and he's... like he speaks but he's doing abebebe (imitating)"

"I have someone living close to my house and he cannot walk. He has a special car and he has a wheelchair and it has a remote control and you press this thing and it moves"

"We've got a person on our road who is disabled and he can't walk. He can't speak properly and he can't talk properly so I go around helping him..."

"There is someone close to my nannas, she's about 38 now and she has to use a wheelchair because she walks funny and she's blind. I think she has brain damage"

The variety of children's experiences with disabled individuals indicate that all of them were not relying on second hand knowledge when talking about disabled individuals and/or disability issues. Furthermore, the fact that all children had some kind of experience in encountering disabled people in different contexts indicates that disability was not perceived as "an esoteric phenomenon outside their experience, as conventional wisdom might have led us to believe. They saw it as part of their 'reality'" (Quicke, 1990; p. 108). For this reason, their accounts regarding the process of integration and their attitudes towards disabled individuals are of a great significance because they represent an insider's point of view.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In addition to the information drawn from the childrens' actual encounters with disabled individuals, three other sources stood out - school, family and the media. Each source complemented the other and children often referred to all three simultaneously.

A school catering for disabled pupils was predictably a context within which disability issues would emerge:

"I know all this from my school. Not that somebody necessarily has talked to me about it, but I have seen Paul in the class and how Paul leaves from the class and what kind of work he's doing"

"Mrs S...[a support teacher] has talked to us about them [disabled people]. She told us not to do too much for them. Like not to hang their coat up and not to fetch their lunch box for them and she told us not to laugh at disables"

"I have heard [the word mentally ill] from school. Like you're a bit funny at the brain and I'm interested in mental 'cause some people are violent 'cause of their brain. I see it on tv..."

As the last account indicates, the mass media, and especially television, was another source of information about disabled individuals:

"...on the telly there is a programme that shows that a girl is in a wheelchair and shows that she's going to parties and discos with her friends"

"I have seen lots of disabled people on tv. I've watched a programme called 'Children in need and children with courage' and another programme.

"...from tv, there is a programme which does sign language and there is another program that shows some of the tasks that disabled people can do"

The vast majority of children mentioned their parents, especially their mothers, as being amongst the main sources of information about disabled individuals:

"I know somebody [who is handicapped] since I was three and my mum told me that she's handicapped and my mum said that this lady is still handicapped [even though she has grown up].

"She [my mum] told me that sometimes handicapped is someone who's not at the wheelchair."

"My mum and dad have talked to me about disabled people. They've told me people in life aren't as lucky as me and they haven't got all nice clothes and they can't run and talk properly"

"When I was little I asked my mum why people can't read or anything and she just said because they're, like, handicapped, so like they don't know much"

"One of my dad's friends, well, his dad used to go to school with somebody like that and he used to stick up for him and sometimes when he sees him I'm usually with him sometimes and tells me about him...He tells me that his brain is not working - it's stopped growing"

While the above accounts indicate that people are more inclined to talk about disability issues, they also show that discussions around these issues, especially within a family context, are mainly limited to conventional ideological meanings of disability based more on a medical perception of what disability involves. Thus it was not surprising that many children revealed a conventional notion on the causes of disability.

A CONVENTIONAL NOTION OF CAUSE

As the following accounts indicate, the vast majority of younger children -year one and two- revealed either confusion or a lack of awareness and/or knowledge. Often, they referred to what they perceived as the behavioural characteristics exhibited by disabled children as an explanation of why some children were disabled and/or "handicapped":

"They're disabled because they're punching and kicking and cannot speak and not sit 'cause they're are disabled"

"They cannot talk properly 'cause they've got a bad voice 'cause they did a lot of shouting/

"They can't understand what you're saying 'cause when you ask them to do something they don't do it"

"They have a broken back and they have a wheelchair 'cause they have broken legs and arms and if they don't have someone to look after them they have an electric chair"

"She's disabled cause she's fat"

The responses of older children revealed that they viewed disability as the result of two circumstances: either that disabled children were born like that or they were disabled due to an "accident":

"They were born like that or they might have had an accident"

"They were brain damaged when they were born"

"...they have something with their brain and they were born like that"

"They were born with things wrong"

"Sometimes [someone becomes disabled] because of the spray that some farmers use, like the pesticide to kill some germs, and then a pregnant woman is being affected."

"If their mum were smoking, or it is not born properly or it can be born very small and these babies can die"

"They had an accident and they are in a wheelchair. They're handicapped"

"They're mum might've had an accident when she had the baby in her stomach and the baby was hurt"

Even though it is clear from the above accounts that older children held no bizarre beliefs it is significant that "causation" was ascribed either to "life" or to "accidents" with no acknowledgment of any 'social' explanations (i.e. consequence of wars, occupational environment, malnutrition and/or poverty, or labelling processes; see also Quicke et al, 1990; p. 111; Kyle et al., 1991; Abberley, 1987).

THE INTEGRATION DEBATE FROM THE CHILDREN'S POINT OF VIEW

As has already been mentioned, a picture portraying two girls -a non-disabled female stranger and a female stranger with Down's Syndrome- acted as the stimulus for initiating discussion on the integration process and the formation of interpersonal relationships between disabled and non-disabled individuals. However, the children had a first hand experience of being educated -at least physically- with peers with Down's

Syndrome and thus their accounts were responses to fictional/hypothetical questions and those referring to their actual everyday schooling experience. The transition from the fictional/hypothetical world to their own real world took place in a "natural" way. The picture generated questions and created "realities" drawn from an already existing ideological and cultural environment - that of the childrens' own experience (see: Chapter 3).

In the initial phase of describing Claire and Sam (the girls of the picture) and creating a story about them, almost all of the hundred and three children indicated that Sam was younger than Claire. This reflects the tendency of "ordinary" children to perceive disabled children as being younger than their actual chronological age (see Strain, 1984; Lewis et al; 1988). However, to be "younger", in the way children used that term within this specific context, also meant being "less mature" and "less clever" than Claire, who was perceived as being older. Age was considered as a reason for the two girls not attending the same class:

"She [Sam] cannot be in the same class as Claire 'cause she's eight and eights are downstairs (infant) just getting ready to come up (junior)"

Pupil A: Sam will be in a younger class and Claire will be in an older class

Interviewer: Why?

Pupil B: Because Claire looks a bit older than Sam

Only a small number of pupils thought that both Claire and Sam were attending the same class, indicating that the composition of the hypothetical class consisted of mixed-aged students, similar to the ones they themselves were attending:

Pupil A: They're going to the same class/

Pupil B: Yeah, 'cause, like, in classes they have nine and ten year olds or eight and nine.

Pursuing the discussion further, however, it was revealed that reasons other than age affected children's judgemental position(s) regarding the educational placement of the two girls. The first questions that the picture raised for children were related to issues concerning the perceived identity of the two girls, and this seemed to exert a

significant influence on their subsequent responses. Thus, children were initially engaged in placing Claire and Sam into certain social categories: "normal" and "disabled". These categories were used as the basis for drawing inferences about the girls even though they knew little or nothing about them beyond what they perceived to be characteristics of each category. It was these inferences that the children were using in explaining the girls' perceived behaviour, in making predictions about them and in forming perceptions of their place in the general social order.

The first issue to emerge in the process of creating the identity of Sam was related to the more wider social effort of promoting the idea of a continuum of "handicap":

Pupil A: Yeah 'cause they're in different classes.

Interviewer: They're not in the same class?

Pupil B: No, because Sam looks different than Claire.

Interviewer: What's the difference?

Pupil B: Her teeth

Interviewer: Is her teeth a reason to be in a different class?...

Pupil C: No, but she's [Sam] not exactly the same as Claire. She looks like...She's a bit like, like Paul [a peer with Down's Syndrome] and Patricia/

Pupil B: or Nick [a peer identified as a "resource student"] and Kathy [a peer identified as a "resource student"].

Pupil A: Kathy is ten but she's in Mrs B..'s group but she's coping in the proper class.

Interviewer: I think I've lost you. You said that Sam looks like Paul and Patricia/

Pupil A: 'cause she doesn't look like she knows everything, like spelling things.

Pupil C: Like Patricia...pause...Like Patricia, she doesn't know much and she [Sam] looks like she doesn't know much.

Pupil B: She looks like Kathy/

Pupil A: Kathy knows some things and others she doesn't, but Patricia doesn't know anything like that.

From participant observations in the class attended by the above group of pupils and discussions with both the mainstream and support teachers of the class it was noted that the four children mentioned above [Kathy, Paul, Patricia and Nick] were identified as resource pupils. Paul was a pupils with Down's Syndrome, Patricia was identified by the teachers as a child with autistic tendencies, while Kathy and Nick were identified as children with learning difficulties. The above account indicates the children's struggle to

place Sam into a category which accorded with her perceived degree of "handicap" or "individual needs".

It seems that the idea of a continuum of "handicap" engenders conflict when thinking about disability and disabled people by acknowledging that different disabled people or, in this case, "resource children" exhibit different strengths and weaknesses. But, the philosophy of a continuum of "needs" or "handicap" did not necessarily alleviate the barrier between "normal" and "disabled". As Quicke (1990) has already suggested, "One could argue that the notion of a continuum of handicap reinforces rather than punctures stereotypes because the barrier between 'normal' and 'handicapped' is retained in this idea. Persons may be categorized as mildly, severely or profoundly handicapped but they still have a handicapped identity" (p. 121). In the pupils' words

"She [Sam] is like Peter [a peer with Down's Syndrome]...Nick and Philip I don't think *they're sooo brain damaged* like not so much as Peter" (my emphasis).

Student A: She's like Kris. Kris is handicapped. Is Kris handicapped?

Student B: I don't know. *He's not as handicapped as* Peter but he's a resource student. I know that (my emphasis).

All children with Down's Syndrome were classified by their peers as being "very handicapped" which meant they were "more handicapped" than their "handicapped" peers with all the social connotations implied. The struggle to categorize centered mainly on the rest of the so called "resource" pupils for whom the perception of them as being "handicapped" still was retained by the majority of children, differing only in the degree, severity and intensity of the perceived "handicap".

Furthermore, when comparisons were made this idea meant that at one end of the continuum were the "normal" children and at the other end the disabled children, with the implicit assumption that the "normal" are always better than the disabled pupils who, within this comparative context were "always slow" and "need help". Even in cases where children could identify ordinary pupils in their own classes as "being slow" or having difficulties in learning, the differentiation between "normal" and "disabled"

still remained on the basis of a perceived quantifiable degree of difficulty (i.e. *always* slow):

Pupil A: Sam needs more help than Claire/

Pupil B: She needs a special teacher cause she's backwards.

Interviewer: Backwards? What does backwards mean?

Pupil A: She's slow. Like Norma Philips [an ordinary classmate]... She's on the last question and she had about twenty attempts at it and got them all wrong/

Interviewer: So Norma is "backwards"?

Pupil C: Nooo. She [Norma] is not backwards. She can do it but she get's everything wrong... Sam is like Mari [a peer with Down's Syndrome]

Student B: Oh yeah. She's always slow.

In comparing academic achievement, children seemed to focus on the abilities of ordinary pupils and the weaknesses of the disabled pupils, magnifying in this way the differences between "normal" and disabled children [a pattern identified in teachers' accounts as well; see Chapter 5). Even though they were aware that ordinary pupils have difficulties and needs as well, often, in creating Claire's identity, they seemed to have a particular image of "the ideal ordinary pupil" not very different from the one reinforced by the new educational trends or those desired by a large proportion of teachers:

Pupil A: She (Claire) does very good work. She likes maths science, art, english and colouring... She doesn't need much help 'cause she's clever

Pupil B: She can do anything

Describing Claire:

Student A: She's good at everything. She's good at maths, at english, at sports..."

Describing Claire:

Student A: She's clever, hard working, fast

Student B: Intelligent

Student A: She's like Susan Smith, [an ordinary peer]. She knows everything .

Juxtaposed to Claire's perceived academic abilities were Sam's perceived "inabilities":

"..she's not able to write like other people can"

"she doesn't know as many words as ordinary people"

"she's not able to write very well [and] she might be a bit deaf"

"She's not good at colouring, she's scribbling and she works in a rush"

"She doesn't know how to spell, how to draw and things like that"

"She's slow, I don't think she's as good as Claire. She needs more help than Claire 'cause she makes quite a lot of mistakes"

"She's rubbish, she cannot do English, she cannot do gymnastics. She's rubbish...when she's writing she's always scribbling, she's too heavy and she goes like that [imitating]"

Within this well-established ideological process and in accordance with the dominant identified pattern, it was only Sam who needed help and the dilemma was whether Sam could benefit from attending an ordinary school and in what way. The already existing alternative to the ordinary school was the special school, and thus the integration-segregation debate surfaced with almost no prompting from the interviewer:

Pupil A: I think that Claire goes to a school like ours and Sam to a special school.

Interviewer: Why?

Pupil A: If you send Claire to the same school as Sam then it would be a waste of money cause only Sam needs the help and Claire's alright. She can do good work like us in our class"

However, the issue is was much more complicated than the above account indicates since the same pupil, elsewhere during the discussion, offered a number of reasons for justifying his opinion that it would be better for Sam to be educated in an ordinary school. Conflicts and contradictions were the most prevailing elements in children's responses.

Ideological crossroads and unresolved tensions

From the vast majority of year four, five and six pupils it was felt that Sam should be educated in an ordinary school, identifying the ordinary school with their own - "in a school like ours". The reasons expressed for justifying such a position differed amongst pupils. As the following accounts indicate, some children, thought it "natural" that Sam should attend an ordinary school just as their disabled peers were doing:

Pupil A: "She [Sam] goes to a normal school, cause Helen and Paul go to an ordinary school/

Pupil B: "Yeah because Peter and Paul go to a normal school so she can go to a normal school"

Pupil A: "She [Sam] goes to a normal school. Like Peter, Caroline, Philip and George are in our school!"

Pupil B: "I think Sam should be able to come here [to their school] and sit next to Mrs B...[a support teacher]"

Pupil A: "Well, Sam can come to this school 'cause we have handicapped people in our class anyway"

In other cases, some children thought that Sam should attend an ordinary school as a matter of personal preference. The children, were quite clear and laconic in their responses, assuming that Sam's friends were attending an ordinary school or that Sam was already attending an ordinary school and thus she had already established some friendships:

"She should go to an ordinary school, because she likes a normal school and she wants to be with her friends"

"She wants to go to a normal school...all of her friends are there [in an ordinary school]...Like Paul and Peter they've got lots of friends to rely on and to play with in the playground... If they went to another school, like a special school they would break up from their friends"

Other pupils supported the idea of integration by enumerating what they thought as being the "main problems" of attending a special school. One of these problems, expressed mainly by year four and five pupils, was associated with the perception that special schools are boarding schools and thus expensive:

Pupil A: "...The problem is that special schools are, like, expensive, like you might have to pay for a special school!"

Pupil B: "Yeah, sometimes it could be 2000 pounds a year for a boarding school. You might not have that money."

Pupil A: "I think it will be a bit, like, harsh to, say the school it's quite far away from home, to get in and out with a wheelchair all the time, so you sleep over at a boarding school. But boarding schools are expensive"

The second "main" problem of attending a special school was associated with distance. Some children thought that disabled pupils should be able to be educated at the school nearest to them. This presumed that special schools were somewhere far away. In their confusion children often indicated that their own school was the nearest for disabled children, probably having in mind only one of their disabled peers, who happened to be a neighbourhood resident as well. In so thinking they failed to take

account of the so-called "resource pupils" who came to school by taxi or mini-bus from other, distant areas:

"She [Sam] should be able to go to a normal school, like this one...like Paul he's able to come to the school nearest to him. This is the school nearest to him and he only has to walk up the road"

"Well I think you have to "trudge(?)" a really long way to a special school..I think she should come here...The disabled can come to this school. It's only just around the corner"

However, it was not unusual to hear children wondering: "Disabled children can come to this school? We aren't handicapped are we?" or "We are not a special school. We are a normal school". Although such a response ostensibly addresses the placement of another apparently disabled individual, in practice its concern focuses on questions of identification and categorisation often related to the complex process of classifying the Self by classifying others. Some children, in clarifying that they were different from their disabled peers, indicated that the latter were not doing the same work as they, "the normals" :

Pupil A:"Peter, Caroline, Philip and George were in the class that we are. We're not handicapped are we?"

Pupil B:No. We don't do the same work as them"

"...their work is made much easier than us. Because they're resource children they do handicapped work, like Peter"

"... 'cause they're resource children their work is made much easier than us so that they can learn better. They have difficulty in learning because they were born with brain damage and things like that"

"They do easy work, easy piezy lemon squeezy"

The above, along with children's tendency to focus on the within-the-child difficulties, by emphasizing disabled peers' inabilities, to achieve academically, lead them to the assumption that integration is a process that presupposes certain conditions:

"..because they [disabled pupils] don't have the same ability like me, like doing maths or english or going around the school but these children, the ones that haven't got the same ability as us, they need separate classes, like Peter"

"They need a special teacher and special work cause if they have the work that we do they never get it done"

In some cases the educational plan that children offered was specific and not very different from either the one many teachers, and particularly psychologists, espouse for the educational placement of disabled children, or some variation of the plan already in existence:

Pupil A: "She [Sam should go to] a special [school] first and then go on to, like, a school like ours/"

Pupil B: "When, like, your downstairs [at infant school] she might have gone into a special one and she might have gone downstairs to a special classroom but when she's upstairs [junior school] she goes in, like, just a normal class."

Pupil A: "She'll be like Helen...They'll see how clever she was and then they'd know which class to put her in and do all the arrangements"

The arrangements seemed to be quite specific. Children, in projecting the discursive practices within which they have learned to think about the process of integration and in adopting the main arguments deployed by adults in defining the notion of integration, thought that it would be beneficial for Sam (who represented disabled children) to attend an ordinary school, *provided that*:

"They have special teachers to look after them"

"They have special things to help them"

"She [Sam] should have her own personal class because she's not as good as her friend [Claire]. She needs to have like special care treatment"

"...they have teachers who can do special work. They have special classrooms"

"They've got special equipment and some special teachers that could help them to understand things and special computers so that they know what they're doing...With the special equipment it will be easier for Sam to understand."

Even though resources are necessary for creating a more inclusive education, the term "special" seemed to be such a dominant feature in children's responses that it was often one of the main reasons used in justifying the exclusion of disabled children from ordinary schools.

Many children indicated that it would have been more beneficial for disabled people to be educated in special schools. According to them, such schools are equipped with special staff and can offer disabled children more individual attention:

"It's better to go to a special school because she'll have more special teachers, like Mr H... or Mrs S...[support teachers] who look after, like, backwards people to make 'em go forward... They [special teachers] can help them [disabled people] better there [at a special school]. They can help them to walk better and talk. They help them to write properly"

"They've [at a special school] got more special teachers like Mrs M.. and Mr C [support teachers] who'll spend time with them [disabled children] rather than the other children"

"It's better [for Sam] to go to a special school because she might not get much attention here"

"..there's more staff she can do [at a special school] and things they can help her with. There's more special equipment."

The interesting phenomenon was that while the majority of children indicated that special schools were better for disabled children because they had special staff almost no-one indicated that their school lacked the above prerequisite. The justification for segregated education was based not on getting attention or of having special teachers, but on having more special teachers and on getting more attention.

In understanding children's accounts it would be a mistake to ignore that such responses are probably based on a realistic appraisal of the educational structures that children themselves experience. They can thus be viewed as a true concern for the education of disabled children. The fact that at overcrowded ordinary schools children are perceived as one of the crowd should not be underestimated. For instance, it was shown in the ORACLE study of junior-school classrooms (Galton, Simon and Croll 1980) that children interacted with their teachers for only 2.3 per cent of the time as individuals and only 15.8 per cent of the time as a member of a group or the whole class (in Pollard, 1992). As Pollard (1992) indicates "these are dramatically small overall figures, but ones which are perhaps inevitable given the teacher-pupil ratios which are deemed to be acceptable in primary school classrooms" (p. 41). Children, perceiving disabled pupils as needing more help than themselves and judging from their own experience of how difficult it is for teachers to spend a sufficient amount of time in responding to individual needs, could have been led to the assumption that it would be

better for their disabled peers to be educated in a special environment where more attention would be offered to them. In fact, from participant observations in three classes it was noted that "resource pupils" were often overlooked in busy classrooms, even in cases where activities were designed ostensibly to include all students. Under the present circumstances (see discussions with teachers) and in view of the established differentiation of "normal" and disabled groups of children that existed it was not coincidental that some pupils, expressing their own concerns as well as reflecting teachers' opinions, went even further by claiming that special teachers were necessary because, otherwise

"Mr R...[the mainstream teacher] would have to help all the children and the handicapped children as well"

"It wouldn't be fair for Mr W... [mainstream teacher] cause he's got two kinds of children ["normal" and disabled] and he'd spend more time on disabled than he would on us so he'll have to rely on us to behave"

"If Mr R...[mainstream teacher] were just teaching all of the class, he couldn't because they're, like, two people to handle at once: there's the whole class and there's the disabled part of the class..."

While statements such as the second one above express children's concern for their own educational experience as well, the responses as a whole did not differ from those offered by mainstream teachers who, under the current pressures, viewed as their first priority the education of "ordinary" children, leaving to support/"special" teachers the education of disabled students.

However, it is one thing to say that children require more contact time with their teachers and another to specify that it is only disabled children who are in need of individual attention by special teachers. The emphasis on "specialism" constitutes the discursive practices through which children come to view the notion of integration. If we consider that such an emphasis maintains the process of labelling by perpetuating the "ordinary"- "special" dualism, then children need to view disabled people as not being different from themselves, while at the same time they must learn to think and act

in terms of a linguistic system within which such distinctions are deeply rooted. Disabled children were perceived as needing "special" teachers, who in turn were often perceived as acquiring some particular characteristics that made them special. For instance, "special" teachers were perceived as necessary for the education of "special children", due not only to their functional role ("they know what they're doing with handicapped people") but also to the perceived characteristics attributed to someone who is involved with the education of disabled children. "Special" teachers were often characterized as being "very nice, and kind and patient and so another teacher might not have been as patient":

"Like Mrs H..is prepared to take them [disabled peers] aside and she's prepared to work with them in different things and she doesn't get impatient if she gives them something to do and they're not doing it, she is not saying "oh I am going to teach normal people." She actually takes the time and patience to teach these children."

It seems that the notion of "special", ascribes a particular connotation to characteristics that in fact are necessary for every teacher who is concerned with the education of children. But the particular connotations accompanying the above characteristics, when related to "special" teachers and thus "special" children, are not without a specific ideological basis. As expressed by a support teacher in describing his role,

"... Some people would say that I'm easy going. I don't like yelling and shouting, you see, because I don't think and this is my own personal idea that with resource children it's no good trying to frighten them...because you cannot reason totally with resource children because they are resource children... they do not understand I mean, sometimes you feel like doing it but it's a poor model to shout at these children and in most cases most of the resource children are getting yelled to and shouted at...You realize it is a very difficult job, isn't it?"

While the above teacher clarified that this was his personal opinion, observations in staffroom discussions demonstrated that he represented the predominant image "special" teachers had acquired, which was an extension of the image created for the "resource pupils" as well. Implicit in such images lies the assumption that limitless

patience and kindness are necessary characteristics of those involved with disabled children. In this way the importance of "special" teachers was strengthened even further by children.

The existence of "special" teachers was referred to first when children were asked whether they thought their school was prepared to educate disabled children. Special facilities was the second important element of the implementation of integration. Children felt their school lacked "special facilities"/ "special equipment" and this was one reason amongst others used in justifying their opinion that it would be better for disabled children to be educated at special schools:

"...there are [at Yorkshire school] teachers with special books and there are teachers who know how to teach them but the school doesn't have special facilities"

"It's better to go to a special school where they have special equipment for, lets say, blind people."

At the same time, however, and in addition to specialism, which implies that problems are located within-the-child, many students were aware that the process of integration could be problematic due to difficulties imposed by the environment of their school. Expressing a limited perception of the concept "environment", they focused on two areas which seemed to be of great importance in influencing their opinions regarding the integration of disabled peers: the structure of the building and ordinary pupils' behaviour towards disabled peers. Both areas were sources of controversy.

As far as the environment was concerned, children focused on the architectural obstacles that their school would impose on children with physical disabilities:

"They've not done it very good because what if they're in wheelchairs with all these stairs. They should have this, like, I've forgotten what they call it, but it's like a ramp going downstairs"

Most of year-six pupils, drawing from their past experience, offered a number of examples of physically disabled pupils that had to leave their school due to the existence of stairs:

"There was a girl called Fay and she was in our class . She had to be in a wheelchair and then she left school and went to another one because when it was time for her to go upstairs, there were too many stairs for her and she would have had problems...They don't have any slopes."

"Mike Thomas used to be here, but he had to leave from the school because he was using a wheelchair and he couldn't come up. There aren't any lifts [around?]"

"We had a girl that left because she was in a wheelchair and she couldn't come up. I think they're supposed to have lifts"

"...when we were downstairs there was somebody in a wheelchair and we were going to have, like, a lift but they thought it was too much so she had to go to another school"

The existence of stairs was used by some children as a reason for justifying their opinion that Sam could not be educated at their school. On this basis, many of them chose Claire when asked who they would have *liked* to come to their school, even though *there were no indications in the picture* that Sam was a physically disabled individual or had any difficulties with walking:

Pupil A: "I wouldn't bring Sam [to school] because if she's handicapped or something and she's in a wheelchair then it'd be hard for her to get around in our school 'cause at playtime you have to go down some stairs"

Interviewer: "Is she sitting in a wheelchair?"

Pupil B: "She's just sitting in a normal chair. She might have a wheelchair somewhere else in the house.."

Pupil A: [Justifying why he didn't choose Sam to come to his school]
"You can't get out of here without going downstairs"

Pupil B: "Yeah. You can't get out of here if you're upstairs, you've got to go downstairs and if she's in a wheelchair she won't be able to get downstairs so easily"

While children indicated an awareness of the difficulties that physically disabled children would encounter in an environment that had not been designed for them, practical difficulties were often used as a rationalization of exclusion. This found

reinforcement in combination with another area of controversy related to the social relations between ordinary and disabled children.

The vast majority of children expressed the opinion that it would have been beneficial for Sam and for disabled people to be educated in an ordinary school because in this way they would have the opportunity to mix with ordinary children:

"She'll mix in. She can play with other people"

"She'll mix with normal people"

"Ordinary schools are better so that they can make friends with other people.."

"[In an ordinary school] they've got lots of friends to rely on and to play with in the playground. Like Peter, he's enjoying being in the class because he's not surrounded by all handicapped people. He's surrounded by other persons like me and Pauline"

"She [Sam] could have some good friends, be cared about and ...[unclear] her friends will make her join in. She might not get bullied"

"She [Sam] can go to an ordinary school, 'cause she will mix with normal people like us and she can learn more. Like she could do songs, she can learn how to play properly and do things like normal people do, so that she doesn't have to be relying on people all the time."

As Quicke (1990) indicates "recognition of the value of mixing is regarded as a progressive development" (p. 117). For the pupils of this study, mixing with other people, "with the normals", was important not only in making friends but in being perceived as normal:

"They'll treat them as normal - they won't cast them aside"

"He [a peer with Down's syndrome] has lots and lots of friends. He wouldn't know that he has all these friends because he goes around and says hello to everybody and the others just treat him like a normal person"

"I know what he's [a peer with Doen's syndrome] enjoying. He's enjoying it when we treat him as a normal person"

"[In an ordinary school] she'll have friends and she'll be taught by teachers as a normal person"

"She might have [in an ordinary school] more friends and more people to help her because she'll be getting to the standards - to what other people are now"

To be perceived of as a normal person was of great significance, especially to older pupils. As was the case with teachers, children indicated a strong association between the process of integration and the process of acquiring "normalcy". Being perceived as normal and/or being treated as normal was regarded by the children as a productive learning experience for their disabled peers. However, being "normal" meant "being like us" and the conflict originated out of the very fundamental ideology expressed by the majority of pupils (see following chapter) that "disabled people are not like us. "Treating" disabled people as "normal" while at the same time perceiving the normality of their social identity as fragile and negotiable seemed to be an endemic contradiction, creating not only conflicts in perceptions and actions but a particular notion of humanism as well. While "mixing with 'normal' children" seemed to be a justification for integration, it also constituted an area for justifying exclusion on the grounds that these children needed to be protected from their 'normal' peers because they would be picked on by them:

"It is better for Sam to go to a private [special] school where she can mix with people of her own kind... If you're at a special school most people are like you"

"It's better [for Sam] to go to a special school because at a special school everyone's like that and they can't make fun of her. They're all like that really...they are the same and they cannot torment each other"

"[It's better for disabled children to go to special schools] because all the other people are handicapped and there are not going to be other people to pick on them"

Such accounts reveal that disabled persons were indeed perceived by the children as being different than themselves and this difference was a potential source of being "tormented". Moreover, the reasoning behind such responses was strongly based on the assumption/stereotype that all disabled children are the same and thus one could not "torment" the other. The word "torment" was used as a synonym to "calling names", "teasing", "making fun of" or "pulling faces". Simultaneously, however, children were aware that the problem lay not only in the "differences" exhibited by disabled children but also in the behaviour of the "non-disabled" children towards disabled individuals.

'Picking on' behaviour was clearly significant because, as the children's accounts suggested, it ranked in importance with specialism and special equipment as a reason for considering integration as a problematic process. Surprisingly, while children, in reference to Sam, saw 'picking on' behaviour as a main problem of the disabled child attending an ordinary school, when referring to their actual disabled peers they no longer saw teasing disabled students as such a great problem.

The findings related to the formation of interpersonal relations suggested that "picking on disabled children" was a far more complicated phenomenon than it seemed to be at first glance - it was part of or even a consequence of a much wider social process. The issue of picking and being picked on by someone else can be understood only within the wider context of the children's struggle to establish and position the "self" and the "other" within childhood culture. These struggles involved a realm of power relationships surrounding one of the most common themes in children's culture: that of competence. Every child had gone through the experience, differing in degree and nature, of the power games taking place within the formation of relationships (see also: Davies, 1982) which in turn was influencing and was influenced by the image and the status of each of them within group situations. In other words, every child had experienced "picking on behaviour". As a pupil put it, "Everyone gets picked on every once in a while".

'Picking on' behaviour was part of the power game(s) included in forming relationships and it was probably what lay behind the actual action of "picking on someone" that was more important than the behaviour per se. For instance, pupils were aware that terms such as "spaz", "thick" and often "handicapped" were "rotten" and/or "awful" names to call someone. However, they continued to use them when referring to some of their peers who were by no means all "resource pupils", although such pupils were included as well. It was not the label per se that was "awful" but the aim(s) of using such labels. As Edgerton (1967) has noted such labels " ... not only serve as a

humiliating, frustrating, and discrediting stigma in the conduct of one's life in the community, but it also serves to lower one's self esteem to such a nadir of worthlessness that the life of a person so labelled is scarcely worth living" (p. 145). Translating this into the children's reality, picking on peers by using such derogatory names was a way of lowering the other's status and self esteem, a way to show superiority or a way of indicating rejection by a particular group at a particular time.

The overwhelming majority of pupils probably mentioned 'picking on' behaviour as a negative aspect of integrating disabled pupils because, "picking on" behaviour was an integral element within childhood culture and the ones who were at the receiving end of such behaviour were those who had lower status within that culture:

"I don't like being at the playground because sometimes people call you names, like they call me pirate head because they don't like me any more"

"I don't like going outside, 'cause they call you names like stupid idiot, they call me thick-head or stupid and they don't want to play with me"

Pupil A: "I don't like calling disabled people funny names because they're the same as anybody else but it's not their fault"

Interviewer: Is the word disabled a bad word?

Pupil A: not really, it is better than spastic (the other two children start laughing)

Interviewer: Why are you laughing?

Pupil B: because Robert [pupil A] calls people spastic and he starts swearing at people/

Pupil A: yeah, because they're calling me names and they're calling me fatty and big blob and it annoys me when they call me big fat blob"

It seemed, however, that disabled peers had a particular status, as many pupils claimed that most of their peers did not pick on disabled children because "it was not fair" since "it was not their fault" that they were disabled. As one pupil put it: "'cause she's different you have to try and be kind to her more." Another reason offered as an explanation of why they were not picking on their disabled peers related to the consequences that such behaviour would entail:

"If somebody picks on Paul [a peer with Down's Syndrome] he gets punished, like he gets lines or tables"

Pupil A: "They don't pick on disabled"

Pupil B: Yeah, cause Mr P...(the head teacher) won't let them"

Pupil C: He won't let the bullies bully them, 'cause they'll get seriously punished...[pause] They daren't, they don't want to face punishment"

Pupil B: They'll have to write out lines. You've got to write out the same sentence over and over again for as many times as he [the head-teacher] wants you".

There were, however, some students who, as a matter of principle, were not calling their peers names whether they were disabled or not. As a pupil put it, "You don't say to the other that he's fat or disabled. You're going to hurt his feelings".

When children mentioned that there were people who were picking on their disabled peers or people who were going to pick on Sam in the event she attended their school, they usually were quite uncertain of who was picking or who would pick on them. Almost every child indicated that it was the others and not they themselves who picked on disabled pupils.

In the youngest class of pupils who participated in this study, years one and two, most of the boys indicated a group of four girls, known as "the brainy ones", as people who picked on everybody. They were thus viewed as a potential source of difficulty for disabled pupils. At the same time, however, the vast majority of the girls of this class named three boys, "the naughty ones" as those involved in aggressive behaviour, though not necessarily towards their disabled peers.

In older classes, very few students, of either gender thought it would be mainly boys who were going to pick on Sam. Others, both boys and girls, drawing from their own experience thought that it would be the Y7's, and of these mainly the boys who played football at a specific playground, that were going to pick on Sam:

Interviewer: "Who do you think is going to pick on Sam?"

Pupil A: No-one in our class, somebody from another class

Pupil B: Like Y7

Interviewer: Y7?

Pupil A: Yeah, cause she's younger and she just started

"... Like year sevens, they're really rough. They bully a lot because like, you're younger than them and, like, you're smaller than them and they think you can't do as much things as them because they're older"

Younger pupils, both boys and girls or boys who were perceived as "weak", seemed to generalize from their own experience with the older and "tougher" male pupils who expressed their superiority and macho identity by forming a football team that was accessible to few dominating in this way a particular space and creating a 'territory' for themselves at the expense of girls and younger pupils. Most of these boys, however, viewed their actions as "part of the fun" by including disabled peers, mainly boys, in their teams. From participant observations it was noted that while children with Down's Syndrome were often not included in these teams because, according to the "leaders" of the team, "they can't understand the rules of the game", a physically disabled peer, in contrast, was one of the lads in the football team. Most of the boys did not view themselves as oppressing their disabled peers even though they indicated that the girls were more likely to become friends with Sam and be more caring towards her. It's difficult, however, to distinguish whether this response was offered because Sam was a disabled individual or because she was female.

The children's accounts did not reveal the gender issue in children's attitudes towards integration with the intensity expected. Quicke's (1989, 1990) analysis on disability and gender relations can shed some light on this issue. According to the findings of his study,

"...the girls' generalizations from their own experiences of boys' assertive behaviour were particularly understandable, but this, plus their own emerging allegiance to traditional female images led to their misrecognizing the boys' potential for making positive relationships with mentally handicapped(sic) pupils. Similarly, boys could have been helped to a realization of the inconsistencies and ambiguities in their own position: like, for instance, the contradiction between their emphasis on *equality* and *dignity* in relation to mentally handicapped(sic) and their emergent sexist attitudes in relation to girls."

An affective aspect of integration

Children's responses to the question of whether they liked to be in the same class with disabled peers revealed some interesting findings. Year one and two pupils were negative about the idea of being educated together with the so-called "resource" pupils. The reasoning used in justifying such feelings was based more on children's perceived images of their peers rather than the process of integration per se. The responses were centred around a description of what was perceived by them as unacceptable behaviour with a greater emphasis on the behaviour of their female peer with Down's Syndrome (see following chapter for further analysis of this social phenomenon):

Older pupils claimed that they liked being in the same class as their disabled peers. As one pupil put it "it makes it different", even though the notion of "different" had a variety of meanings and reasonings. Pupils liked to be educated with disabled peers because they perceived it as a beneficial experience for themselves. They were "learning" out of this experience even though the type of learning had multiple dimensions. Some claimed that it was beneficial seeing that disabled children were able to do things as well:

"It's good to see that people like Kelly and Paul can do things, like Kelly and Paul are handicapped people and it's good when they're dancing with us and when we do p.e together"

"I like it 'cause if you can see some handicapped people doing some good colouring you think 'God I can't do as good colouring as that' and today Peter did some good colouring and everybody started looking at it and going 'Oh' 'cause it was really good."

"We learn that they're just like other people and it's good to treat them like everybody else"

"I like having them in the class. Sometimes they show us things that disabled people can do. Like, if someone is in a wheelchair he shows you how they use them and things like that, how you steer them"

Others claimed that they liked to be with disabled pupils because they learned "how to cope with them". As the following accounts indicate, the language used is not

very different from that some adults employ when referring to the benefits of integration for non-disabled pupils:

"...you learn to cope with those. Like if you want to be a teacher you learn to cope with those when you're young and then when you get older you know what to like do when they're doing something"

"You learn how to cope with them and then when you're somewhere public and there's a disabled person there he or she needs help, you know how to cope with them"

Some pupils liked the fact that,

"Sometimes they [disabled peers] get the same work like us and if they cannot understand then we do it again and we understand it better"

However, according to the dominant pattern, children enjoyed having disabled peers in the same class for two basic reasons: firstly, "it was more fun" and secondly, they could help them.

"It was more fun" to have disabled peers in the class either because,

"You get more people in the class and there's more fun when there's more people inside. Like I like Mrs B...and Mrs S...[the support teachers] and today I was messing with Hellen [a peer identified as a "resource" student] and Mrs B...was telling us to be quiet and then Mrs S... walked in and said 'Yeah, shut up' and I thought that was funny and everybody [including the teachers] started laughing"

or because

"I like Paul [a student with Down's Syndrome] to be in my class because he's funny and he's a non-stop joker"

"I like it because they make us laugh. Like Patricia when she says 'Hello Mr R...' and she makes us laugh and we like Mr R...when he tells us jokes"

Characterizations such as "being funny" and "making jokes" were perceived by the majority of students as positive personality traits. Furthermore, from participant observations it was noted that children either welcomed or purposely created "funny" situations so as to break the formalities, the tensions, the stress and/or the boredom of the classroom environment. However, it was difficult to distinguish whether they were laughing with or at their particular disabled peer, who happened to do or say something

that was perceived as "funny". In other words, it was difficult to understand whether it was the "deviation" of the act that generated laughter or whether children concentrated more on the social interaction and the sharing of the social situation.

Finally, children liked being in the same class with disabled pupils because they had the opportunity to help them:

"I like it 'cause I learn him [Paul] how to measure and learn him some things like measuring. That [measuring] is a difficult thing to learn. Isn't it?"

"Yeah, I like being with them 'cause you can help 'em reading and stuff like that when you haven't got nothing to do. Sometimes Mr F...asks us to do a jigsaw with them or something"

"[I like it] 'cause we can help them. When I was downstairs there was a girl who had an electrical chair and she could talk and read and write and me and my friends, we were pushing her and we were playing trains with her"

Many children feeling that disabled pupils needed more education but also more help than "normal" children saw it as a moral obligation to "provide" it to them. On the basis of this obligation they chose Sam when asked who they would have liked to be educated at their school:

"I'll choose Sam 'cause we could help her"

"Yeah, Sam 'cause we could help her. Claire doesn't need much help 'cause she's clever and you know, 'cause she's [Sam] backwards and handicapped we could help her"

"I'd choose Sam 'cause she needs to learn more things than Claire [and] 'cause she needs special care and she needs people to look after her"

"I'll pick the disabled because we can help her...She's got to learn more. She needs more education than Claire does"

While the notion of "help" is a desirable social feature among people, it can have different underlying connotations, especially, when it is strongly linked with a humanism based on needs (and its synonym "the needy") rather than rights within a society dominated by notions of competence, individualism and the ability to be self-sufficient. As Thomas (1982) indicates,

"We know that our society is in part based on an ethic which gives emphasis to self-sufficiency and independence, status and success, power, and wealth; and while it acknowledges that there are disadvantaged individuals and groups whose needs can legitimately be met, there is a survival of belief in self-sufficiency such as to make the recipient of public and private assistance feel subordinate and inferior" (p. 72)

Quicke's (1986) study of interventions in pupil-pupil interactions, like those of peer tutoring schemes and special educational needs, sheds further light on this point. According to his findings, situations within which one person provides help and the other receives it "are not as straightforwardly a 'good' thing as many of their protagonists may imagine. Far from being a positive intervention in the pupils' world they may paradoxically highlight and reinforce the negative aspects of pupil culture to the detriment of special needs pupils (sic)" (p. 163). That is because any such interventions should be grounded on a thorough understanding of pupils' meanings and the social processes which generate them. According to this study, children thought of their disabled peers as "always needing help" because of their "inabilities" and thus they were perceived not as people who are helped but as 'helped people' - a status which places dependency over personality. Such a status had negative consequences for disabled children perceived as having a passive role in situations where they were being helped by their non-disabled peers. Due to this perceived status, many children claimed that ordinary children often "get fed up" with helping disabled children and this was held as a possible reason of why "normal" children didn't like to be with disabled children.

Nevertheless, it was heartening to hear that many children liked being educated with their disabled peers. Those who expressed negative feelings claimed that they did not like the "disruption" caused by the existence of disabled peers within a class context:

"I like it [being in the same class with Paul] because he does jokes and we laugh but sometimes what I don't like is when you're telling him to be quiet and you are trying to say to him to be quiet and the teacher is asking you to write something you have missed it and you get done"

"...'cause they mess about. They don't let me go on with my work, 'cause Mari will hide all the rubbers and she disrupts us and we have to start our work from the beginning"

"... Not really, [I don't like being in the same class with Peter] 'cause sometimes he can be a pain, when he's good he's good but when he's bad I don't like him to be in my class because sometimes he tries to be funny but he's stupid and when the teacher is talking to us and Peter was shouting I couldn't understand what he was saying"

"All the teachers gather round them and they shout and they speak loud and you're not able to concentrate"

Finally, others expressed their concern that disabled pupils may attract teachers' and others' attention at the expense of "normal" children:

"...like on parent's evening she [the teacher] might comment on their work and not ours 'cause, like, they're different and they [parents] know that we can do it but they don't know about them"

"They get more attention [from the teachers], 'cause they might be stuck and the teachers are spending all the time with them"

In summary, after introducing the backdrop which formed the contextual framework of approaching children's accounts, the above discussion focused on the way children viewed and felt about the integration of disabled children. Children's accounts indicate the complexities and contradictions inherent in this process, projecting also the conflicting messages children are receiving from their wider social environment. In the same way as the children participating in Quicke's (1990) study, the children of this study deployed every argument in the current debate for justifying their responses. My experience from analyzing children's accounts concerning their attitudes towards integration shared something of Quicke's experience in observing the discussions of sixth formers regarding their attitude to their working class roots:

"In discussion groups it was observed that most participants were likely to use arguments based on both racist and tolerant themes, with some discussions going full circle, so that some people ended up expressing views which directly contradicted those used at the start of the discussion" (in Quicke, 1991; p. 51)

Children's attitudes towards the integration process tended to be conflicting and confusing as the overriding affirmation revealed by children was that they held contradicting judgemental positions, exhibiting an *ambivalence of whether it was beneficial for disabled children to be educated in an ordinary school*. This dilemma preoccupied children's discussions and generated further dilemmas indicating that the process of integration includes a number of issues that constitute areas of controversies (i.e. defining integration, creating academic identities, locating 'the problems' and defining the notion of 'mixing'). In turn these areas were used as justifying either the inclusion or the exclusion of disabled children from ordinary schools.

Even though it can be said that children were able to oscillate between an "integrationist" and a "segregationist" position regarding the education of their disabled peers, such a distinction neither suffices nor helps to explain the unresolved controversies expressed by them. The dilemma of whether it is beneficial for disabled individuals to be educated in ordinary schools was not invented by them. Perceptive children in reflecting on their dilemmas and conflicts projected also the contradictions and tensions that already exist in the social world within which they have been immersed. The moral dilemma projected by children is a conflict at a societal level as well. On one hand it is connected with the liberal cultural norms based on notions of humanism, of helping and valuing disabled people. On the other hand it is connected with the economic and political interests that by focussing on standards, achievement and the smooth functioning of ordinary schools create structures within which assessing disablement means actually putting one in a lower status. Thus, the integrationist and/or segregationist opinions that children held were rationalizations by them of trying to handle the moral dilemma which is just as much a cultural dilemma as an individual one. But an examination of the attitudes towards the process of integration, especially when *social* integration is the topic under discussion, necessitates also an examination of the issues involved in forming relationships/friendships between disabled and non-disabled children. This can be done only in association with the wider context of

childhood culture within which friendships are of a central importance. Thus, the following chapter 'enters' into the realm of childhood culture in an attempt to explore the meaning children ascribe to their interactional and perceptual patternings with their disabled peers.

Chapter 7

DISABLED CHILDREN WITHIN THE REALM OF CHILDHOOD CULTURE

Child-culture: enabling in one respect, constraining in another

To begin with, understanding children's definitions of friendship necessitates *to relate these definitions to the particular structure within which children have been positioned*. Children, due to their structural position, are amongst the most vulnerable groups especially in these social contexts (i.e. family and school) which form most of their everyday life. That does not mean that they are powerless (even though that is the case in some circumstances) it rather implies that they have to deal with social expectations, contradictions, ambiguities and evaluations that not only are externally imposed on them, but often can be potentially threatening for their own self-identity. They have to perform within a social context where the conceptualization of their role includes a number of ambiguities:

"...children are important and unimportant, they are expected to behave childishly but are criticized for this childishness; they are supposed to play with absorption when told to play, and not mind stopping when told to stop, they are supposed to be dependent when adults prefer dependence and responsible when adults prefer that; they are supposed to think for themselves, but they are criticised for original solutions to problems."

(Calvert, 1975; p.19 in Pollard, 1985)

As far as their life within an educational setting is concerned, they are expected to be one of the crowd but to work individually as well. They can speak when they are told to, while the approved topic of discussion within a classroom situation is usually pre-defined by an adult who, in addition, evaluates the perceived quality of the response. Thus learning to survive means first and foremost learning to interact with adults, which in turn means learning what the adult wants. Speier (1976) has shown how between the 'culture contact' of adults and children, the latter often find themselves within a

restricted position in terms of conversational rights especially when disagreements or arguments arise. This restriction is intensified in an educational environment where children are routinely judged on how well they can "fit" in with the routines and activities which either the teacher or the institution develop in order to manage different situations. They are subjected to teacher power and they are required to respond to pedagogic approaches that have been considered, by someone else, as appropriate for their development as competent social members. They have to comply with an official curriculum that they have little say over. As the following accounts indicate, this does not mean that they have nothing to say, but because they lack the power to define what should count as the reality of schooling their definitions of the situation have a lesser degree of sticability when compared to teacher definitions:

Pupil A: ".. we want to do something that is more exciting, that we are more interested to do, but Mr G...just picks on something and he goes on from the books and we know every Monday we have to do this and that. I want to change the system. We should get a choice of what we want to do, like what topic we'd like to do. We should be able to choose."

Pupil A: Mr F... gives us hard work and expects us to do it. He expects us to do crosswords/

Pupil B: and sometimes he gets very annoyed. He expects us to do everything that he gives and if we do something wrong he shouts. I don't like it when he gets angry and starts shouting.

Pupil A: I'd like to change the way tables are. I would like the tables to be more closed together like Mr S... allows the children to sit wherever they want but in our class we have to sit boys and girls so that we can be quieter

Pupil B: I would like in the class to have a more unisex colour. Now it's pink but I want a colour to suits both boys and girls, like green or red

Within an educational environment the development of individual interests, needs and desires can be regarded as impractical, partly because of the nature of the adult/teacher-child relationship which is based, to a large extent, on an on-going supervision and regulation of children's lives, and partly because of the limitations inherent in institutional organizations such as schools. Thus, regardless of the way children view the situation, they are expected to accept it and to adjust their own lives to it. As Pollard (1985) suggests:

"their success or failure [to do so] may have a great importance in terms of their identities and ultimately of their chances in life...The experience of the children will vary, first according to their degree of acceptance of the teacher's curricular aims and second, if they do accept them, according to their ability to carry those aims out" (p. 84).

Thus, it was expected that children's responses towards their experience of schooling would vary from child to child. The following exchange between two friends is indicative of the variation which exists among different children's experience of schooling; this variation is associated not only with the nature of the experience but also with the intensity of feelings involved:

Pupil A: I like school because as you get to a different stage and different age there are more things that you're learning... You can learn one thing from the television program but you can learn much more from other things at school. I like the teachers/

Pupil B: Play-time is the best thing and dinner times. I like/

Pupil A: Yeah, I like both playtimes and dinner times. I don't like school holidays because you don't learn/

Pupil B: You're mad. If you are on holiday you can read your own books and sit on your chair and dream. You don't have to get up for sucking school.

Interviewer: What is "sucking school?"

Pupil B: It's like you want to step on it. Like, I like to go to trips and I like answering questions, and I like stories and I like training and I like learning different things at different stages but n-o-t a-t t-h-i-s b-u-i-l-d-i-n-g. I don't like this building and I'll take you (the researcher) and Jim (his friend) and I'll leave Mr G...(the mainstream teacher) and Mr R...(the support teacher) to die. He [Mr G...] gives me lines and Mr R... gives me lines too. I wish to have a robot and tell him (to the robot) to go to Mr G.. and shoot him [and] Mr G... would say "Oh, oh, oh no. I didn't do anything" and I'll say to him "Oh, you'll starve..."

The above account indicates that not only experience of schooling varies from child to child but the ones whose definitions of the situation are incompatible with the teachers' definitions find themselves in a powerless position. Thus pupil B acknowledging his powerlessness within the school institution refers to a robot as an aid that will help him to accomplish his intimate thoughts. In the majority of other cases, friends take the place of the robot for helping children to cope with their structural positions in school and alleviate some of the threatening elements of school life. That does not mean that entrance into childhood culture is unproblematic and a conflict-free

process. It means rather that *friendships in children's lives have a central place as a 'life-saving' response to the exigencies of the institution - fear, boredom, ritual routines, regulations and oppressive authority* (see: Woods, 1977; Hargreaves, 1982). It can often make all the difference between liking or loathing school. As Woods (1983) notes, "friendship groups form the structural basis of the child's extra-curricular life from a very early stage" (p. 96). This childhood extra curricular life serves as an antidote to the official system and its importance to children is as great as, if not even greater than, the formal social structure within which they have to spend a considerable part of their life. The importance of children's friendship groups can be demonstrated by the fact that the vast majority of children when asked what they enjoyed the most from their school indicated:

"I like playing in the playground with my friends"

"I like school because you can see and you can play with all your friends"

"I like being at school because I meet most of my friends at school, while if I'm at home there are not many things to do. I'll be bored"

"I like coming to school because I can see my friends, especially the ones who are far away".

The same responses were offered from the children identified as pupils with special educational needs when asked what they liked the most from school:

"I like playing police with my friends and arresting people who smash cars"

"I like my friends. I like doing friends' letters"

"I like it when people say they are your friends"

"I don't like to leave school. I like playing with my friends in the playground and I like the green and the grass and the wind blowing the trees"

For children, friends are an integral part of school life. It is within these groups that children make sense of their experience(s) and often they can establish new definitions of different schooling situations. Furlong (1976), in an attempt to explore how individual pupils define classroom situations, indicated that: "it is not enough to

look at the individual on his[sic] own, for he's aware that his behaviour is a 'join action'; the others are taking part; that he's interacting" (p. 163)

Thus the second function of friendship is *to enable children to enter within that joint sphere called childhood culture*. Until they make friends they cannot participate in children's culture. Their experience of being "one of the crowd" (see: Jackson, 1968) can be reduced the moment they make friends and thus they are enabled to participate in children's culture. As Davies (1982) maintains:

"The fearfulness of this aloneness, the possibility of being outside children's culture, should not be underestimated when seeking to comprehend the children's understanding of the world of friendship...To be alone in a new place without friends is potentially devastating. To find a friend is to partially alleviate the problem"
(pp. 61-63)

Even though some children, especially in nursery school, may regard the toys themselves as having social meaning while others at this age may be more interested in doing things alone than interacting with other children at the same time, it is during childhood that many first experience loneliness (see: Bell, 1981). The centrality of being with your friend(s) for friendship is illustrated through the effects that not having friends can have:

"If you don't have friends you'll be bored all the time...It's scary to be alone"

"If you don't have friends you feel that you cannot go anywhere, you don't feel like it [going anywhere]. But when you have friends you can go and enjoy it. Otherwise you don't feel like doing anything"

"[If I don't have friends] I'll feel sad because I would have to go up and down and I would walk around with my hands in my pockets and I would be alone and work and do things on my own and I don't like that"

"If you don't have friends you'll be sad and no-one is going to play with you...and you would just be looking around and everyone is playing and you are alone"

"[It is important to have friends] otherwise you'll be on your own and you'll have nothing to do and you'll stand in the corner feeling mad all alone. We need someone so that we don't feel sad and bored"

"I will feel sad because I won't have anyone to talk to...I will feel strange"

"[If you don't have friends] it feels like talking to the floor or the air...I'll feel nervous"

Due to the fear of being alone within an unknown crowd, 'being with someone' becomes the core element of childhood friendship while 'liking someone' from the young children's point of view has a specific instrumental nature related to children's sense of vulnerability at school. In contrast to adult assumptions, according to which the reason friendship develops is that people like one another(see Wisman, 1986) from a child's point of view, especially during early childhood, friends are valued for their physical accessibility and often of their material and physical attributes. This does not mean that liking does not constitute a part of childhood friendship it implies rather that it is not the most fundamental aspect of friendship and when it is, children "are clearer about the pragmatic nature of the liking than most adults" (Davies, 1982; p. 68). In children's words,

"I like him. Why? He's my friend. He likes me. He always plays with me"

Interviewer: What is that you like most from your friends?

"I have someone to play football and other games with"

"They let you play with them"

"They play with me"

"You always play with your friends...At nursery I had nobody to play with and I was on my own and I asked Rebecca if she wanted to play with me and then we became friends and we played with each other"

"I like Fred. I met him at Mrs I...s class and I liked that he was playing with me"

"I like Jonathan. He's my best friend, He always plays with me. He comes to me and says "Do you want to play a game? and we play running games and I like that ..[and] when he gets chosen and he has to pick someone, he picks me."

"I feel quite happy because I have someone to play with and I don't have to worry all the time"

A peer's willingness to be a playmate was valued as a friendly action and in turn such a peer was referred to as being a friend. Within that framework a peer's characterization as being or not being "nice" was often based on the above criterion. For

instance, "She's nice because she plays with me". This rule of childhood friendship was expressed in a higher degree and intensity by the year 1 and 2 children and according to most of them it was the "violation" of this rule by Mari, their peer with Down's Syndrome, that partially was held as a reason for not wanting to be friends with her:

"She's not nice..I don't like playing with Mari because she doesn't want to play with me"

"I don't like playing with Mari because she always runs off from the game. She doesn't sit to play with you"

"I don't like her because she doesn't like me. She doesn't let me play with her"

According to the same logic,

"I like Mari...She chases me and then she comes to find me and it's fun"

While such reasoning may be viewed from an adult's perspective as being a form of "childish" behaviour based on irrational simplicity, for the children it constituted a basic rule of their culture because it was directly associated with one of their primary self-interests: being enabled to enter childhood culture. Thus, as Pollard (1985) maintains:

"The official system of the school, with its hierarchy, rules and particular criteria of evaluation, exists alongside the children's own social system, which may appear to be less formal but which also has its own hierarchy, rules and particular criteria of judgement" (p. 80)

It is these rules and particular criteria of judgement that render childhood culture enabling in one respect and constraining in another. On the one hand, by creating, understanding and manipulating these criteria children are able to construct within the adult directed structures, their own reality/culture, which offers them a source of support and security in the interaction of the two cultures. On the other hand to enter and maintain an enabling position within this reality demands a high degree of sophistication and conformity. That is because child culture "acts rather differently to provide norms, constraints and expectations which bear on its members" (Pollard, 1985; p. 50). Implicit to this restraining nature of childhood culture lies the significance of friendship as serving many separate self-interests, rather than mutual interests even in

the case of older children who learn to think of interpersonal relationships as mutually reciprocal within which each person must begin to pay attention to the other's perspective. Even though adults might feel some revulsion to this idea, for children such egocentrism is necessary for self- and social-surviving if we consider that during childhood, they come to learn some of the most fundamental social aspects of interpersonal relationships including their concern of identity and status within both the peers' and adults' cultures. Thus, it is not surprising that for children friendship is being viewed as essentially an exchange relationship. Thomas (1978) goes even further by claiming that "Forthright in the extreme, friendship is presented as involving a direct trading of favours" (p. 67). Even though such trading or better bargaining has as many functions as meanings its central point of reference is the Self around which the dynamics of the bargaining are evolving. The interrelationship of Self and the dynamics involved in childhood friendship patterns is complicated and multidimensional. This connection is unfolded throughout the discussion of this chapter in an attempt to show that friendships between disabled and non disabled children involve a) a challenge to the emerging concepts of classifying the Self by classifying the Other; b) a challenge to the emerging ideologies of what is being perceived as the "appropriate social order" and; c) a challenge over some of the basic interests-at-hand included within the function(s) of friendship.

FORMING FRIENDSHIPS: THE FIRST PART OF THE FRIENDSHIP EQUATION

**"We come to like people we associate with because we associate with them, rather than because they are intrinsically likeable."
(Davies, 1982; p. 68)**

The fact that *proximity can lead to friendship* has already been proposed by Homans (1951) who has suggested that the nearer two people are located in space, the greater the likelihood that they will come to like one another. This is so, probably because the nearer together two people are, the greater the opportunity for interaction,

while the more two people interact, the more they will like one another or at least the more they will come to know each other. The evidence of this research supports Homan's proposition in various ways.

Firstly, children's perceptions of Sam (the girl in the picture) tended to be more negative than their perceptions of their actual peers with Down's Syndrome. This probably is closely related to the fact that the children "came in contact" with Sam only once while in their reality they had the opportunity to interact with their peers with Down's Syndrome on an everyday basis. Feelings of attraction are usually developed towards others with whom we have some close personal interaction defined by proximity. But within the research situation where a picture was used to initiate an interaction, the effect of proximity was not taken into consideration (see Chapter 3). In doing so, the use of the picture provided only one or, at most, two levels of interaction: that of a "unilateral awareness" and "surface contact" (Levinger, 1974). Research concerning interracial acceptance has shown that the first level of interaction is influenced by the salience of race to the child (or, as in this case, disability), while responsiveness at the second level of contact would provide the lowest level or origin of acceptance (see: Carter et al., 1980; pp. 117-137). Thus, by excluding the opportunities offered by the issue of proximity there is a simultaneous exclusion of the opportunity to become aware of other unique information about the individuals involved in shared experiences.

Secondly, in more general terms, the importance of proximity in interpersonal attraction was indicated by the fact that all children without exception referred to at least two people from their own class as being their friends. This does not negate the proposition that children tend to form friendships with other peers who are of the same age. [Probably, the same age factor is just one indicator of the high level of conformity in childhood friendship.] In many cases some of the friendship ties in the upper infant (year one and two) and in the junior level were left over from nursery where children

met for the first time as they were thrown together by the force of circumstance. The following accounts, in addition to the effect of proximity, also confirm James (1993) proposition by which durability is an important feature in childhood friendships, not only for older pupils but for younger children as well:

"I met Samantha at nursery and then me and Samantha met Fay and we were playing together"

"I met him at Mrs S..'s class and he asked me what my name was and he said 'Do you want to be my friend" and I said yes and we played together and we got to know each other. I invited him to my house and he came twice and then he invited me to his house..."

Furthermore, propinquity and patterns of daily interactions may partly account for the close correspondence which was found between class-room seating plans and the patterning of children's friendships. For instance, in year one and two, twenty-two out of twenty- nine children referred to someone they were sitting with as being their friends while others referred to someone who happened to sit beside them in a previous class as friends:

"...we sit together at the same table and I help her at maths"

"We met at Mrs D...'s class....I liked her because I was siting next to her"

"I met her at Mrs I...'s class, we sat together but not all the times. Now I sit at the same table with her"

In the same way all "resource children" referred to at least two other "resource pupils" of the same class as being their friends, a likely result of the fact that as a group these children had the opportunity to spend a substantial amount of time together, sharing a number of different educational and social activities.

Finally, in year three and four, twenty out of the twenty seven children referred to at least one person from the same neighborhood as being their friend. In some cases a "happenstance" meeting on the way to school was viewed by children as the first part of the friendship equation (see also Davies, 1982).

"I saw her [her best friend] at the school but we didn't talk or anything but she was living close to my house and one day when I was coming to

school I noticed her and I waved to her and we came together to school and then we started to play together"

Neighborhood propinquity seems to be important, not only because it provides the context within which children can meet for the first time before even entering the school community, but also because it offers children the opportunity to meet outside the school and to travel to and from school together, fostering in this way a sense of continuity and strengthening certain interpersonal relationships:

"I met Chris when I was three years old. He asked me if I wanted to play and I went down [to his house] and we played...He lets me visit his house and I let him come to my house"

"...they [friends] always come and visit you if they know where you live, some [of my friends] live close to my road"

"...she [the friend] comes to my house and we play leapfrog"

"...she lives close to my house and sometimes I go to her house and we play with her caravan"

"...tomorrow I am going to Mathew's house and I'll bring him a chicken baby and a duck baby"

"...yesterday I went to David's house and we played with his cars"

Neighborhood propinquity, while not being the most important element within childhood friendship, seemed to provide several opportunities for enriching interactions. Those who lived in the same school catchment area could continue playing outside the school community, sit together watching tv, have tea, go for walks nearby, meet their friend's parents and other siblings, and so on. What for the majority of ordinary pupils seemed to be a natural event, neighborhood propinquity in their friendship relationships was for all the so called resource children, except one, basically absent. They were "the ones who are coming by taxi" following a child's definition of "resource students". According to other children "I haven't invited Peter [a peer with Down's Syndrome] to my house. I don't even know where he lives and he doesn't know where I live". The importance of neighborhood propinquity in friendships between disabled and non-disabled children is best illustrated by the following account from one of the teachers who was also a parent of a disabled child:

"...The children that are living close to their school they associate with at their homes as well. It's natural and that affects their friendship. While...I see that with my daughter...if you're living far away from your school environment, then it's very hard. There is a discontinuity in friendships. Friendships at home are artificially created. I mean if you have a birthday party who are you going to invite? Because the children that you spend half of your day with are at quite a distance from your house and transport has to be arranged and yet sometimes they don't have the relationship in the neighborhood to invite those children...The children should go to their local school...[otherwise] parents have to make special arrangements with local clubs if their child is not attending a local school. Because anyway these [disabled] children are regarded as the odd ones but you know, you need to belong...you belong to your family and then you belong to a wider family and then to your neighborhood and then to your school and sometimes these [disabled] children find it difficult to identify themselves with any of these groups. They are in every place and it's not easy at all..."

Proximity and/or propinquity is of great significance in the creation of friendships and to ignore their importance is to ignore a core element in the generation of interactions that can lead to the making of friendships. As James (1993) maintains:

"Children's choices of their best friends are at least partially - if not substantially- affected by momentary factors like besides whom they are standing or sitting when they complete the [sociometric] test" (p. 219).

The problem with this argument is that proximity, even though necessary, is by itself insufficient to explain why the physical placement of disabled children in ordinary schools does not necessarily lead to meaningful social integration as well (see: Hoben, 1980). To move from physical to social integration is to cover a long distance which involves a number of other complicated social parameters.

FORMING FRIENDSHIPS: THE SECOND PART OF THE FRIENDSHIP EQUATION

"...You see, really and truly, apart from the things anyone can pick up (the dressing and the proper way of speaking, and so on), the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he always treats me as a flower girl, and always will; but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady, and always will."

(G. B. Shaw, *Pygmalion*; in Rosenthal et al; 1968)

Understanding how people behave towards others necessitates an examination of how each party thinks about and perceives the Other, as these two points of view are mutually interdependent (see also Yuker, 1988). Hargreaves (1972) demonstrates convincingly that any analysis of human interaction "clearly involves a consideration of the ways in which persons perceive one another. It is the perception of just who and what the other person is which steers one man's(sic) behaviour to another" (p.31).

The process of forming perceptions about an Other is a complicated affair involving static and dynamic aspects. However, in any encounter there is a starting point and it is at this stage that appearance and physique are important criteria in impressionistic classification because they are associated with beliefs and assumptions upon which perceptions are based. As the following accounts indicate, appearance signals provide early social information which acts as an anticipatory signal to others, conveying clues that influence the formation of the Other's perceived identity:

"She (Claire) looks like a kind person...I notice it from her face, her mouth and her eyes"

"She [Claire] looks more intelligent and smart...[than Sam]... It is the way she has her hair and the way she's dressed. She got long blonde hair and blue eyes and she's tall"

"Clair looks like a kind of bully. She looks like pushing everybody, calling names and pushing and fighting and swearing. I think Claire is good at bullying...Yeah, she's a bully because you can tell from her eyes and her face. She has a cruel face "

"She [Claire] looks cleverer than Sam. She looks brighter. [Why?] You can understand it from her face, from her eyes, from her smile"

Pupil A: She [Sam] is nice

Pupil B: No she's not. She doesn't have a nice face. I don't like her eyes. She doesn't have long hair. She doesn't have nice trousers and she's naughty. She's fighting people

Pupil C: She's rubbish. Ugly people are rubbish"

"She (Sam) looks like quite an open and cheerful person. She looks kind and she looks like she's helping people ...She has a bigger smile than Claire"

Even when relationships are already formed appearance seems to be a point of reference in descriptions of the other person. With younger children this phenomenon is intensified because, especially at the age of six to seven, children's descriptions of others tend to focus on simple traits and are orientated to the immediate and the concrete (Bromley, 1973; Rogers, 1978; Durkin 1986). For instance, when asked to describe their friends, children of year 1 and 2, but also older children tended, among other things, to concentrate on certain characteristics of physical appearance:

"...I like her. She's gorgeous. She's small, she has blonde hair and green eyes. I like it that she's small and has blonde hair. We have the same colour hair"

"She's nice looking. I like her hair - always silky. She always has oil. My mum doesn't allow me to put oil on..."

"I like her hair and her clothes"

"I like it that he's not wearing glasses. I don't like wearing glasses"

However, children refer to appearance signals not only because they concentrate on single and concrete elements in describing the others but also because they are undergoing the socio-cultural training that makes sure that each generation acquires the ground rules and the associated values of what seems to be the "appropriate social order of appearance". As Thomas (1982) points out these values are of course not simply applied to others, they are applied by the self to the self in the formation of the Self-concept. Children, even from the age of six, have already formed a subjective value of themselves in which body image, including visual appearance is identified with self-image. Thus, children in presenting themselves claimed, among other things, that:

"I look beautiful. I have a nice pony-tale. I have beautiful hair. I'm lovely..."

"I look terrible. I look like a ...[unclear]...I am horrible..."

"I've got blonde hair, green eyes and a big mouth. I'd like to be tall and more tall...[pause] I'm quite fat...."

"...I'm beautiful because I brush my hair every night. I have lots of girls behind me because I'm smart..."

"...I've got short darkish brown hair and brown eyes. I've got a sun-colour. I'm pretty.. [pause].. I like to be pretty"

"...I want to become thin. Well I'm thin. I want to have long legs and long nails..."

"...I'm ugly and if someone will say I'm ugly I'm going to call them names"

Often the "I have" or "I don't have" become "I am" or I am not". Appearance signals are of social importance because they are used to imply additional qualities and characteristics which in turn are used as the basis for interactional, emotional and evaluative responses [see above accounts]. For instance, as a type of game all children were asked to describe Sam and Claire by using nine index cards with the following characterizations: *"naughty"*, *"clever"*, *"nice"*, *"has lots of friends"*, *"friendly"*, *"with good manners"*, *"without good manners"*, *"ugly"*, and *"beautiful"*. According to the dominant pattern children's connection of the different characterizations confirmed that a positively or negatively valued appearance can mean the attribution of other personal qualities and characteristics which follow the value direction of the physical characteristics (see Thomas, 1982):

"Claire is beautiful, friendly, nice, clever, with good manners.
Sam is ugly, without good manners, naughty..."

"Claire is beautiful, with good manners, she's nice, clever, friendly and has lots of friends.
Sam looks ugly, don't have good manners, she's naughty, she doesn't have a lot of friends. She's not nice..."

The above 'physical attractiveness stereotype' is based on the wider socio-cultural conventions that supply the ready-made typification that those who are beautiful are good - an assumption unlikely to have any foundation in fact (see Argyle, 1975). However, as Booth (1985) suggested "prejudices about talent and beauty are in all of us, and pressure for their removal may provoke deep-seated resistance" (p. 3). Advertising exploits cultural stereotypes of physical beauty which are identified with goodness, while social values, such as the premium based on appearance, is just one important set of the dominant value-system in our society, followed by power, prestige and influence. In the same way, as a six year old child bluntly put it, there is the stereotype that "Ugly people are rubbish". In this case and especially when the point of reference are females,

Pupil A: If she will re-arrange her face she will look better"

Interviewer: How can she re-arrange her face?

Pupil A: put make up on

Pupil B: Plastic surgery. She can get her ears back"

It would be a mistake, however, to ignore that sets of dominant value-systems were challenged by some children:

Pupil A: I have good manners, nice hair and beautiful teeth [two of his front teeth are missing]...pause..No I'm ugly and rich and I want to become a farmer (laughing)

Interviewer: Why are you laughing?

Pupil A: Because I'm ugly and I'm rich. I'm rich and your thinking I'm going to pick like a big job and I just say a farmer, like a poor job"

Also, agreement on the meaning of symbols was by no means shared by everyone:

Pupil A: She [Sam] is ugly and I don't want to have ugly friends/

Pupil B: She's not ugly to everybody. She's not ugly to some people. There are some other people who may like her. I like her. She's nice with good manners."

"Sam is not very clever but she got good manners, she has a lot of friends, she's not naughty, she's not beautiful but she's not ugly."

"Claire is ugly. She's ugly and clever. She has good manners and she has lot of friends. Sam is nice with good manners, friendly and ugly."

Finally, for others the socio-cultural meaning of symbols brought conflict:

Pupil A: She's ugly with good manners, friendly, clever and nice

Pupil B: No, how can she be ugly and nice and friendly? You have to say ugly with no good manners/

Pupil A: I think we should put the nice in and put the ugly out and put the friendly and the clever in ...pause...Well she's ugly but you can be ugly, clever and nice at the same time!

These cultural meanings of appearance are of great importance in encounters with disabled people, not only because, "it is when trying to conform to such values that young disabled people feel most oppressed" (Quicke, 1985; p.159) but also because the socio-cultural creation of difference begins from the values attached to appearance. Deviation in appearance is the first sign of attributing "a handicapped identity".

"She looks handicapped": A tale about Us and Them

"What is the function of this sensitivity to the appearance of others, this capacity to distinguish 'normal' from 'handicapped'? (Thomas, 1982; p. 16). How we come to attach social and functional meanings to physical variations is a process difficult to understand, but initial encounters with a disabled person illustrate the lessons we unconsciously learn in childhood:

Pupil A: She's ugly...She's not clever

Interviewer: How do you know

Pupil A: She's got this smile/

Pupil B: She looks thick

Pupil A: She's a bit disabled

Pupil B: Yeah, I noticed it the first time I saw her 'cause you can tell by her face

Pupil A: She needs more help than Claire because she makes quite a lot of mistakes

Interviewer: Oh I see. What makes you say that?

Pupil A: I'm just guessing. She just looks it

Pupil B: She [Sam] is the opposite of the other one [Claire]

Pupil C: I think she looks like a disabled, like Patricia and Paul

The Opies (1959) in their *Lore and Language of School Children* indicate that differences in appearances are of great significance to children in creating the vocabulary of distinctiveness, which becomes more subtle when it is used to provide an affirmation of "a handicapped identity":

"...she must be handicapped because she's ugly"

"She's disabled because she's fat"

"..you can tell [that they are disabled] by their looks"

"She looks pale, her eyes are quite small and closed and she's quite slanted. I think she's disabled"

"She's handicapped 'cause when she's looking towards the TV she's pulling her eyes inwards like closing her eyes and she opens her mouth"

"I think, like, because of her face that she has something like a bit of a mental something with her brain, cause you can tell those people when they have their face like that, like Paul, it means that you have something mental. When there is something wrong with your brain then it shows on your face"

What seems to happen is that the visible signs of distinctiveness in appearance are the first challenges to the perceived appropriate social order of normalcy since they present an image physically different from the norm:

"she looks funny"

"She looks funny. She has a big head and it sticks out and she's got big eyes. It looks as if her eye brows have got more hair on, like, they're thicker and she's got that look ..."

"She looks funny 'cause her smile is kind of funny and her eyes aren't straight. They're ... this eye is bigger than that eye"

Pupil A: I think she's Japanese"

Pupil B: I have a friend who's Japanese [but] Sam is not Japanese. She looks Japanese but she's not. Her eyes look Japanese. She's handicapped"

The cultural values attached to appearance-departures from the norm are acquired through an unconscious learning process involving perceptual comparisons which enable children to define others as "exceptional", "atypical" or "not-normal":

"She's handicapped because handicapped people have funny faces. Other people have straight faces but handicapped people faces are going inside or outside"

"I understand that she's disabled because she's got, you can look at her [Claire's] face and she's got a brighter face and you can see the way her eyes [Sam's] look like. Claire's eyes are joilier and are straighter than Sam's eyes"

The vocabulary of distinctiveness is also a means of projecting that we belong to the unstigmatized, which is the first step in creating the story between "Us" and "Them":

Interviewer: You think Sam looks a bit slow but Claire doesn't. How did you understand that?

Pupil A: Because of her face

Interviewer: Her face? What about her face?

Pupil A: Her eyes and how she smiles

Interviewer:

Pupil A: Her face, it doesn't look exactly *like ours* would

Interviewer: Her face doesn't look exactly like/

Pupil B: other people's, *like normal people, like ours* but handicapped people would look like that (my emphasis)

Pupil A: She's a resource student

Interviewer: How did you understand from the picture that Sam is a resource student?

Pupil A: Because she doesn't look *like normal people*. Her head is lop-sided and her eyes, like, look at her eyes and it is, like, look at her body.

She's sitting like that. She's sitting funny. She's not straight" (my emphasis)

"Is there something wrong with Sam? She doesn't *look like us*...She, she looks a bit like a resource person" (my emphasis)

"I think she's disabled...from her eyes and her skin she's not like normal people."

Deviations from the norm in physique and appearance, are of course not simply statistical, neutral deviations - they possess value connotations when used to confirm a specific identity for the other. When this is taken with definitions of what it means to be "disabled" or "handicapped", appearance then becomes a factor which intensifies the social stigma of being disabled thus enlarging the gulfs between Us ("the normal") and Them ("the disabled").

Defining disability

"Initial encounters between the disabled and others do not start from a neutral point, and the disabled person has to deal with definitions of himself and his disability previously and independently conceived by others" (Thomas, 1982; p. 8)

The problem with the use of any label or category is that it focuses on one specific attribute at the expense of everything else about an individual. While the word "disabled" had many meanings its central function as a label was to distinguish the "normal" from the "not-normal":

"[Disabled means] that you're not normal"

"They [disabled people] are not the same...pause.. they're not like us"

"It [handicapped] means that they're not like us. They have different faces and hands"

"Disabled are people who cannot do things like normal people can do"

Interviewer: What do you mean she's disabled?

Pupil A: It means, they [disabled people] cannot do anything that normal people can do

"It [the word disabled], means, like you cannot do things that normal people like you and me and Julia and Kathreen can do"

Paradoxically, even though the attitudes towards what constitutes normalcy were very central and fundamental in maintaining social order, none of the children could explain what normal means and as some of them claimed: "It's just an English word". It seems that our culture teaches us what the signs and symbols of normalcy are by indicating what is not-normal, in this way establishing who is "like us" and who is "not like us". Thus, for children to be normal means to be "like us" while not to be "like us" means, as one child put it, that "it is something wrong with you" As Thomas (1978) indicates:

"The notion that we use convenient conceptual packages when thinking about others is, of course, not new. Perceptions of national characteristics, racial groups and other 'outsider' minorities are part of our social education. They are built-in elements in our socialization. To 'be like us' is natural and normal, to be 'not like us' is foreign, unusual and abnormal" (p. 13).

Disability, in any form, seemed to be a violation of children's own priorities in relationships at this stage and it was not coincidental that children viewed disability in terms of what people so described could not do. As Quicke (1990) notes children are more likely to refer to features such as "talking" and "movement" because in their perceptions of peer relationships competence in these areas is important. In children's words:

"They cannot walk, they have to go on wheelchairs"

"They don't listen very well and they do things that are very wrong"

"They cannot talk properly"

"They cannot do anything that I can do"

"Disabled people cannot play or write properly"

"Handicapped is when you cannot speak properly or it's something wrong with your eyes or you have a disease"

"Disabled is a person who cannot talk, like Peter, he's talking like boulou boulou and you cannot understand him"

"Handicapped is like the deaf and dumb [dumb], like Peter, he's having trouble in speaking. He's handicapped"

"They cannot read and they cannot write properly, sometimes they're naughty"

Children of year six and seven concentrated more on behavioural characteristics because the appropriate social order of behaviour was considered to be important to them for a variety of reasons (see below):

"[Disabled are the people] who go on the grass and sometimes they're naughty"

"They're naughty and a bit separate"

"They're tormenting people"

"They're poorly and naughty. Nobody likes them"

An interesting finding was that children of older ages often seemed to distinguish between "disabled" and "handicapped". The word "disabled" was used mainly when children referred to physically disabled children, as opposed to "handicapped" which was used in describing mentally disabled people:

"To be handicapped, it has to do with your brain but if you don't have a leg it has to do more with disabled. Like there is a difference between disabled and handicapped. Someone is disabled when he has lost one of his senses or he has no leg or he uses a wheelchair. When you're going to the toilet you can see a sign saying disabled toilets and it shows a wheelchair, but handicapped is more like someone who is mentally ill. It has to do with brain damage"

"My mum is disabled and it means, like, you know, handicapped people have trouble with part of their face [see above: the connection of the face with mental disability] but disabled people have a problem with part of their body, like their arms and their legs"

"I grew up thinking that disabled is someone sitting in a wheelchair or having problems with their legs but now I know there are handicapped people as well who are not able to understand things because their brain don't work properly. Like, when you get older, about your age, they still have the brain of ten. Their brains are not like ours - it [their brain] stopped growing."

Often the label "handicapped" evoked more derogatory stereotypes projecting some of the gross prejudices surrounding mentally disabled people:

"They [handicapped children] bit their parents"

"Handicapped are worst than disabled, because handicapped never learn even when teachers are doing everything"

"Handicapped people are bad and they're going to the special school to learn how to be kind"

Pupil A: Handicapped people don't learn things because they cannot write and read and when they grow up they will rob shops. I know someone who is handicapped and he robs shops now because he doesn't know what/

Pupil B: no, no Anastasia. I/

Pupil A: because he cannot understand what anything means. He didn't learn anything at school and he didn't understand what letters mean and he cannot sign up/

Pupil B: No Anastasia, I know that man but he doesn't rob shops

Pupil A: We don't make friends with handicapped because... they might get killed[?]. They might be silly and they go to the doctor and they can take you on their motor-bike somewhere and kill you

Pupil B: Yeah, like kidnappers. My mum said that people kidnap you and take you in a car and they can take you away...I have some people next to my house and they're handicapped and they take drugs because they're silly

Words used to describe people can be both a manifestation and a determinant of an attitude. Children had learned to view disability as an attribute of the individual - "they have something wrong inside" - with no acknowledgement of it being the outcome of a relationship between people with an impairment and the rest of society. According to this general deficit view, the handicapped identity was confirmed upon a person by reason of his/her physical/functional difference, very well known in the medical model which treats disability as a defect in the individual, and his/her symptoms as the signs of an underlying cause of disability.

The nature of such perceptions are likely to influence not only the formation of interpersonal relationships and the values that are acquired but how they are implemented into friendship acts and deeds. As Thomas (1978) has suggested, the definitions that children have about disability and disabled individuals gradually develop to have personal and social consequences for both disabled and non-disabled persons, as well as for their interactions, because such definitions are taken for granted identities. For instance, disability was strongly connected with notions of dependence - a belief legitimized by the perceived identity of disabled people who were solely viewed as people "who are not able to do things like ordinary people can":

"They need people to help them because they cannot do things"

"I cannot imagine how they will be when they will grow up. I think that they will need someone to live with them and help them like a guardian"

"[Handicapped] are the children who need help, like with the work in school because they grow up with problems"

"They need help because they don't know what to do"

"She [Sam] cannot brush her teeth 'cause she doesn't know what to do. She doesn't know how to eat. Her mum has to feed her"

Often disability, especially mental disability, was extended to cover the whole personality and humanity of the person:

Interviewer: We talked a lot about Sam but we didn't talk a lot about Claire

Pupil A: Probably she [Claire] would get embarrassed if she was talked about a lot

Interviewer: You think so?

Pupil A: Yeah, because, like Sam might not know the meaning of the word embarrassed and she won't get embarrassed.

Someone who looks different is perceived as both thinking and feeling different than other human beings. There were, however, children, who viewed an impairment as part of the individual with some functional consequences, without this being a determinant of separating people as belonging to a different human category:

"They [disabled people] are like us but there are some things that they cannot do it so if the teacher has to teach them a game she has to show them what to do"

Pupil A: They [disabled] are ordinary people apart from the fact that they have lost one of their senses, like hearing, or some of them may have lost two senses, like they cannot see and they have lost their hearing senses but when you lose a sense then you get another sense better/

Pupil B: You add to your senses like you cannot have an extra sense but you can add to your other senses like you could feel things more or you can see more than what we can do"

If it can be assumed that "person chooses for his/her friends ... those who he perceives to be like himself in some significant respects (Lacey, 1970 as cited in Ball, 1984; see also Hargreaves, 1972) then this basic perceptual division between the "Us" and the "Them", as was reflected in the majority of children's accounts, constitutes an additional hindrance to smooth interactions between disabled and non-disabled children.

In an educational context the distinction between the Us and the Them is being strengthened, especially where mentally disabled children are concerned, because schools "are one of a very few remaining public interactional spaces in which people are still engaged with each other in the reciprocal, though *organizationally patterned*, labor of producing meaning - indeed, the core meaning of self-identity" (emphasis mine; Wexler, 1992; p. 10). The creation and the meaning of self-identity in a school context is strongly associated with academic competence which is not only a means for surviving but is associated with values that form the basis for the evaluation of both the self and the other's self. In a school context "to be clever" is significant because this becomes an important criterion upon which the school-structured identities are being officially formed. In turn, these school-structured identities influence the creation of friendship ties because what happens within the classroom setting influences what happens outside the classroom (Pollard, 1985; Ball, 1984; Roffey et al., 1994).

The school-structured identities: "ordinary" and "resource" students

Academic achievement was not mentioned by any child as being a characteristic of friendship ties, but it was a source of feedback in the development of each child's identity. The subjective value that children had formed about themselves, even from the age of six, in addition to body-image (see above) was also based on their sense of competence in academic terms:

"...I need little help for words"

"I don't need any help with my work"

"I need quite a lot of help in Geography and especially in writing"

"I'm quite intelligent. I'm good at English and stories. I'm quite good at English and stories. I'm quite good at tests and I take high marks. I want to be a doctor or something involved with the hospital. I'm quite ambitious"

"I would like to be more cleverer than I'm now. I know that I can be more cleverer [but] I always get into trouble because I do practical jokes"

"I want a lot of help. I'm not a very good student. I want some help with writing...Spelling makes me angry.."

As Pollard (1992) maintains: "...to learn in lesson's is not an interest-at-hand simply by virtue of the need to cope with the particular situation. It is linked to the maintenance of self-image, to enjoyment, to stress avoidance and to dignity -facets which, though experienced with immediacy, accumulate over time into more established identities" (p. 89).

Children, however, do not develop a "conception of self" until after a conception of others has been acquired (see James, 1993; p.216). They learn about their status at the institution only in relation to the other's status. Someone is "slow" or "slower" only in relation to someone else. Perceptual comparisons cannot be made unless there are some criteria of measurement and other people to compare the Self with:

"I like maths. We have to do three books at maths and some people are doing book one, others do book two. I do book three"

Academic achievement was an integral piece in the whole puzzle of developing the image of the Other:

Laura Meghan: She's slow. She can be good sometimes but she's slow...
Fred Connord: He always dreams and forgets about his work. He says that he's quite good at stories but he hardly got C the previous time...
Sara Breton: She's fast but she doesn't do it. She's lazy. She does it when she gets into it but she doesn't get into it.
Robert Calahan: He gets everything wrong. He's really slow
Adam Brokley: He's the brainiest because he gets lots of house-points.
Melisa Forest: She's clever. She's is the brainiest. She has never got lower than B. In spelling tests she's always finding the answer.

Children were aware of what teachers expected of them and what they expected from other children. They knew who was famous in the class in terms of academic achievement, who had more stars and why, who had the most or the least house-points and what such award-systems meant. Often they were just too aware of teachers' evaluation systems, expectations and even preferences:

"Smith [is the most popular] because she's clever. She's known to get the higher grades in the class. I like Smith but Mr F... treats her like a kind of pet and I don't like this. If someone will do something that he didn't suppose to do it then he says "I am sorry" but Mr F... says "you're stupid". If Smith do the same thing and is in trouble , it is ok for her. He

let her go off and he's always checking her work to make sure she's not making any mistakes. If someone has missed a lesson like with Philips that he missed this medieval thing, Mr F... told him to go and take the notes from Smith. He never trusts anybody else with the notes, and if he doesn't remember something again he asks Smith."

"Paula is the least famous because she comes with a taxi because she lives far away and sometimes she has forgotten to bring some stuff but because she was in a rush she forgot and Mr G... always [he's] asking her the hardest questions and if she doesn't know then he's always shouting at her and it's not fair"

Through classroom experience each child comes to know who "the teacher's pet", is and who is "bright/clever". This awareness influences their friendship groups and the nature of their interactions because as Pollard (1992) has shown, learning is of significant interest in the development of a particular identity, for such ability is part of the competence required of group members (see also the account of Quicke and Winter; 1994). For children defined as being the "resource pupils" the presumed identity was that they were "always slow" and "not very brainy", either by reason of their disability, as far as older children were concerned, or by reason of their behaviour in the eyes of the younger children. This perceived identity of "resource pupils" had become so firmly embedded that it had been legitimately regarded as a stable element of their self-concept. In older classes, "resource pupils" were not even included in those groups of ordinary children that were perceived by their peers as being "slow". They had been attributed a group identity, a sense of sub-cultural identity which by definition had both a status subordinate to majority interests and restrictions on entry into certain roles. They were viewed as "a separate group" or as a "quarter of the class", being different from the rest of the class because they were "the special needs children". Such a school-structured identity was just one among other reasons for strengthening the story between "Us" and "Them", hindering in this way meaningful relationships within a classroom setting even when activities were constructed in such a way as to ostensibly include all children. Thus, on the one hand, the vast majority of children were negative when they were asked if they would like to work together with Sam on the basis that disabled children "cannot do things that we can do." On the other hand, in cases where they wanted to work together with their disabled peers it was only on the basis that they

could help them, perceiving the latter as passive recipients within classroom- structured interactions.

Finally, what was found in year one and two class can illustrate how school-structured identities, including the identity of being a "resource pupil", influence children's perceptions of each other and, consequently, their relationships. Within the classroom children's seating arrangements were basically organized by the teacher in such a way as to manage the diversity of ability and age included within that classroom. As the support teacher indicated, children were grouped according to "age and, in part, level of ability". Thus, children were classified into five different groups, designated by a colour: red, blue, green and yellow for the ordinary children while the "resource children" were identified by their own teacher's name and were known as Mrs R's group. Children were aware of this structure but they were not aware of the reasons underlying such a structure:

Interviewer: Why are there these different groups?

Pupil A: Because there isn't enough space for everybody to sit at one table so Mrs S... splited us in different groups"

Pupil B: Mrs S... don't want Jim working with George and Saul. She doesn't let anyone sit next to friends. Only at our group we are allowed to sit together.

When they were asked how many groups there were in their class the vast majority referred only to the four groups which consisted of the ordinary pupils. It was only after probing that they referred to the fifth group, which consisted of the so- called resource pupils:

Interviewer: How many groups are in your class?

Pupil A: There is blue group, yellow, red and green.

Interviewer: Are there any other groups?

Pupil A: No

Pupil B: Oh, yes there is Mrs R's group. They don't have a colour but they have a name

Moreover, children had formed a perceptual image of each group, one not very different from the basic official reason underlying such a structure:

Pupil A: The red group is the best.
Pupil B: I'm in this group
Pupil A: The yellow group is the worst
Interviewer: Would you like to be in the blue group?
Pupil B: No, they don't do hard work.
Interviewer: Would you like to be in a green group?
Pupil A: No, They're too noisy
Interviewer: Is there any other group in your class?
Pupil B: no
Pupil A: There's Mrs R's group
Interviewer: Would you like to work in this group?
Pupil A: No/
Pupil C: they don't do much work
Pupil B: I don't like the people. They aren't very clever and they're not old
[in fact some pupils in this group were older than the rest of the class]
Pupil A: I don't like that they always talk

Pupil A: I want to be in the red group because they do hard work/
Pupil B: They're on a higher work because they can do their work properly 'cause they think
Interviewer: What about the green group
Pupil C: I don't want to be in that group. It's noisy
Pupil A: I want to be in this group because Steven is there
Interviewer: What about the yellow group
Pupil B: they're low work
Interviewer: Would you like to be in Mrs R's group?
All together: noooooooooo.
Pupil A: She's with handicapped. She's doing dead easy work.
Pupil B: they're messing about and they don't get on with their work

While it has been acknowledged that proximity is significant for children in forming relationships, at the same time it can often be misleading in understanding the issues included within the formation of childhood friendships. It was indicated previously that twenty-two out of the twenty-nine Year 1 and 2 children stated that at least one of the people who they identified as being their friends was sitting at the same desk with them [see above]. At first glance, it can be said that proximity was a significant factor in the formation of some friendships. This actually might be the case. However, the way in which the pupils were formally grouped can largely influence the patterns of pupil friendship-groups by imposing constraints both on the nature and the range of contacts between students (see also Ball, 1984; Hargreaves, 1967). Children's reference to peers sitting with them as friends included, in addition to the issue of proximity, certain similarities and common *emerging* significant values/norms related to academic orientated aspects.

The significance of academic competence is mainly associated with the official curriculum and its socio-educational values, such as the premium based on academic achievement which, in turn, is connected with the purposes of the school. However, its influence on the formation of relationships is just too important to be ignored (see Wexler, 1992) even in a primary school setting. It was not coincidental that older children expressed a concern about whether Sam would like to be in an ordinary school on the basis that she would have to deal with "some brainy students" who might "torment" her by calling her "stupid" because "she is not as brilliant as them". But academic achievement is only one of the many facets that the notion of competence entails within childhood culture. Disabled children have to deal with a number of culturally established expectations that engender difficulties in forming interpersonal *relationships and are doubly exacerbated* because such expectations are directly *associated with the interests-at-hand* of the ones who hold the expectations.

The cloak of competence: behaviour in context

It has been reported that appearance and the values/assumptions associated with it are very important for initial acceptance or rejection but that it may become progressively less important provided there are opportunities for social interactions. While in creating the identity of Sam appearance was indeed of primary importance in children's evaluations of the Other, it was clear that behaviour and functionalism ranked high as a hindrance to smooth interactions between them and their actual disabled peers. However,

"When judgements are made on socio-behavioural grounds, then the social context in which they are formed becomes critical in understanding how people are categorized" (Thomas, 1978; p. 15)

Several researchers (Peterson and Haralick, 1977; Goodman, Gotlieb and Harrison, 1972) and in fact many of the teachers interviewed suggest that younger children are more "accepting" of disabled children than are older children. The findings

of this research suggest that the issue is much more complicated. It was found that the younger children expressed more rejecting attitudes towards Mari, their peer with Down's Syndrome, even though in a playground context it seemed that a child with Down's Syndrome was involved with his/her peers to a greater extent than the children with Down's Syndrome at the junior level. While this seems to be a contradiction in itself it entails some interesting issues worth considering. Of course the different personalities and social skills exhibited by these different children with Down's Syndrome influenced substantially the frequency, nature and quality of their interchanges with non-disabled peers. However, the way children of different ages conceptualized the notion of friendship alongside with their self-needs and the structures of their games played their own role. I do acknowledge that types of friendship and self-needs are not necessarily contingent on age and that a simple hierarchical developmental model of friendship cannot be sustained. As James (1993) indicates "there may be a considerable blurring of categories of 'friend' and any individual child might be at different stages of friendship with different people" (p. 216). At the same time, however, "there are complex interactions between cognitive development (levels of understanding), moral development (ideas about right and wrong in relation to others) and learning experiences which affect social development" (Roffey et al., 1994) and in turn affect the conceptualization of friendship and the interests that friendship comes to fulfil.

Early childhood is the most significant period in the formation of identity, even though the sense of identity which is produced by such early socialization will continue to develop through other experiences (see Pollard, 1985; p 242). However, the younger the child the more significant these are likely to be. One of these experiences is the sense of vulnerability that young children feel as they are forced to rely on their resources to deal effectively with the crowd of a school playground. In attempts to reduce their feelings of fear and uncertainty they were willing to be friends with every peer who expressed a willingness to be a playmate. Often that included the

supplementary rule that the other is willing to play "what I want to play" which is connected with the instrumental view of friendship in terms of how enjoyable and rewarding a particular relationship can be. Rejection was often a consequence of the other not satisfying this interest and it was mentioned frequently by children in justifying why they did not want to play with their peer with Down's Syndrome:

"...when you ask her [Mari] "can we play doggies?" she says "No. I want to play horses"

"I don't like when she doesn't want to play what I want to play"

"She doesn't want to play what I want to play"

"I don't play with her because she always wants me to chase her and I don't want to chase her all the time"

"When you tell her to stand up she sits down and she doesn't play games with me"

However, peers were characterized as being "nice" or "not being nice" mainly according to their willingness to be or not to be playmates (see above). Such a willingness seemed to be an indication of "liking", which reduced the fear of the "Other" hurting "the Self":

"cause they're nice [her friends] and they like me. Because if the other doesn't like me he might hit me"

The ground rule was that "no one wants to be your friend when you're fighting and kicking". Thus,

"I don't like people who are naughty and people who kick and hit...I'm not friends with Mari 'cause she pushes me"

Among young children the term "friend" usually referred to what they conceived of as "friendly behaviour". Conversely children often rejected as friends those whose behaviour was interpreted and classified as unfriendly. Any mild "aggressive" behaviour such as kicking, thumping, pinching, even though a frequent occurrence in childhood relationships, was classified as unfriendly and not only strengthened the fear about the other but also implied that the other was projecting feelings of dis-liking:

"She [Mari] is not very nice. She's nipping me and then she kicks me because she doesn't like me"

After extensive and careful observations connected with discussions with Mari in a playground context it seemed that nipping or kicking was a way for her to initiate an interaction: mainly, the one being nipped chasing the other. Indeed, often such actions were the beginning of interactive activities. These different "ways of communication" expressed by the peer with Down's Syndrome were often misunderstood by the other children who felt such actions indicated feelings of "disliking". Relevant to this observation is Hargreaves (1972) proposition that we tend to like people who we think like us and thus, if the Person is given information (such as kicking, thumping, nipping) that the Other does not like him/her, then Person will tend not to like the other:

"[Justifying why she doesn't like Mari] She kicks me. She thinks I'm naughty"

Simultaneously, children were testing ways of dealing with conflict and differences between each other: either they called an adult to solve the problem or they tended to ignore children who behaved in ways they didn't like; the most frequent response was to reciprocate. Participant observations and discussions with children, both younger and older, confirmed Davie's (1982) proposition that children speak more often of negative rather than positive reciprocity:

"I like him to be nice to me, not to fight me because that will make me fight as well"

"She [Mari] pushes people because she likes to and then she kicks me and I kick her"

"[If a friend won't talk to me] I will ignore her and get away and go and play with somebody else"

Negative reciprocity is an important rule in childhood culture because, according to children's perceptions, there is the proposition that "I am a mirror to you which provides you with my perception of your behaviour towards me" which is somehow different from Cooley's proposition of the looking-glass self (see Davies, 1982; p.76). As Davies (1982) indicates:

"The unquestioning way in which reciprocal acts are engaged in clearly involves a controlling element, though the children do not necessarily accept 'control' as their motivation" (p. 83)

Children learn, through the response of others, that their own behaviour has consequences. It is this very basic rule of reciprocity and its functions that give the impression that children's relationships are un-stable and involve a substantial amount of quarrelling. Quarrelling and fights originating out of the reciprocity rule were the strategies used by children for dealing with the delicate balance of the "power-games" forming a part of relationships (see Davie's analysis of the notion "contingency friends" which was confirmed by this study as well). But due to this childhood rule, mentally disabled children seemed to be quite vulnerable, not only because they often were not able to understand fully these cultural contexts but also because their way(s) of initiating interactions were easily misunderstood by their peers. Disabled children's behaviour [in this case Mari's behaviour] was doubly exacerbated due to children's limited information and understanding of disability issues (see previous chapter) and their difficulty/inability to find a satisfactory explanation for the other's often unpredictable behaviour:

"I don't know why she pushes me"

"She fights me outside for nothing"

Thus, children often focused on the behaviour per se using this as the basis of identifying the other as "being naughty" or "disabled". But having limited knowledge of what the second label entails contributed to the creation of less "tolerant" and "accepting" approaches towards their peer with Down's Syndrome as her actions not only puzzled them but also challenged their emerging concepts of acceptable patterns of behaviour.

There is, however, another side of the coin. While children expressed quite negative responses towards their peer with Down's Syndrome, with the vast majority of them claiming that they "were not Mari's friend because.." for a number of behavioural reasons, at the playground children were often seen to play with her. There are a number of explanations for this contradiction. First, younger children are at the beginning of the

process of creating self-presentation techniques (see Goffman, 1971) so in discussions with them they tended more to use their "authentic" voices in talking about the Other even when their descriptions tended, from an adult perspective, to sound negative or even cruel. As they got older, they appeared more concerned about the desired self that they present to the other -i.e the researcher- and thus constrained in expressing authentically their thoughts and opinions. Secondly, it is well known that at one moment children claim that they are not friends with someone while at the very next moment they can be seen playing happily together:

Pupil A: They [friends] are kind to you

Pupil B: Sometimes they're not because once Pam hit Susan

Interviewer: and what did you do Susan?

Pupil C: I told it to Miss and then I became friends with Pam"

Even though at one point children -in a discussion context- claimed that they would not like to play with Mari, in the playground they were seen to be involved in interactions with her. This is also associated with the nature and the structure of their games, which tend to be more flexible and inclusive if compared to the structures and the hierarchical rules and roles involved in the dynamics of older children's games. Of course every encounter exhibits sanctioned orderliness arising from obligations fulfilled and expectations realized (see Goffman, 1961). However, access to younger children's games such as chasing, skipping, playing with the eagle, was easier to gain for every child at different times. Children were able to change from one game to another, often being involved with different peers for the duration of a single break-time. This playground context was different from the one observed at the junior level in which gaining social acceptance within a group or forming deeper relationships were related to the more established norms of behaviour within the group. As a result individuals, in order to gain access and maintain an enabling position within the different groups, must acquire the values, attitudes, language and images of the group - processes that are quite complicated and include conformity and highly sophisticated strategies.

As children grow up they learn that "friendship" is a far more complex social relation while the factors that shape the patterns and courses of their friendships extended further than the willingness of someone to be a playmate, without negating the proposition that such a willingness was still of great importance. For older children, it was one thing "to have" friends and another "to be" friends (as these terms have been defined by James; 1993)

The dynamics involved in the formation of "being friends" with someone are multidimensional and have been analyzed extensively by other researchers (see James, 1993; Davies, 1982; Foot, Chapman and Smith 1980; McGhee and Chapman, 1980). The difference, however, between "having" and "being" friends is that the latter involves complex manouvres of maintaining the friendship, a great deal of emotional and self-investment, relations between the self as the "ego" and the friend as the "alter-ego" as well as more sharing and participative interactions. This differentiation is significant because, according to the dominant pattern, disabled children experienced the context of "having" friends rather than "being" friends with non-disabled children. For instance, the other children viewed them more as contingency friends, as someone who keeps you company and plays with you when you have broken up with your "friends". Most of the disabled children were not socially isolated due to absence of company or even an engaging social network but due to the absence of these more complex and at the same time intense and mutually participative interactions involved in the context of "being" friends. They were perceived as friends but not "proper" friends. Notions of competence, functionalism and behaviour were used as reasons for explaining why disabled peers were not "proper" friends or why they were excluded from game contexts:

Interviewer: Yesterday when I was walking at the playground I saw that Paul was alone. Why the other children didn't play with him?

Pupil A: Because they think that he's not as good as them, like he can't run as fast as them and so they don't bother about him.

Pupil B: Because he cannot play like we do. He doesn't do the same things/

Pupil A: and sometimes if you will play with a handicapped person you have to change the game. You have to do something completely different

because they cannot do it and it is not right but now it's a playtime and you don't want to go and play with a disabled person because playtime is for a rest and not for work. If you play with handicapped people [it] needs more work and effort because you have to tell them things more and more again and again and if the game has some rules you tell them and then when you finished they leave

The list in terms of functional difficulties that children referred to was quite long. Directly, mentally disabled children were often rejected because they did not not fulfill expectations and the culturally defined goals as well as the approved means of reaching them. In more subtle ways disabled children's rejection was associated with an important element of childhood culture: the acquisition of status. As Pollard (1992) maintains:

"Status...to some extent ...cuts across the questions of friendship relations and of social competence and in a sense it summarises their social outcome" (p. 49).

Furthermore Davies (1982) has shown that how and why who can do what to whom in a particular situation depends on the status that someone has.

Status: A primary self-interest

Beyond the struggles of "having" and of "being" friends lay the primary concern of presenting an acceptable image of the Self in the public demonstration of sociality which playtime represented. One of the many functions that "friendship" served was to provide the means for the creation of a satisfactory image of personhood. In turn, beyond the concern of children to be seen as full and competent members of their group lay the concern of obtaining a specific status. This was an enabling interest in the context of protecting their self and surviving the variety of situations which they encountered at school. The social position of the Self, however, was influenced not only by the amount of friends that someone had and his/her ability to present a competent self but *by the image that had been attributed to his/her friends as well*. To be liked by or to be friends with the leader of the football team or with someone who was considered as being "naughty and nusty" played an important role in the creation of one's own image and, consequently, on the formation of friendships with others:

Jim: "I think I don't have lots of friends because sometimes when I play with Tom and another friend comes up and I say I play with Tom then he just goes away and finds another friend and you lose him"

In the context of the group discussion in which Tom was present, Jim explained that "they [the others] do that because I think they don't want to interrupt things". However, in a private discussion that I had with Jim he explained to me that no-one wanted to be with him when he was with Tom because Tom was considered by the others as being "naughty". In fact from participant observations, discussions with the other children and the sociometric devices employed it was noted that Tom was both socially and emotionally isolated. According to the teacher "...he's a very strange boy. He cannot form relationships with other children. He doesn't know how to mix with people. He shows off a lot. He hits people...he's shouting and screaming". Tom was the child who wanted to take revenge on the teacher by using a robot as his aid (see beginning of this chapter). In the context of forming friendships Jim knew that his friendly relationship with Tom had consequences for his own position within his peers group. Nevertheless, he continued to be friends with Tom because: "I know he's shouting a lot but there is another thing with him as well. He has two sides: one soft inside and one hard from the outside. I found that out myself. When he's in the fighting mood and the ball comes to his chest he doesn't say 'Ouch' but when he's in the soft mood and the ball comes to his chest he says 'Ouch.'"

While Tom's explanation is revealing, at this point it is more relevant to note that children, even from a very young age, put into practice the old adage that "Who you 'hang out with' reflects appreciation to you":

"I don't want to be friends with Mathew because he's friends with Mari (a peer with Down's Syndrome)"

"[I don't play with Mathew] 'cause Mathew is Mari's friend and if someone will hit Mari and Mari will fight back then Mathew will go to stand up for Mari and he fights back"

Being friends with disabled individuals influences the "image" and the "status" of someone as s/he is obliged, by the others' assumptions, "to share something of the

discredited of the stigmatized person to whom they are related" (Goffman, 1963; p. 43).

As Goffman (1963) maintains:

"The tendency for a stigma to spread from the stigmatized individual to his(sic) close connections provides a reason why such relations tend either to be avoided or to be terminated, where existing" (p. 43)

In children's words,

"[I don't want to be friends with Sam] because she has a big head and she looks silly. If I play with people with big heads someone may laugh at me"

"I don't think that people like to go with handicapped because other people will pick on them"

"Some people think they're tough and disabled people are weak so they don't want to be seen with them"

"..you don't want people to see you with handicapped people. They'll pick on you"

The above discussion focused on these issues which impinged upon the creation of more inclusive and productive interchanges between disabled and non-disabled children. But what seemed to be "a barrier" for some was "an aspiration" for others.

A process of redefining?

Discussions with children revealed that 'feeling sorry for' was a frequent response offered, mainly by girls, in explaining the reasons for forming friendly relationships with disabled peers. In some cases such a reason was surrounded by conflict and confusion:

Pupil A: He [Paul] comes up to you and asks you if you want to play cowboys and Indians and you feel so sorry for him that you play with him. So if he would come up to me and Judi and ask us if we want to play with him 'yes, we are going to play with him'. We would not say that we want to play another game

Interviewer: Why do you feel sorry for him?

Pupil B: You look at him and you feel like we better play with him because he's alone and he has nothing to do and then you think that if you were Paul and you were seeing yourself lonely and you could not help it and you feel like sorry and you feel like sad about him so you go and play with him/

Pupil A: there are a lot of people who play with him because they feel sorry. I don't feel sorry for him, because these [disabled] people are borned and the determination that people have got to actually become a normal person it's incredible. I'm treating him like a normal person and I don't feel sorry for him (look the response pupil A offered at the beginning of this discussion).

It is a controversial judgment whether there is "anything wrong with 'feeling sorry for'" (see Quicke, 1990; p. 121). The important issue here is that no child offered this as a reason for explaining his/her friendly relationships with other ordinary peers. On the other hand while 'feeling sorry for' can be "the first step towards genuine empathy and understanding" (Quicke, 1990; p. 121) it is probably one of the reasons, whenever friendly relationships existed, why disabled peers were perceived as friends but not "proper" friends.

The process of redefining involves other issues and questions. How can we explain the expression of bewilderment when I asked Greg (a ten-year-old ordinary child) if he was Simon's [a six-year-old child with Down's Syndrome] relative? Very laconically he told me: "I'm his friend." My question was a projection of my surprise (and doubt?) of seeing a mutually caring and affectionate relationship between a disabled and a non-disabled child. But as Taylor and Bogdan, (1989) suggest:

"People who are involved in accepting relationships eventually take them for granted, something that does not require an explanation. In fact, asking people about why they have the relationships may evoke expressions of bewilderment, impatience or even disgust. This tells them that the person asking the question regards the relationship as something abnormal, that needs to be explained". (p. 27)

As the following account illustrates, in already formed relationships between disabled and non-disabled children the "disability" becomes less central to the relationship while the shared activities are of more importance:

Interviewer: Do you have any disabled friends?

All Together: No

Pupil A: Oh, no Anastasia. Peter is my friend. He's in my class. I play football with him...Once we went to a fair and then we went to his home and it was late. Peter asked his mum "Can Charly stay here tonight?" and his mum told him no but his dad said yes and I slept over there. We woke up the next day and we played football.../

[At another phase of the discussion]

Pupil A: ...It was a disco here at school. His [Peter's] mum said he couldn't go because no-one could pick him up, no-one could take him to

the disco and I got up early in the morning, I got Graham [another friend] and we said we'll take Peter with us...[the discussion evolved around the disco party which concluded as being 'good fun' and 'great'].

Children who had formed inclusive relationships with their disabled peers related to the other as a person rather than as a "stereotype", by focusing more on the humanity rather than the "disability" of the person. This constituted the sentiment or the motivation for entering into such relationships which were mentioned as a response to more general questions such as "Who is your best friend?":

"I'll talk about me and Peter. He's quite nice as a friend, the only problem is that he's kissing my hand...Sometimes he comes and starts pulling a funny act to make me laugh. He cheers me up. He's kind and funny...He's always there for me so I'm there for him. He says in his language 'you are my friend'.. Now I can understand what he's saying"

"[Paul] he's my very best friend. First I didn't like him but he liked everyone, even people who fought him. He's very friendly...Sometimes I help him and he helps me. I never fell out with him."

"He's [Peter] my second best friend. He's a very, very, very, funny guy...He likes football and wrestling"

While the patterns of such accepting relationships varied, their central element was that the other was viewed in terms of his contribution to the relationship and his positive attributes rather than his difficulties. This approach seemed to be qualitatively different from the more dominant passive view that was to be found in other relationships between disabled and non-disabled children.

Pupil A: You know these greek dances that you showed us? We help him to learn them and we dance together/

Pupil B:and he shows us how to catch the ball

Pupil A: he can catch it good/

Pupil B: he catches the ball better than we can

"When someone is after us then he [Paul] helps us. If someone is kicking me he goes and puts him down"

The above children were aware that their friend was "different" but difference was given positive meaning "forming part of the explanation of the unique value to that person as an intimate" (Bogdan et al., 1987;p. 38):

"...sometimes he's [Peter] hilarious, like dead funny being with him. You can laugh all the time...He and Patricia pretend that they want to get married and me and my friends we were pretending that we were priests and they kissed, and then they got into the car and we went around the

school but we all pretend. Like we pretend that we are in a disco or that we are in an aeroplane. They have a wild imagination they can imagine us that we are drivers...."

On the one hand, the relationship was described in terms of liking and enjoying the company of the disabled peer (see also Strully and Strully, 1985a). On the other hand the "disability" while being acknowledged, was not seen as the central organizing factor around which explanations of the relationship were constructed. The following short account is quite illustrative of this different approach to interactions with disabled individuals:

The context of the discussion evolves around a hypothetical birthday party and the activities that children (males) will do at this party after picking one of the two girls in the picture

Interviewer:....Lets say that you're Sam's friends and/

Pupil A: Nooo I won't be her friend. She's handicapped/

Interviewer: You don't want to be her friend because she's handicapped.

Pupil A: Yeah

Pupil B: Yeah

Pupil C: [impatiently and with a raised tone of voice] No, no, no. I don't like to put people off like that. I don't like to pick on people like that. I think I would pick them both.

Such an approach can become the basis of forming an enabling social identity of the Other including sensitivities and talents that labels such as "handicapped" and "disabled" cannot capture. If there is to be a concluding remark for this chapter than at this point Goodie's (1984) suggestion is significant. He has shown that lack of agreement between socially generated identities and reflections of real differences in the social organization of interactions out of which identities emerge are important in understanding the way identities are socially produced. In the way a child put it:

Pupil A: They don't really know her [Mari, see above] that much

Interviewer: What do you think they have to know about her?

Pupil A: That she's not horrible. She's nice and kind

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

"For every complex issue there is a simple answer, and it is wrong"
(H.L. Mencken, quoted in Zigler and Hodapp, 1986)

It has already been mentioned, that a concentration on attitudinal research raises serious questions about the area of special education research, policy and practice.

It has been reported that the integration of disabled pupils in ordinary schooling communities presupposes a change of attitudes. In turn, attitudinal research is based on the assumption that the attitudes expressed by people involved with disabled children will influence the way they behave towards them. Positive attitudes of teachers and/or peers have been frequently identified as a crucial factor in the success of "integrating programmes".

The centrality of attitudes in the creation of more inclusive social communities has been acknowledged yet, paradoxically, according to the dominant pattern of previous attitudinal research, their exploration has been divorced from the very social contexts within which they have been created. Thus, historically, attitudes have been perceived as abstract entities, a-political, a-social and a-historical and they have been fragmented from their complex and contradicting relationships with other social entities. Conventional attitudinal research based on quantitative measurements, operationalization and experimentation usually reduces and transfers complex realities into statistical data and conflict-free, often unexplored relations. In doing so, they allow little room for a broader view of the social reality in their research and pay little attention to the forms of taken-for-grantedness that portray social and political phenomena as neutral and psychologically natural occurrences.

Adopting an alternative perspective, this study has been premised on the belief that an attitude, including all its facets and conflicting dimensions, is a communicative act, aimed at defining or handling the tensions involved in social relations between

people or groups with differential power (Chapter 2). The attitude and its statements have all been perceived as part of a debate and have been grounded in the real problems of the social world. As the whole discussion (see Chapters 4, 5 6, and 7) has illustrated, attitudinal statements were both culturally specific and context bounded. For this reason, any attempt to explore and understand what people tried to communicate by expressed attitudes necessitated exploring the context within which particular attitudes were developed in the first place. Quicke's, (1990) suggestion, according to which "researchers should clarify why they consider a response to be positive or negative, and we would argue that they will not be able to do this unless they discover why the person responded in a particular way" (p. 105), indicates the usefulness of such an approach towards the process of exploring attitudes.

This approach has served a twofold purpose. Firstly, it indicates the effects of political discourses, made at other levels, in everyday educational practices. It enables us to identify those institutionalized processes and ideologies that encourage inclusive or perpetuate exclusive practices. To achieve its "objectives" the study has been founded on the theoretical premises of the socio-political perspective of disability. This involved a theoretical shift from the dominant disablist framework of focusing on the one side of the disability relationship in which all references concerned with attitudes towards disability use the disabled person as the point of reference. This ideological/methodological move has been considered necessary on the basis that "it is the only approach which offers a way of adequately engaging with the complex and contradictory issues involved...[and it is] also necessary for disabled people to develop a sense of human dignity and identity" (Barton, 1991; p.18). This last sentence is of great importance. While for the technical purposes of writing texts, such as this thesis, "we all have to struggle to turn the dense complexity of everyday life into a linear structure" (Atkinson, 1992; p.5) it would be misleading to give the impression that I entered the field with an internalization of what a socio-political approach to disability involved. This would mean to negate one of the most profound influences that the experience of

being involved with this topic had in my personal/political evolution of viewing the paramount reality that surrounds me. Amongst the most fundamental relations that have influenced the decision to adopt this approach is a recognition of the ideological processes involved in listening and understanding what disabled people endeavour to tell us. Enlightening though this process can be, it also entails a great deal of intensity and tension especially for a non-disabled researcher who has not experienced the oppression and indignity that disabled people have experienced by living in societies where the absence of their voices is in itself striking. As Barton (1991) maintains:

"This absence of disabled people's voices and concerns is not because they have nothing to say, via the available mediums, but that they are explicitly prevented from speaking. This is related to the ways in which disability is defined and to the expectations and practices associated with such definitions. It is fundamentally about unequal social relations and conditions and the ways in which power is exercised in our society" (p. 6).

He (Barton, 1995) further argues that "overcoming disabling barriers will include listening to the voice of disabled people and their organizations, especially as they struggle for choice, rights and participation" (p. 10). Within a research context, Susan Peters (1995), a disabled writer/researcher, contends that:

"disability...can only be understood by stepping outside traditional approaches to research, which I feel have reproduced 'given' knowledge of disability as a medico-psychological product of innate individual traits. I believe that only a radical departure from this knowledge will affect the ways research is conducted 'on' disabled people, rather than 'for' and 'by' disabled people" (p. 59).

In light of this, teachers' and peers' expressed attitudes have been used, in this study, as the means for exploring social, ideological and practical issues surrounding notions of integration and disability. In efforts to clarify why teachers and peers were responding in certain ways it became evident that discussions about their meanings and feelings towards integration could not be separated from their understanding of educational policies, the practices of schools as institutions and their meanings towards the notion of difference/disability. Beyond this perspective lies the assumption that one

cannot hope to understand how attitudes might be changed without a full appreciation of how they got there in the first place.

Against this background the rationale of using children with Down's Syndrome as a referent group was created initially out of the complexity and the nature of stereotypes embraced in expressed attitudes towards mentally disabled children. However, throughout the process of this study it has been revealed that the issues involved in integrational practices and ideologies are determined in far too complex a manner to be accounted for by a single variable such as mental disability - a term which in itself is problematic and includes the illusion of homogeneity.

A MATTER OF "INTEGRATING PROGRAMMES" OR A MATTER OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES?

During the time that this study was taking place the education system in England was - and still is- going through a transformation. This has involved a remorseless pressure by Government to impose change on schools and teachers through the introduction of numerous policies and innovations. These have covered all aspects of educational provision, policy, practice and the values underpinning them. The most central characteristic within this transformation period has been Governmental extensive efforts to introduce a centralised competitive market system for the supply of educational services that has resulted in changes to the governance, content and outcome of schooling. The "'free-market' economic ideology and its 'laissez-faire' social philosophy," (Carr and Quicke, 1990 p. 434) dominating the policies made at a Governmental level, has required schools to become more responsive to the economic needs of society in general and the labour requirements of industry in particular. As well as these moves towards the development of a centralised market-led education system, a framework has been created within which "the rhetoric of differentiation both within and between schools to cater for individual abilities and interests was deployed to 'raise standards' and to establish criteria to facilitate parental choice" (Carr et al., 1990; p.

435). At this historical-educational point, the present study has attempted to explore the question of attitudes towards integration, and particularly to locate the question of inclusive education within the wider scene of a changing educational context. Issues of 'entitlement', the National Curriculum and other Governmental interventions in education have created a new sense of urgency in addressing this topic.

Laudable rhetoric and harsh realities

The overriding view revealed by teachers was that their attitudes towards the process of integration tended to be conflicting and often confused, as the notion of integration had no inherent meaning. Indeed, its meaning was rather to be found in the context and purpose of its use, being contingent on several educational (im)practicalities, while a whole range of practices that were called integration supported segregationalist mentalities. However, the ideological and practical themes that were raised in teachers' discourses about integration revealed the degree and nature of the barriers that need to be overcome if laudable rhetoric is to become reality.

It has been emphasised that teachers' willingness and commitment in promoting integrational practices were highly influenced by *the conditions within which they had to work*. In other words, teachers are policy makers but their policy/practices are contingent on the structures and the institutional conditions within which they apply them. The issue is whether these structures encourage or discourage inclusive principles.

The insights offered in this account (see Chapter 4) revealed that teaching is not what it used to be. It does not include the same degree of enjoyment and fulfilment that teachers have experienced in the past because recent economic and political changes are tending to have a negative effect upon their moral and motivation. The new demands that need to be faced are perceived as threatening some of their most fundamental interests-at-hand such as satisfaction, workload and autonomy.

Teachers felt, as mediators of contradictory expectations, that established creations of 'good practice' (some rooted in a child-centred approach to teaching and learning) were being threatened by the introduction of a value-for-money mentality within educational planning and practice. They found themselves within a context where a shift in defining principles of professional commitment was emerging. They were, they felt, called on to become the service deliverers of a Curriculum that had little relevance to the practicalities of the circumstances in which they worked and bore little resemblance to their views of what constitutes teaching and learning. Thus, they felt that they had to intensify their efforts to preserve a balance between the demands of political and market forces and the demands of children; demands that were difficult to reconcile. The findings of this study confirm Pollard's (1990) suggestion that:

"Primary school teachers have thus, in a sense, been 'caught in a trap', torn between the aims which they espouse and the means to bring them about" (p. 70)

These conditions combined with the frantic pace, extreme scope and breadth of the legislative powers used by Government, and frequently the confusion engendered by the newly required demands and practicalities/technicalities, made most teachers adopt the strategy of "just coping" with the situation. But as Elliot (1990) has indicated there comes a point when at best such a strategy might no longer be fair to pupils or to teachers.

Through this race of "copying" or "managing their time", teachers' were left with little physical and psychological space or energy for engaging with the most fundamental element of teaching: the development of a reflective attitude towards their own practices (see also Mittler, 1992). Besides, in the name of professionalism, teachers' reflective ability towards their teaching has been seriously challenged while teachers have been criticised for "their failure to maintain standards, discipline and provide school leavers with the appropriate attitudes and skills necessary for competing effectively in the market place" (Vlachou and Barton, 1994; p. 105).

The notion of "professionalism" here is of great significance. As Fulcher (1989) indicates "...the politics of professionalism in education... have been deployed to block democratic policies" (p. 277). While this stands true for a number of arenas relevant to the area of integration, where teachers and teaching is concerned 'professionalism', and its language and institutional basis, have been used in order to demoralise teachers and consequently to circumscribe their autonomy by increasing centralised regulation. Thus, even in cases where teachers found that a National Curriculum was important, they were highly critical and tended to reject it often on the basis of the dogmatic imposition of these changes.

Within this context the emerging question has been "Where does inclusive education stand in an educational system that focuses on the technical, technocratic, mechanistic, highly regulated and economic aspects of schooling (see chapter 3) rather than its pedagogic practices which involve moral and political issues?"

An impossible dream? Inclusive principles and the new educational era

The overriding viewpoint revealed by teachers has been that the conditions within which they have to work tended to make the commitment to inclusive education more difficult to maintain. The intensification of the teaching act, combined with the mechanisation involved, often led teachers to view inclusive priorities as an additional burden.

The often unmanageable workload that teachers had to deal with led them to perceive children with special educational needs as their "second priority", while being the first priority of "support" teachers. This practice strengthened the division between "mainstream" and "special" teachers while such allocation meant that mainstream teachers could maintain a supportive veneer while taking the minimum responsibility for educating these children. In addition it perpetuated and even strengthened definitions of integration as being about "specialism" and "special teachers" even though most of the mainstream teachers were aware that 'special' teachers were necessary not due to

their attribution of "being specialists" but due to their important function of alleviating some of the "extras" of ordinary teachers. But the language of "specialism" was still used as necessary in legitimising certain roles.

The above, in combination with the fact that the fiscal crisis made it nearly impossible for the school to have sufficient resources to meet all of the expected goals, strengthened the perception that integration was about "resources". Such an understandably strong focus on the materialistic aspects of integration was further reinforced by the fact that little was restructured to fit the demands of teaching children with special educational needs while at the same time more and more was added to the already existing structures and responsibilities of the teacher's job. But such a preoccupation limited teachers' vision of integration and discouraged attempts to focus on the pedagogic aspects of the curriculum necessary for the inclusion of disabled children.

Children with special educational needs were in danger of experiencing a higher degree of exclusion even within ordinary classrooms, due to the mechanisation of the teaching act, which reinforced a restrictive notion of learning, a specific image of children and a linear process of development. *While political rhetoric talks about "entitlement" in a broad and balanced curriculum, teachers talk about a stronger urge to "fit children in a specific system"*. Teachers' opposition was to be found in their struggles to avoid doing so. But the above elements, compounded with the intensification of competitiveness surrounding the aims of education, were in contradiction with commitments to inclusive priorities. Under these conditions teachers were sceptical as to whether ordinary schools were the places in which children with special educational needs could be educated adequately, and express the opinion that integration was a "cheap alternative" to special education.

Too many 'givens' influenced and restricted definitions of integration. In turn, definitions of what constitutes "resource children" were based on a number of

institutional and practical restrictions, including the cultural categories that teachers brought into their interactions with children with special educational needs (see Chapter 5). Definitions of the "integrated resource" were contingent upon what the school could or could not offer. While teachers were aware of this, they tended to focus strongly on the within-the-child difficulties in justifying not only their attitudes towards integration but the quality and the nature of education children were provided with. Thus integration was strongly defined as being about "resource children". Too many facets of integration relied on perceptions of children's attributes even though such attributes were contingent on concerns, purposes, demands and pressures emanating more from the school and classroom life than the children per-se. Further, a medical approach towards notions of disability has strengthened teachers' tendency to focus on different parts of the child (i.e. behavioural and cognitive aspects) in justifying certain educational practices. Beyond this approach, however, their tendency to focus strongly on the within-the-child difficulties was directly influenced by, and simultaneously an influence upon two of the major sub-roles of being a teacher: the disciplinarian and the instructor. Teachers' personal and professional achievement was to be judged by the degree to which they could satisfactorily accomplish these sub-roles in their classrooms. In turn, this influenced the core feeling and an appreciation of the self as "being good at the job". This, in turn, was connected with being able to "survive" within the classroom. Thus, *integration was about conformity and discipline while support teachers often withdrew potentially "disruptive" children from the class or dealt with them in a way that ensured the smooth functioning of the ordinary system.*

In institutions such as schools where conformity is a great, if not a central institutional element, the process of integration was perceived as one of normalisation. But the way normalisation was both perceived and implemented constituted just one more form of oppressive attitudes and practices towards disabled children. The process of normalisation in its applied form imposed a negative connotation on "difference" while the everyday practices were evolved around modifying or tolerating difference.

The perceived notion of difference was contingent on a) the values informing what was selected as of importance and thus as being a priority within educational activity; b) the structures and constraints within which the educational activity was to be realised; and c) the cultural/ideological assumption that there exists an essential homogeneity of cultural norms and values that individuals can adopt so as to be ascribed a valued image and a culturally valued life (Chapell, 1994). All the above reinforce the process of assimilation and the need for conformity, rendering inclusive principles and practices difficult to realise. Even when the notion of acceptance was applied it was connected with notions of tolerance, in such a way, that being different was perceived as an unwanted attribute. Such perceptions not only maintained but reinforced a status of difference strongly linked with inferiority and dependence (Chapter 5).

However, teachers' positive attitudes towards the process of integration originated from a recognition that integration was the best way to overcome prejudices. They felt a moral responsibility to contribute to a positive generational change, to a more caring, not necessarily inclusive, culture. They placed a great emphasis on the social aspect of integration, often at the expense of the academic benefits that disabled children could obtain out of such a process. But the exploration of what "social integration" involves has indicated that the issue of inclusion is much more complicated and it extend beyond the school boundaries. Indeed it reaches the "constitution" of Self and the ideologies and values to be found on wider societal culture. Nowhere was this reflected more than in the discussions I had with children. Adults, through the process of child-management, too often, ascribe to children a status subordinate to their own by viewing them as incomplete entities or as adults in the making. However, discussions with children can reveal important messages about the nature of society within which we live. It is through these discussions that one can realise that what are predominantly viewed as natural and neutral occurrences are in fact socially created ideologies which as of second nature are histories congealed into habits. Further, by observing and listening carefully to children I realised the magnitude of multiplicity of dimensions of

power (both overt and covert), and the complexity of intention involved in forming interpersonal relationships which, in this context, constitute childhood culture (see also Quicke and Winter, 1994). This lived multiplicity goes far beyond our efforts to capture reality in textual forms.

Social integration: Culture and identity

The culture of a group of people is based on their whole way of life, including language, ways of perceiving, categorising and thinking about the world, forms of non-verbal communication and social interactions that, in turn, are based on rules and conventions about behaviour, moral values and ideals as well as needs and priorities. The above dimensions are all part of the puzzle called interpersonal relationships, upon which the notion of "social integration", to a large extent, is based.

In interpersonal relationships between disabled and non-disabled children the former have to deal not only with the actual difficulties originating out of a particular impairment but also with the perceived restrictions associated with the cultural meanings attributed to disabled children by their non-disabled peers. Thomas (1978) in a study of the social psychology of childhood disability, which includes interactions, suggests that from a socio-psychological perspective the precise medical category of disability is not particularly relevant - except if it carries a social stigma. Severity of disability, he claims is a more useful approach since this indicates the likely degree to which the disabled person will be able to cope with the problems of everyday living. He goes further by tentatively dividing this heterogeneous group called disabled people into five "psycho-social categories of disability-handicap":

"(1) This category is based on the degree to which the disability pervades the perceptual field. It is *highly visible* and provides early information which acts as an anticipatory signal to others...These signals convey clues about the social identity of the disabled person.

(2) In this category the dominant theme is difficulty in effective *interpersonal communication*...

(3) Here the person appears normal both from a distance and during social encounters...

(4) This category relates to the connotation carried by the *label*: the disability is associated with social stigma, as in severe retardation and educational subnormality.

(5) A *combination* of the above - for example Down's Syndrome...with its physical aspects and its social stigma..."(p. 6)

I referred to the above categorisation only in an attempt to indicate the complexities involved in relationships between non-disabled and children with Down's Syndrome. While the dominant tendency has been to focus on the actual difficulties that children with Down's Syndrome might exhibit in forming relationships, an exploration of children's attitudes towards their peers with Down's Syndrome necessitates an exploration of the assumptions and values that they hold both on issues of appearance and issues of mental disability. The opportunities of different children with Down's Syndrome have been restricted and their difficulties exacerbated, both because of the way mentally disabled children have been regarded and treated and also because of the inaccurate stereotypes which have been attached to their distinctive appearances (chapter 7). These assumptions and stereotypes have been conceived by others previously and independently from actual relationships with people with Down's Syndrome. Often these individuals are rejected on the basis of their appearance rather than their capabilities. The corporeal inscription of a disability such as Down's Syndrome is just too much for pupils to ignore. In this case and as Marks (1994) suggests, "to be inscribed as physically different is to be conspicuous, and enlightened educational and social policies appear to have done little to transform that" (p. 77).

Appearance in general is of importance because it is linked with cultural values and assumptions that might not have any foundation in reality. For instance, it has been demonstrated that appearance is linked in children's perceptions with functional effectiveness and intellectuality even in cases where children had never been in contact with the people about whom, based on the most slender evidence, they formed a social identity.

However, appearance in the context of disability is of a central importance because it has been used by others as a social indication of differentiating the "normal"

from the "not-normal". It is the first challenge to what has been perceived as the "social order of normalcy". Simultaneously, this differentiation serves the purpose of confirming that "we" belong to the unstigmatized, creating in this way a particular group identity for the ones who have been perceived as different.

An important implication of this finding is that any attempt to change children's attitudes towards their disabled peers, in this case towards children with Down's Syndrome, necessitates attempts to change attitudes towards what constitutes normalcy. This is because the two sets of attitudes are strongly connected so that a change in one set should take under consideration a change in the other. In other words, a change in one set of attitudes "causes" a change in the other and vice versa. But we learn to place attitudes to normalcy as very central to our lives, as indicated from children's emerging ideologies. Here lies one of the multiple reasons of why particular negative attitudes towards disability, such as a strong emphasis on a deficit approach towards disabled people, are particularly resistant to change.

The creation of more inclusive social practices necessitates that disability awareness should extend further than the organisation of the class structure and/or the introduction of compartmentalised disability awareness programmes. It should be a cross curriculum issue with an emphasis on reflecting upon the values embedded in and transmitted through pedagogic practices. The strong emphasis on conformity, on normalisation and the differentiation of pupils according to their intellectual competence and functionalism that are found within the institution of schooling strengthens a particular notion of normalcy and is in contradiction with programmes that are applied in efforts to promote more inclusive relationships. Children should be encouraged to reflect on disability issues, but it is also necessary to be critical on restricted notions of normalcy. Teachers' attitudes towards these social facets are of great importance because as it has been illustrated (see Chapter 6) children's attitudes towards the process

of integration reflected those of their teachers and/or of the ones existing in the wider society. Further as Quicke (1990) maintains:

"To many pupils... lessons about attitudes towards disability may seem paradoxical. On the one hand the teacher is encouraging critical engagement with ideas and practices which discriminate against persons with disabilities, whilst on the other the very same teacher may be identified with an authority which generates discriminatory attitudes of another kind" (128)

An additional reason for the complexities involved in changing children's attitudes towards their disabled peers is the linkage of specific attitudes with specific self-needs and priorities. It has been emphasised that due both to the complexity of childhood relationships and to children's vulnerability in a school context, childhood culture can be enabling in one sense but greatly constraining in another. The rules and sanctions that are entailed within this culture demand a high degree of conformity because acceptance is based very much on an instrumental notion of relationships. For instance, friendships are regarded as serving important self- rather than mutual interests. There is a continuous bargaining associated with efforts to "control" the situation and to create a specific image and status necessary for the protection of self.

Simultaneously, within the realm of interactions children are learning the appropriate social order of behaviour which is contingent upon specific group contexts, structures and priorities. Deviations from what has been considered appropriate behaviour is perceived as threatening some of the primary interests-at hand (see Chapter 7). The centrality of different interests varies and it is this variation that influences how flexible and accepting different children and different groups are in their responses towards children who they perceive as exhibiting deviant behaviour. In this respect, it can be argued that within childhood culture disability is regarded as a form of deviance, even though this issue is much more complicated as a process and needs further exploration (see Hargreaves, Hestor and Mellor 1975). At this point, however, it is important to note that the perception that disabled children are deviant and the nature of

the response towards behaviour exhibited by disabled peers is also influenced by the cultural meanings and categories that their peers bring into interactions with them.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Research such as this often seems to raise more questions than it answers. In fact, during the process of analysing, interpreting and discussing the findings of this study, many issues emerged which were either beyond the "objectives" of this study or for which there was a lack of adequate information in order to form safe interpretations. Although many issues which emerged from this study are amenable to forming further research objectives and they need to be explored in greater detail with further research, there are some areas/points of view that are identified as particularly critical.

One of these issues is the need to approach attitudes towards integration from a different perspective if we have any genuine concern for creating a more inclusive society. While notions of attitudes can be elusive, being influenced by a number of situational and personal variables, any attempt at attitudinal change should have as a starting point the realisation that it is not solely the attributes of a disabled person and/or the nature of the disability that influence both teachers' and children's attitudes towards the process of integration. Attitudinal statements are highly linked with specific structures, values and ideologies that are to be found in the real world that every one of us experiences. Thus, any attempt to understand attitudes, and people's resistance to change, necessitates first and foremost an understanding of the conflicts included in the paramount reality within which attitudes are rooted. The resistance to change of certain attitudes is not only linked with the personalities of the people who hold a specific attitude but also with their efforts to succeed in overcoming the problems and tensions they set themselves or the problems that they have to face. Such tensions become more complex and difficult to resolve because different collectivities of people endeavour to pursue different goals -the way they think "things are" or "ought to be"- within unequal social relationships.

In the present context these conflicts and tensions have become more confusing and subtle. This happens, not only because of the plethora of contradicting ideologies and values that are to be found in our society about a single social issue but is also due to the extensive confusion of voices emerging out of the dynamics within which old assumptions no longer hold while new ideas and assumptions have not been internalised. To complicate issues further, critical terms either have no inherent meaning- certainly someone has to be appreciative of the multiple meanings already in existence - or they are used in different contexts serving different purposes.

Language is a significant means in the struggle of defining parts of the paramount reality as communication itself has become a hard and a confusing process, while labels of social phenomena have lost their meaning due to the need of rethinking and reconstructing certain terms and definitions. For instance, *how are we to interpret notions such as "democracy", "equality", "rights", "choice" and "professionalism" in a conservative highly technocratic and economically-led educational era?* Such terms provide pretexts for interpretation, are themselves to be examined as interpretations, are subject to varying interpretations and can be examined within specific contexts for the extent to which they create structures that impinge upon the development of inclusive practices. Further, what does "social policy" mean in a capitalist society and how do specific practices come to be defined and legitimised as "social policies" even when they are not? These are critical questions and need further exploration if we are to understand "the ways in which legislation and the vested interests of various professional groups may contribute to the legitimization of inequalities in the education of specific groups of children" (Vulliamy and Webb, 1993). They are also important in understanding why "integration" still has been surrounded by the same popular questions (such as questions of resources, specialism and/or the integration vs segregation debate) that were to be found in the past when attempts focused in justifying segregation. The fact that still there is a need -and a more urgent

one- to focus on attitudes towards integration is just one indication that the underpinning structures and institutional framework surrounding integration has remained not only basically the same but has further restricted progressive changes despite claims of "constructive" and "progressive" integrational policies.

I would not like to imply that the process of integration has been a static phenomenon - even though some facets of integration can demonstrate its stagnation as a process (see also Marks, 1994). Rather the experience of conducting this study made me realise that the resistance to change certain attitudes -including policies and practices- is to be found elsewhere and not in the perceived abilities or "disabilities" exhibited by disabled people. This assumption includes a particular stance but I have already acknowledged that both researchers and knowledge are neither natural nor neutral. The produced knowledge in all its facets (i.e. research produced knowledge or official curricula) involve "notions of desirable and undesirable, and if acted on without full consultation with those such actions affect, it involves the use of power" (Fulcher, 1989; p. 263).

As Barton and Corbett (1993) suggest:

"Our findings have supported the principle that there can be nothing simplistic about the process of change, which has to be both conceptual and structural" (p. 20)

This study has demonstrated that some objectives/definitions surrounding integration have been consistent with extensive practices of segregation. Ideas arising from the philosophy and the practices of 'special' education have been imposed on the process of integration, limiting visions of inclusive practices. The language deployed and the ideologies underpinning it have revealed that "handicap", "specialism" and notions of "need" - despite the apparent humanitarianism implicit in this notion - were frequently occurring themes surrounding what was perceived as "appropriate" within the social reality of schooling. Such notions are more relevant to a segregationist ideology and when referred to the process of integration, even though they have been presented as

beyond politics, their main purpose is to obscure the politics of education and the failure of the ordinary educational system to create inclusive practices.

Inclusive education, as Slee (1993) has suggested "necessitates a reconsideration of the complex and potent cocktail of pedagogy, curriculum, school organisation and the ideologies that inform these components of schooling" (p. 351). In fact, inclusive policies and practices necessitate that "integration must be a policy, a programme, orientated towards its own destruction" (Branson and Miller; 1989; p. 161). For some, the vision of such a process may appear absurdly utopian. For others, however, that means recognising inclusive provision as an educational issue and thus highly political. Inclusion is about the curriculum in its broader sense (see Apple 1993 and Wexler, 1992) and an exploration of the reasons that the educational apparatus has failed to create opportunities for all its learners regardless of their potential 'outcomes'. It is not about separated short-term programmes, special units, behaviouristic token-awarded approaches and experimental designs but about challenging issues of power, control, discipline, priorities and conformity to already established dominant sets of values. Further as Fulcher (1989) has powerfully shown it is not solely about laws:

"...legislative decisions may achieve formal rationality... in the sense that the law is 'complied with', in a procedural sense (schools will carry out research for 12 per cent as handicapped, for instance); but the evidence also suggests the law cannot achieve substantive rationality, or goals of the kind implied by the notion of free appropriate education (if for a moment, we ignore the professionalism inherent in the notion of appropriate). The literature on English school practices revealed a child may be placed in a regular school...but that social and educational integration do not necessarily follow" (p. 270.

It is about commitment as well. Teachers play a significant role in the creation of more open and democratic structures. As it has been emphasised teachers do not merely deliver the curriculum, rather they are the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement. Thus the creation of inclusive practices requires commitment on their part. However, it would be either naive or unfair to teachers to suggest that the creation of inclusive education can be based solely on their commitment, especially when their

participation in decision-making and policy development at Governmental level has been merely minimal. How do teachers view the changes imposed on them? What forms of opposition are they developing? What are the means they use in balancing their own ideologies with the ones they have to comply with?, In what ways do they use already existing structures in pursuing their own interests-at-hand? and how is their vision of integration restricted in the interference of materialistic and ideological realities? These are questions which need to be examined further within specific school contexts to provide the sorts of support they are both entitled to and which are necessary in resisting romantic notions of change.

Furthermore, inclusive ideologies necessitate changes at other levels of society as well. This includes the identification and exploration of these particular processes through which individuals are classified, objectified, individualised, disciplined, normalised and/or excluded from communities. In relation to integration, the medical and the charitable/humanistic approach towards disability and thus towards disabled people have contributed significantly to the construction of their inferior status by creating images that are connected with a particular notion of negatively valued difference (see Hewey, 1992). Such created images have been perpetuated by a strong focus on normalcy; a notion that seems to be defined by describing that which does not constitute normalcy. That, in turn, is contingent upon the meanings that people ascribe to particular cultural symbols. The association of disability with negatively valued difference has been further strengthened by the wide spread dominant set of values that have been connected with appearance, power and prestige which in turn have been contingent on what seem to be the most valued elements of our existing society: performance, competence, functionalism and commercial productivity.

In a society which is increasingly based on an ethic which gives emphasis to self-sufficiency, independence, status, success, power and wealth, desirable social features such as help, care and even interdependence have been used as indicators for

legitimising oppression, inferiority, marginalization and exclusion. Thus, "despite decades of progressive rhetoric..., it is still the case that this minority group [the so called disabled] feel stigmatised and boxed into stereotyped passive roles" (Quicke, 1988; p. 167).

Because the struggle for challenging these sets of dominant values that oppress people as human beings is complex, difficult, brings discomfort and is even regarded as an "unfashionable morality", the focus has been towards normalising individuals who deviate from the norm in any respect by "treating" and/or "curing" their difference. Paradoxically, normalisation is demanded in a world full of difference. The close relationship between processes of integration and normalisation reveals that integration is not about validating difference - rather it is about conformity. Further, the new generations even in cases where they have been educated, at least physically, with disabled peers, hold oppressive ideologies because they have acquired the values that are widespread in different sections of society, so developing a new type and nature of prejudice which is more subtle and so more difficult to identify. Exposing both the covert and overt ways in which dominant values encourage the creation of oppressive attitudes entails an exploration of the way such values come to affect interpersonal relationships including the creation of the Self- and the Other's Concept. It further entails an examination of their influence on the creation of disablist images. These are important questions and need further exploration in attempts to understand some of the oppressive structures inherent in the existing society.

However, "individuals may resist or contest the way they are constructed by policy documents or dominant cultural perspectives, and choose actively to construct their own subjectivities as other than compliant and conservative" (Marks, 1994). The way pupils who are integrated into ordinary schools construct views of their own subjectivities is a crucial issue and has not yet been taken seriously into consideration, thus restricting opportunities for expression. Disabled pupils' voices can enable us to

understand that the way they have traditionally been constructed reflects the philosophies and policies of the relevant educational systems. Such accounts can indicate that specific images/identities are social creations. Also they can indicate that the identity disabled individuals have created for themselves is different to the one imposed on them by official and/or educational systems.

Having said that, it would be a mistake to ignore that there are social relationships in which individual differences, irrespective of their degree and nature, are not only accepted but also celebrated. It could not be otherwise in a society that has been dominated by the ascription of multiple meanings to cultural/social symbols. If that is not the case, how else are we able to interpret social relations in which persons defined by some as being "severely and multiply handicapped" have been loved and befriended by others. Thus, while it has been strongly emphasised that a sociology of exclusion is a serious and urgent task yet it would be monolithic to ignore the fact that we need a sociology of inclusion and acceptance as well. It is not argued that a sociology of acceptance should replace the sociology of exclusion, but rather it can enlarge our understanding of relationships and would enable us to focus not only on "what not to do" but how acceptance and celebration of differences can be accomplished (see Bogdan and Taylor; 1987). Probably this task is more relevant to the context of forming interpersonal relationships but every society or system is based upon such relationships. Further, the above suggestions are based on the understanding that it is the expression of individual subjectivities, especially, by people who have been historically oppressed, that can lead to the internalisation of how serious and important a question such as the following is:

"Discrimination and prejudice create the sense of being disabled that leads to further discrimination and prejudice. *How can this vicious circle be broken?* (my emphasis, Coleridge, 1993; p.36).

In concluding I would like to note that even though I hope this study has contributed in the debate I am nevertheless aware that it is just a small contribution to

the framework rather than the answer to the problematics involved. I feel that the endeavour to recognise the degree and nature of the disabling barriers to be overcome in the creation of more inclusive societies has no end. It can itself serve as the basis for change. Thus, while this study reached its "textual end" simultaneously it has opened a wide range of questions and has created complex tensions for me. While knowledge remains partial and the demand for change continual, such change, towards a more inclusive society, requires us to constantly challenge inequalities of power, recognise the privileged voice of the oppressed and affirm 'who are the real 'knowers''- in this context: 'disabled people'.

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