APPENDICES

SUPPORT TEACHING CONTEXTS

> Due to the sensitive nature of this document and my concerns to protect Nell's anonymity this document has been retained in my data archive and may be inspected on request. It has been verified by my supervisor and critical friends.

> My research journals are in my data archive and are available for verification

purposes. The journals contain information which would lead to the identifícation of research participants and research settings. As with other documents of a confidential nature, the journals have not been made public within the thesis, in keeping with my promise to safeguard the anonymity Of participants. 1 explain my ethical procedures in Chapter 4.

Appendix 1 : Ethics Statement

As part of my postgraduate research programme I am undertaking an action research project to study my own practice as a teacher. I am particularly interested in the issue of inclusion of all children in the full life of the classroom and school, regardless of academic / physical (dis) ability or membership of a particular social grouping. As I will be focusing on my own practice the children who participate will be those currently attending my classes.
This ethics statement is to assure you that I will observe good ethical practice throughout the research.

This indicates that

 the permission of my Principal and Board of Management will be secured before the research commences;

 the permission of the children and their written consent will be secured before the research commences;

 the permission of the children's parents and their written consent will be secured before the research commences;

 confidentiality will be observed at all times, and no names will be revealed of the school, children or staff;

 participants will be kept informed of progress at all times;

 participants will have access to the research report before it is published;

 all participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any time and all data relating to them will be destroyed.

Please sign the sheet overleaf and return one copy with the permission sheet for my files.
Thank you for your co-operation. I look forward to working with you throughout the year.

....

Appendix 1 : **ETHICS STATEMENT**

As a researcher, I am aware of my responsibilities towards my participants, especially since they are children and I will seek to maintain strict ethical practice throughout this research.

1.   I will inform those, who wil! be involved in, or affected by, this research, namely the pupils ín my class, their parents and my teaching colleagues within the school.

2   I will seek their written permission to involve them in the research.

3   I will discuss the research with all the parties involved and attempt to explain, as clearly as possible the nature, aims, objectives and methods of the research

.4   I will confine research to my own classes.

5.   I will seek to uphold confidentíality. Anonymity will be guarded through use of pseudonyms and / or elimination of information that could lead to participants identification. In writing the report I will not reveal anything of a personal or compromisíng nature.

6   I will keep control of tapes, transcripts etc.

7.   I will keep participants briefed on the progress of the research and any new methods that may be adopted.

8   Anyone who does not wish to participate in the research has the right to refuse.

9.   Anyone may withdraw from the research at any time during the project or before publication. Parents retain the right to withdraw their children if they so wish. (All their details, relevant data, etc. will be destroyed).

10.   I will inform participants of the research outcome and the probable uses of this research.

11.   My first responsibility is to the participants of my research and I will try to be mindful of this at all stages.

12.   All participants and the researcher are equals, to be treated with equal respect and integrity.

I have read the ethical statement.

Signed :..   Date : ....

Appendix 2A :   Permission from children

Dear ....,

 We have talked about doing a research project, during which we will try out different ways of learning. We hope to find out which way of learning suits you best. I am hoping to learn how to become a better teacher. As I explained I will tape some of our chats. We will write up diaries. You will work in groups with others and we will all share our ideas. I might use your ideas for other groups or classes.

 You will sign a learning contract to promise to do your best. You have to get someone at home to be a learning buddy. In school your group will have the responsibility of finding out about things for yourselves and then teaching it to others.

You may have to be the teacher sometimes!!

If you are happy with all this then please sign below. Thank You

....

Yes I want to take part ....

No I **do not** want to take part ....

SIGNED ---

Date   ------------------------

Appendix 2B : Parental Permission for research

.

....

Dear Parents / Guardians,
I am currently doing a course of study for my own personal and professional development. As part of this course, I am conducting a research project.

I intend to base this research on my own teaching practice. I hope to use this research as a means of improving my practice and the children's learning, enjoyment and participation. This is called Action Research.

The children will be co-researchers as we try out different activities and learning strategies. I have explained the research to the children and I will seek their permission to involve them. My data collection methods will include audiotape recording the children and myself in conversation, photographs, diary recordings, field notes, and reports. I would also appreciate your involvement (comments, observations etc.) in the research project. Feedback from participants will be used to decide on new activities.

 I am now seeking your permission for [name of child] to take part. The focus of the research is not the children. They will be helping me to focus on my practice. There is no compulsion to become involved. Strict confidentiality will apply to children's details and participants may withdraw at <u>any</u> stage. Participants will be informed of progress throughout. My research report will be available for examination before it is published.

I promise that I will observe good ethical conduct throughout. Please read the enclosed copy of my ethics statement.

If there is anything further that you would like to clarify please feel free to call in (before or after class time) and we can discuss it.

After reading the ethics statement and discussing the project with your child I would be grateful if you would sign and return the attached sheet at your earliest convenience.

I enclose two copies of this letter, one of which is a copy for my files and one of which is a copy for your files.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Cahill.

Appendix 2B : Parental Permission for research

To Margaret Cahill,

I, [parent's name]_____,

give my permission for_____[child's name] to take part in your research.

Signed ....

[Parent's name]

Date...............................

_____-

To Margaret Cahill,

I, [parent's name]_____,

do not give my permission for_____[child's name] to take part in your research.

Signed ....
[Parent's name]

Date.................................

Appendix 3A : Research Methods.

The research followed a generative action-research model (McNiff 1988 : 44-46). An overall action plan and a sample action research model are included in Appendices (3D, 3E & 3C).

My concerns vvere

A low level of pupil participation and interaction,

Over reliance on didactic teaching methods,

which hindered effective learning and limited quality learner participation and interaction.

The 'before' situation was outlined through investigation of

pupils' experience

my own practice

teacher assessment of current pupil participation

This was done through ...

interviews (parents, children and colleagues)
personal and colleagues reflection and observation
a review of class achievements

Action : The data generated suggested recommendations for future action which were used to devise, implement and evaluate strategies for change (Action Plan - Appendix 3D)

e.g. Leaming partners adopt selected solutions leading to ....

Negotiation/signing of a learning contract

Negotiation of methods, presentation and sequence of study

Negotiation of teacher/leamers role.

Suggestions were adopted, tested, evaluated and modified in light of the fíndings. Practice encompassed new issues as they arose and changed continuously in light of evaluation.

Appendix 3A : Research Methods.

Monitoring:

Evaluation and observation was done by all the learning partners (pupils, parents, two teaching colleagues and myself). Personally I kept a class journal/diary including fíeld notes of significant events. I consulted with and interviewed participating pupils and some parents.
I also consulted regularly with my critical friends. I aimed to develop pupil portfolios, involving samples of children's work as a form of assessment.

Journal.

My journal documents the varying activities/leaming strategies used by the groups. It documents my own ideas and observations, problems as they arose, my reasoning as to why they arose and the possible solutions. In this way it was a tool for ongoing evaluation.

A separate recording of observations on children's engagement with tasks, success achieved, etc. notes signifícant aspects of the action as they occurred e.g. non-participation, frustration.

Critical Friends:

Critícal friends   observed class

                        discussed with / interviewed class

                        presented some input lessons

                        evaluated the final presentation

One colleague wrote a joumal of her experiences with our study

                                                    (Appendices 7 &9)

Pupils :

Pupils kept intermittent journals and commented frequently on the project.

Honest pupil feedback was encouraged through the use of :

   an anonymous suggestion box
    unsigned written work
    an appointed group spokesperson
    a class council

Parents :

Parents were invited to visit and observe while work was in progress. They were encouraged
to give feedback. Some parents provided feedback in both oral and written form. (Appendix 9A)
 All were invited to contribute material.
 All were invited to the final presentation.

Presentation :

A class presentation was chosen as a display of learning. The format, content and audience were
chosen by the pupils.

The emphasis was not on content but included the valuing of process and the improvement in
learning skills, self-esteem and confidence displayed by the children (as attested to by colleagues
and parents).

(Appendix 9)

Data generated was used to support claims of improvement .

Appendix 3B : Research Data

Data collecting techniques were both qualitative and quantitative and included consideration of

experiences, impressions and feelings around issues.

Data to include : Field notes   Colleague, parent and student comments
                     Research journal.   Photographs.
                     Taped interviews   Student presentation.
                     Student diaries.   Student worksheets.
                     Observations.   Work samples

The areas of investigation were :

A. **Current Practice** Investigate through ;
                             Colleague Observation,
                             Interviewingchildren,
                             Review class achievements,
                             Interview parent / colleague,
                             Personal reflection on practice.

B. **National Guidelines** / expectations for pupils by reference todocumentation.

                   (Curriculum / Scheme of work)

C. **Relevant Research** in the area - through readings

Research progressed through the Action / Reflection Cycle of planning, evaluation,
re-planning....................................

A written Action plan was devised and helped to guide the research (Appendix 3C).

A journal, recording thoughts and possible strategies aided monitoring of my own practice.

Appendix 3B

Evaluatíon was done through ;

Method	**Participants**
Diary/Journal	Teacher/Pupils
Observation, Comment, Reflection, Interview	All partners
Suggestion Box Class Council	
Pupil Portfolios	Pupils/Teacher

Triangulation of data was employed - extracting key elements to support my claims (e.g. Comparison of data form teacher /pupil/ critical friend diaries may highlíght an incident of independent pupil learning ......)

I identify working criteria to demonstrate movement towards my aims ....

I hoped to show improvement in the areas of :

A. 1.   Pupil co-operation, motivation, participation and interaction.

   2   Development of self-esteem and personal responsibilíty for learning.

   3   Development of a participative, classroom environment.

B. 1.   Development of own thought processes...
       displaying recognition of the importance :

                      of process

                      of individual needs
                      of using various methodologies.

17

Appendix 3C : Project Plan

Investigate Current Situation   **[Critical Friend]**

1.   Pupils' Experience   My own practice   Teacher assessment of pupil participation.

C) Collect / Sort Data From 1 to form **Recommendations**

 3   Pupils / Teacher decide on **adoption of some suggestions**. Use of project work / peer tutoring.
Teacher as facilitator / provider of
 resources
 Use of varying methodologies.

(1) Pupils / Teacher decide on central subject theme.   ANCIENT EGYPT

ANCIENT EGYPT..... .(adopt an integrated theme approach, with 'given' content
in subject areas, but negogiation of methodologies, presentatíon and sequence of study)

(2) Learning Contract

6.   Implement suggestions (e.g. Group work, Use of Gardner Ml)

Λ

7.   Observation   Reflection   Evaluation (by leaming partners)

V

(3) Modify suggestion / re-plan with new suggestion

Steps 6, 7, 8, continue to encompass new aspects

9. 'Presentation / Display '   >   Evaluate outcomes
Future Actíons

Appendix 3D: Action Plan.

Action Planning:

 1. What is your research focus?

 2. Why have you chosen this issue as a focus?

3. What kind of evidence can you produce to show what is happening?
   (Evidence 1)

4. What can you do about what you find?

, 5What kind of evidence can you produce to show what you are doing is having an
        impact?('Evidence2')

6. How will you evaluate that impact?

7. How will you ensure that any judgements you might make are reasonably fair and
   accurate?

8. What will you do   then?

McNiff, J., Lomax, P. & Whitehead, J. (1996) *You and Your Action Research Project*,
Routledge: London.

Page 20 is a diagram

Appendix 4 : Conversation with a colleague.

I was about to begin working in a new school and was delighted that one of my colleagues decided to give me some background on the group of children that were to form my new class.

NW : I taught this group last year and they nearly broke my heart. Their apathy is enough to discourage the most enthusiastic of teachers. You will get no good of most of them. They just don't make any effort.

MC : I'm sorry to hear that. Are they a weak class?

OQ : No they are like most classes. They can be divided into three fairly distinct groups, the good students, the weak students, and the *hopeless cases*.

NW : Group A are the good students, achieving well in class, competent and obedient. Group B students are also obedient, but they experience learning difficulties and are below average IQ. However, they try their best and are willing to please. Group C are neither competent nor obedient. They are neither interested, nor engaged in the learning process. I have made a list for you so you will know who belongs where. It will save you wasting your time on those who just don't care.

MC : Thanks. Hopefully some of them will turn over a new leaf this year and surprise us all. I hope to get parents involved as I find that usually helps.

OQ : Sr. X always deals with the parents here. It saves the class teacher from the usual grief. You won't have any direct contact with the parents except on Parent Day.

MC : I haven't experienced that situation before. I always have contact with the children's parents.

NW : Well you were probably dealing with reasonable parents. Parents of this group have a bad attitude, no interest, and place no value on education. They regard us teachers as part of the establishment. They have a major chip on their shoulder. There's no point wasting your time on those kids. They'll never amount to anything. I've seen generations of them in my time.'

<div align="right">(Diary, September8th,1999)</div>

Appendix 5 A : Interview extract: October 4th.

Context : Children had expressed a desire to live in the Stone Age because there was no school :

Teacher : Let's talk about school and learning.
Surely you don't hate school that much?

The following are extracts from the conversation :

Child A : School is a drag - a real pain. It makes me sick on Sunday nights just thinking
about it.

Child B : Yeah - it's boring, boring, boring!

Child C :   We never learn any good stuff. My Dad says that school is a waste of time - it
has nothing to do with real life. He says he spent 13 years of his life there and
never leamed anything useful !

Child D : Teachers make you do stupid stuff- like Irish!

[Comments were plentiful]

Teacher : What do you think we should learn?
What would you <u>like</u> to learn about?

Child D : We could learn about West Life'.

Child E : No - we could learn how to cook.

Child A : That's even more boring!

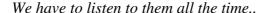Child D : How to hunt, like the Stone Age people.........
.
Child B : What for?

The conversation continued on a number of divergent paths with líttle consensus. However a
number of statements received a good deal of support. These included the following ..

Teachers are bossy,

They aren 't real humans.

Teachers like to make you look stupid.....

In school: *we have to learn stupid stuff...*

We have to listen to them all the time..

We never do any fun things....

There was agreement that 'teachers have favourites - the goody-goody pupils, that are always licking up to the teacher'.

There was also a belief that teachers only like the pupils 'who do what teacher wants or know all the "stuff"...............................

EH **:** School is like a prison. You have to go. You sit all day and listen to stupid stuff.

RC **:** I don't listen. I think about other stuff. Goody – goodies like PXXX listen all day and lick up to the teachers.

DB **:** That's 'cos her mother's a teacher. She has to be a ***good girl.***

PC **:** Well it's better than being stupid like you. You're so stupid you couldn't learn even if you tried.

RC **:** We're not stupid! We just won't let teachers tell us what to do.

AM **:** You don't do anything anyone tells you to do. And they get away with it Teacher. How come?

DB **:** Yeah Teacher, it's not fair!...

Later in the conversation I introduced the idea of different forms of learning and different kinds of intelligence (Gardner : 1983/1993). I pointed out that such different ways of knowing are not generally recognised or accepted in dominant forms of education or society. ....

AM **:**   Well different people might learn in different ways but Rachel or Hazel aren't smart in any way. They are always lowest in the tests in *everything........*

Teacher **:** Everyone has talents. They might be artistic or musical..... You just have to find out about

your gifts and the best way to learn for you. Of course you have to make an effort also....

HK **:** I don't want to learn any of that ***stupid stuff*** we do in school. I learn other cool stuff.
I could learn much better than you if I wanted to!

Teacher **:** Yes I believe you can learn as well as anybody else in the room. How about proving
it to the others. I want to tell you what I have in mind as a little experiment....

Appendix 5B

Extract from conversation

Teacher :   How would you feel about choosing the next unit to study? Maybe we could try out
            some new ways of learning.

Child A :   Learning is learning, no matter how you do it. It's still hard.

Child D :   It's not fair really! I might spend ages learning my spellings and still get
            them wrong while X only looks at them once and knows them.

Teacher :   Why is that unfair? You just need to find a different way of learning them if LCWC
            doesn't work for you.

Child D: I can't learn them even though it takes ages to do my lessons.

Child B :   Yeah! But you're good at swimming.

Child D :   So what? I still get in trouble for not knowing my spellings.

Child A :   School is only about reading and maths and stuff.- things that you have to learn off by
            heart.

Child A :   Yeah! Learning should be fun – not just tests and homework.

Child S :   Tests are to make sure you learned what you're supposed to...

Child SW : I find it very hard to learn things even though I try my best. I always forget things
            doing a test.

Child C :   Why don't you have tests on fun things? Why can't learning be about fun things?

Child A :   We should do more art....

Child G :   ....and computer games.......

Teacher : Well R..   what do you think would improve your learning?

Child R : I want to sit beside A and R (her two friends). They always help me.

Teacher : But you'd spend all your time talking. That's why I separated you

Child R : No, they help me when I get stuck.

(Page 25 Handwritten Learning Contract)

Appendix 6B : Rules

Rules
  Each group will have a Chairperson, Encourager and Reporter

.

  The Chairperson will have the casting vote on division of tasks.

  All roles will be rotated around the group.

  Chairperson will ensure group runs smoothly - may report on any individual who is disrupting

   the group.

  Repeated disturbance will cause the individual to be withdrawn from the group.

  Any group not working will be disbanded and return to 'normal teaching'.

  Everyone's contribution will be listened to.

  Everyone's contribution will be valued by the group.

Appendix: 7A

Observation : October 12th.

Observing the group work in the classroom on Tuesday I felt that the children were adjusting to a new strategy. There was quite a bit of noise and some children were obviously not participating in completion of the given task. Some group members argued while vying for dominance within the group. However, the children did seem genuinely excited about group work and many struggled to get the work done. With a little more guidance I think this strategy will work well. The greatest impediment to progress was M's constant interference and calls for 'quietness' in the room. I think teacher will have more difficulty adjustíng to the new strategies than the pupils.

(Observation by Critical Friend.)

Appendix : 7B

Observation : October 29th.

Chíldren are now arranged in groups to facilitate group work. They have been given worksheets with relatively simple tasks, involving skills such as dictionary work, comprehension and cloze activitíes.

Activities were briefly prepared in a class session and then the chairperson had responsibility for division of tasks and completion of activity. MS also observed this session and we discussed it afterwards.

Throughout the lesson I moved from group to group, fínding to diffícult to avoid 'teaching' each group as I went. My attention was continuously drawn to the time wasting activities and negative aspects. This was the main feature of the ensuing conversation.

Teacher : This group work really wastes a lot of time! It takes them ages to look up anything.

MS : They are only learning these skills - give them a chance!

Teacher : Group A worked through the questions - everyone did every question!

MS : They learned a lot from it - including the fact that they could have divided the work.

Teacher : I should have just told them that. In fact I could have taught them all the facts in one fifth of the time.

MS : They are in control of their own learning. Stop interfering !
Anyway just because you're teaching doesn't mean they're learning.

Appendix : 7C

Observatíon : December 15th.

The children have now become fairly independent in their work. Groups are working well and seem very motivated. Children are experiencing a wide range of activities.

However, I feel that they are still too dependent on me to provide activities for them. I must encourage them to create activities for each other.

On December 16th I announced :

'Today we're going to do crosswords, anagrams and a multiple choice quiz. But, today you are going to make these yourselves'.

Reaction was varied :

RC : We can't do that. You're the teacher. It's your job to make them. Teachers know everything.

SW : We couldn't do that stuff. It's too hard!

HK : Oh, my God!. You'd want to be a genius to do that.

AM : Of course we can do it. We've seen loads of examples!. What will this group do teacher?

HD : You're getting paid! We're not going to do your job for you.

Appendix : 7D

Observation: February 4th.

The class worked in groups on a variety of tasks. Each member was gainfully employed and appeared comfortable working in this manner.

They continued from task to task, wíthout teacher direction, displaying motivation and responsibility.

The Nile group, on finishing individual activities conferenced as a group to ensure the tasks were fully completed. Many individuals fínished their own activity and sought to join other groups. They negotiated access and tasks without interference from the teacher.

While supervising at lunch break children quickly resumed their activities when lunch was eaten. Some were hoping that the rain would continue allowing them to stay indoors and work on Egypt.

(Observation by Critical Friend : M.S.)

Appendix : 7E

Observation : February 16th.

On visiting the classroom I found the whole class busily engaged in a variety of activities.

I focused on those children with whom I have direct contact in my role as Learning Support Teacher. I was very impressed by their enthusiasm and responsibility.
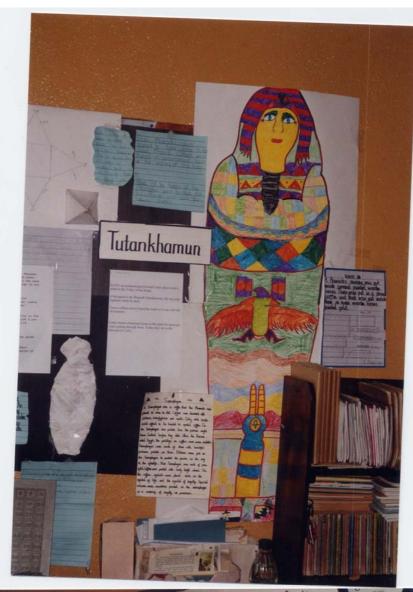
I found EH working confidently in a group – doing a chart illustration. As art is her strong point I decided to question her on the topic they were studying which was farming in Ancient Egypt. She was quite articulate and knowledgable on the topic. When I commented on this she explained that drawing the pictures helps her to remember the facts.

One child SW, who is a very diligent student, with limited academic ability, was in charge of a group. She fulfilled her role in a most impressive manner displaying confídence and self-assurance.This child was very shy and displayed a lack of self-esteem in previous years.
She has really blossomed. She feels her opinions count too. Imagine her taking charge of a group!!

Child S, on the other hand has always been dominant and self-assured. S finds it diffícult to share the spotlight with anyone. She rarely listens to the opinions of others and constantly interrupts. Within this group organisation she actually waited for her turn. Group work has forced her to tolerate others and listen to them. She can't be as bossy as usual.She has even learned to wait her turn.

(Observation by critical friend/colleague X.)

Egypt : Gift of the Nile   Social Order

Pharaohs

SLAVE

Tutankhamun

Appendix 9C(i) : Colleague Validation

My association with this class on their Egypt project has been as beneficial to me as to the children. 1 have watched this slow metamorphosis and stand in awe of their beautiful butterfly that has emerged. My first visit saw a rather disinterested, teacher-dependent group of students.
By their own account school and curriculum content held no interest for the majority. Class teaching was the general methodology experienced and personal responsibility for learning seemed totally absent.

Learning Strategies

The introduction of group learning strategies enlivened the pupils somewhat but the belief in <u>choice</u> for students was slow to take root. The willingness of the teacher to release power and the willingness of pupils to accept power and become responsible was the first battle to be fought. Having shared this power and become partners in learning the benefits began to flow.

Pupil participation has grown steadily throughout the project. Pupils have produced a wide variety of materials, resources and information. The production of such resources was one indicator of increased motivation and development of a sense of responsibility for their own learning. The use of the resources within their own group and class was an indication of the extent and quality of this participation in their own learning. The children acquired the skills of research investigation, recording and presentation as they proceeded, led by their own curiosity and their need for these skills to complete their work. Their success was heralded by a growing confidence and sense of pride in their achievements.

Group work provided the security necessary for many to give full participation and purposeful interaction. Collaborative and co-operative strategies developed as decisions had to be made about materials, presentations etc. In fact the level of co-operation was amazing - without it the class would not have access to such a large amount of information or achieved such successful pooling /sharing of equipment and information. The children developed a proprietorial interest in their chosen area and were intensely motivated to complete their work, imposing their own criticisms and evaluation. Loyalty to the group was very strong.

Research began with school library texts but soon spread to books from different sources, the internet, television programmes, friends and acquaintances. Less academic pupils really shone in areas of practical activities such as modelling, map and chart making.

Visiting midway through the project was remarkable in that motivation and participation had increased dramatically. The class was hungry for information . They also displayed a sense of pride in their work and displayed collaborative skills previously unseen. Their absorption in their work was almost total. Interaction with the pupils highlighted their understanding of the work.

The variety of approaches to any one topic adopted in the groups allowed for individual interests. This also created a sense of belonging and self-worth amongst the pupils both within their group and in the class. The role of encourager within the group was very effective. All pupils seemed anxious to achieve a goal during the class period. All seemed to accept that sources of knowledge were varied and interaction between partners displayed respect and democracy. A positive work ethic and pursuance of a common goal developed, uniting the students in their efforts.

.

The presentation strategy, using a variety of modes included everyone with most groups assigning those with particular skills to particular components. The pupils were unanimous in their preference for this type of work, as indeed were the parents to whom I spoke. It has been a journey of real learning -I have learned not to underestimate the power of natural curiosity or over-estimate the need for a 'teacher to teach the children'. As my father used to say 'Children when interested will learn, *in spite of the teacher*.'

(Critical Friend, M.S.)

Appendix 9C (ii) : Colleague Validation

I visited the class on a number of occasions during the "Egypt Project" in a variety of roles.

The aim of improving pupil participation was of major urgency in this class and has been achieved very effectively. Children, whom I teach as a learning support teacher have grown in confidence and were participating well in class activity and discussion during my visits to the room.

The extent of participation varied according to activities undertaken but the use of a variety of motivational factors allowed each child to experience a sense of belonging and achievement.

The use of co-operative and collaborative learning strategies enhanced the quality of pupil/teacher and pupil / pupil interaction. The learning environment was relaxed but very effective. Teacher and pupils worked together in a variety of grouping options.

Although pupils were allowed to talk and move freely there was a great sense of purpose and motivation evident in the room. Children went on with their work without any teacher dominance. Indeed during supervision duty at lunch time I have seen this class work on their project when the teacher is not even in the room.

The majority display high levels of absorption in their work and would only stop when directly questioned. Similarly in collecting data / materials, a sense of responsibility and motivation ensured continuation of work. The teacher was regarded as a resource rather than a font of wisdom and books, peers or other adults were as likely to be consulted as the class teacher.

Respect for the others opinions and work was displayed and great care was displayed in handling and construction of models etc,.

 Interaction was polite and purposeful. I believe this work was of particular benefit to the
 children I work with. A variety of learning strategies and presentation techniques allowed them to experience success. Their failure in 'academic subjects' was overturned as artistic, musical, modelling activities eto. allowed them to be 'the best'.

The opportunity afforded them to participate in group work, in a variety of roles was very benefícial. The security of knowing their opinions would not be ridiculed, helped growth of self confidence. I have rarely seen such enthusiasm amongst 'weaker' children. They talked incessantly about 'Egypt' and were very proud of their achievements.

(Critical Friend, X.)   53

Appendix 9D : Validation

Comments from Presentation Audience

On visiting class 7 for a presentation of- 'Ancient Egypt'. I was asked to review the work done by ticking the following criteria and adding comment :

Children had :

(2) Acquired a large body of information

(3) Acquired the skills of research, investigation, recording and presentation

(4) Understood their role within a group learning environment

(4) Displayed pride in their work

(5)　Acquired a sense of chronology

(6) Developed the ability to work independently

(7) Displayed purposeful interaction and collaboration

(8) Understood the work and displayed an ability and willingness to discuss it.

(9) Had designed, made and used a variety of teaching aids to enhance their presentation
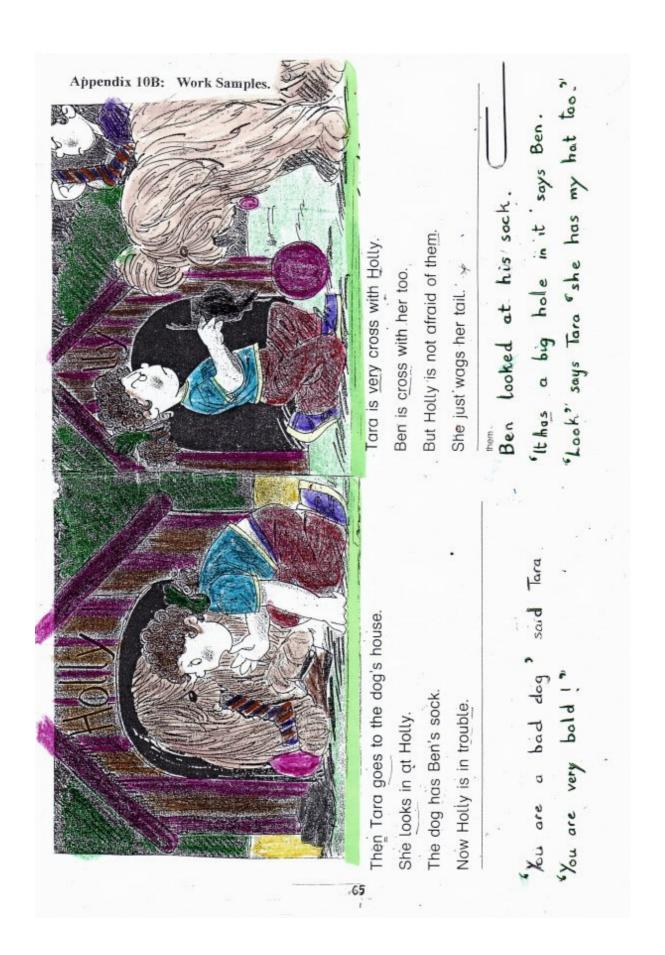
54

Appendix: 9D

Observation on Presentation

(A) The children have produced exceptional work and displayed tremendous confidence throughout their presentation. Their ability to answer questions and discuss related issues is very impressive.   (Colleague 4)

(B) This display was magnificent. The charts, posters and models made by the children were super. They held the attention of the children in my class for over an hour. They should be proud of their achievements.   (Colleague 6)

CI) A selection of pupil comments were noted in the journal :

'It was really *cool'* (A6)

'Egypt was a very interesting place. I'd love to go there now' (MG6)

'I didn't think it would be so good. Why can't we do one?' (EH6)

'Imagine their teacher let them learn about Mummies - pulling out brains and other

weird stuff.' (EC 5)

APPENDIX 10B : NELL'S IEP

Due to the sensitive nature oft his document and my concerns to protect Nell's anonymity this document has been retained in my data archive and may be inspected on request. It has been veríﬁed by my supervisor and critical friends.
1 explain my ethical procedures in Chapter 4

Pages 57- 80 Work Samples.

HOLLY

Then Tara goes to the dog's house.

She looks in at Holly.

The dog has Ben's sock.

Now Holly is in trouble.

Tara is very cross with Holly.

Ben is cross with her too.

But Holly is not afraid of them.

She just wags her tail.

them.

Ben looked at his sock.

'It has a big hole in it' says Ben.

'Look', says Tara 'she has my hat too.'

'You are a bad dog' said Tara.

'You are very bold!'

65

Appendix 11A: Correspondence with my supervisor

Dear Margaret,
 I've just read your work with absolute delight, as always. 1 think you have the makings of a first-class thesis in this work alone. 1 do want to emphasise that you do not need to do any more data gathering. Your doctoral thesis ís different from an MA. The doctoral work looks more at your work in general, in terms of what you believe about issues, rather than focusing on discrete aspects of practice. The thesis Of course needs to be supported by practical examples from the data, which you do. You have a lovely way of integrating your stories of practice into the theoretical issues you are discussing, and that is just what is needed. Well done you!

 Your work is clearly informed by some central themes, all to do with justice, power and control. You show how justice informs your own wish to undertake your research into your own practice, because justíce is what is denied to the young people in your care.... Yet you also show throughout your work how you intend to hold onto your own vision of what Rorty (1999) calls 'social hope' and show how you turn social hope into social reality. (Rorty, R. (1999) Philosophy and Socíal Hope, London, Penguin)

 1 think you could begin to structure a thesis from your present ideas and literature base. I'll make some suggestions about how you might begin to organise your material, but these are suggestions only, to give us a start. You also know how writing shifts and develops through the process of writing. 1 regard the text I've just read as part of your thesis - good practice writing that explores the ideas and begíns to articulate how you respond to the ideas in terms of your own practice.

Perhaps a useful starting point is to take Jack Whitehead's questions of

> What is my concern?

> Why am 1 concerned?

> What do 1 think 1 can do about it? What will 1 do about it?

Appendix 11A: Correspondence with my supervisor.

1 think you are bringing the two strands of power and knowledge together, because you are raising questions both about the nature and acquisition of knowledge (learning), and also about who qualifies as a knower and what should be known. You seem to be saying that, in your view, knowledge is the property of an individual knower who cannot but create knowledge . How people come to know is different, because we are all different, and being different is absolutely the norm. Of course, this is contrary to what official knowledge states, that there is one kind of knower and one kind of knowledge.

Your commitments to pluralism and inclusive philosophies enable you to celebrate diversity in knowing .... It is of course just a skip from diversity in knowing to diversity in culture. The same principles apply: official knowledge maintains that there is one cultural norm, and anyone who deviates from the norm is undesirable, so they are kept quiet, or, preferably, made invisible.

There is however a substantial literature around issues of power and control, as you know. Foucault's work is outstanding in this regard, because he shows the relationship, as you are doing, between power and knowledge.
1 think, in fact, that this idea of the relationship between power and knowledge might be the organising principle for your research. 1 am not sure, and will have to think about it and talk with you. But it seems plausible at the moment. If this were the case, you might frame your work in something like the following way:

 Introduction
You are investigating issues about the relationship between power and knowledge. You intend to show how you have generated your own theory of power-knowledge by exploring the nature of your own practice as someone who has been subjected to the power of privileged people_ _You have given time to investigating the philosophical underpinnings of traditional theories of knowledge and comparing them with the philosophical underpinnings of theories of knowledge that are grounded m a pluralistic view of knowledge and learners. You have also given time to investigating the nature of the relationships between those in power and 'ordinary citizens'. You have come to understand the nature of power relationships, and also the strategies that those in power use to keep others under control. In this thesis you are proposing a new theory of education that celebrates the capacity of all to know, and the power Of teachers to enable all children to enjoy loving relationships and fulfil their own potentials for productive work.

Chapter 1 Title - something about setting the scene

Appendix 11B: Correspondence with my supervisor

Responding to Margaret, 28.8.xx

Dear Margaret,

I've read your work with my usual enjoyment. 1 always like reading your ideas. As we discussed on the phone, here is my initial reaction to how your work might hang together. 1 am not sure whether my perceptions are on the right lines, but it's a beginning. The ideas might change as we go - mine as well as yours.

I perceive your work to have two separate but interrelated strands: the first to do with knowledge and learning, the second to do with the politics of what constitutes legitimate knowledge and who is to be seen as a legitimate knower.

You seem to be saying, in your critique of Claxton's work, that you believe knowledge to be what people create when they learn. The capacity for learning is a property of each and every individual. I agree. I ground my own beliefs around knowledge and learning in the work of some prominent theorists. For example, Chomsky has shown, in a rigorously scientific way, that the capacity for learning is part of the genetic endowment of humans. He makes these claims in relation to humans' capacity to learn language. 1 also ground my beliefs around the capacity of all to learn in Habermas's (1975) view that people are not able to not-learn. The literatures about the so-called 'nature/nurture debate' are extensive. Your work and mine go beyond a fairly simplistic view of 'nature' or 'nurture', and raise questions about the nature of knowledge and people's capacities to come to know in their own way. We also raise questions around the issues of power and politics (see below).

As well as your ideas about what constitutes knowledge and how people come to

know, you also raise questions about the politics of knowledge. In recent times I've been working with ideas around curriculum, because curriculum is perceived as the domain in which knowledge is communicated and acquired. Different literatures exist around how curriculum is conceptualised. Some people believe that curriculum is a package of discrete knowledges that can be communicated to people, including students. This view of curriculum permeates official documents, and is readily seen in UK education systems. (I am not sure, but 1 think the Irish curriculum might be different.)

The curriculum is standardised and 'given'. In the UK the curriculum is expected to be 'delivered' by compliant teachers. It does not take too critical an eye to perceive that promoting this view of curriculum can be seen as a strategy by those in power, e.g. governments and education authorities, to impose their own stamp on the rest of us. It is also easy to see how other powerful commercial groupings such as publishers also adopt and promote a certain view of curriculum, in order to sell books. In the US this has become a terrible dilemma for educators, because publishers want to sell books across the country, but different states have their own policies, so it's a question of bringing everyone m line, in terms of what counts as knowledge and how knowledge is acquired, in order to save on costs and sell as many books as possible. I think US education often appears as a battleground

between educators and publishers.

You could write some excellent chapters around these íssues alone. You might choose to write sections with individual chapters built in. But 1 am proposing these ideas to act more as mental frameworks rather than as writing structures.

What is my concern?
You spell out how you experience a profound concern about the way that children are treated in schools, and how established attitudes manifest in social and educational practices that give the grounds of your concerns. Curriculum is viewed as a 'thing' to be administered. Children are seen as 'things' to be controlled. Teachers are seen as 'things' that implement the 'things' called knowledge in order to 'educate the 'things' in front of them.

This tendency to 'thingify' people and processes ís highly evident throughout the literature. It is rooted m the idea that knowledge is a 'thing'. You'll remember how we studied all these in our MA work, about how knowledge is seen as 'out there', an object of enquiry. This view goes against what you stand for. You see knowledge as a creative process, and people as creative, spontaneous original identities, always in process.

Appendix 12: Research Journal.

My research journals are in my data archive and are available for verification purposes. The journals contain information which would lead to the identification of research participants and research settings. As with other documents of a confidential nature, the journals have not been made public within the thesis, in keeping with my promise to safeguard the anonymity of participants. 1 explain my ethical procedures in Chapter 4.

Appendix 13 : Children's validation

Conversation with a colleague.

Jane in meeting with Tia asked her how things were going in school. She was aware of the background.

Jane : Well Tia, I am delighted to see you in school every day. How are things going for you? Last time I was talking to you, you very very unhappy with school and you were absent a lot. Now Ms. Cahill tells me you are back in class and doing well. What has changed? Did you get a new teacher?

Tia : No, but the teacher isn't so bad any more. And I have some new friends now. And we are learning some cool stuff. Do you want to see my project?

Jane : Yes, I would love to see it. Can you bring it to my room later?

Tia : Yes. I'll bring it up at small break. I made a load of money at the bun sale. Thanks for buying some.

Jane : You're welcome Tia.. I'm just glad you are enjoying school now but I don't understand what changed.

After some time in conversation Tia related the following :

'I hated school because I thought that I couldn't learn anything and the others were always laughing at me. I used to get sick thinking about the tests and stuff. The teachers were on at me all the time. They didn't believe I was sick. I didn't mind doing things in Miss Cahill's room because there was no one looking at me or laughing at me. Even when others were there they had their own stuff to do and they had trouble with their lessons too. Miss Cahill let us help each other and didn't give out too much. Me and Chloe worked together a lot and when I went back to class we sat together and we help each other all the time. We always stay together in group work but now I like

some of the other girls too. They don't laugh at me anymore because everybody gets stuck sometime. It don't matter, you can't be right all the time. I just do my best..'

<div align="right">

(Conversation with JB February 20th,)

</div>

Later that day Jane spoke to Chloe about Tia, questioning Chloe about her friendship with Tia whom she had previously referred to as a bully.

 Chloe reported *'Tia is not a bully. She gets upset when she gets stuck so I help her. Everyone used to laugh at her because she would say rude things to the teacher. Nobody would play with her or ask her to their house because she was always in trouble. Now I know her and we are friends. I think we should try to be friends with everyone.'*

<div align="right">

(Conversation with JB February 20th,)

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Appendix 14 A : Colleague Validation

Extract from Betty's Diary

I can show that I have contributed to the education of **workplace colleagues** in the following ways. Betty, the Special Needs Assistant for Nell, wrote the following :

'Today I was offered a different job, something totally different than my present job as an SNA. This got me thinking about how my job has changed over the years.It has certainly improved. A few years ago I would have jumped at the chance of changing jobs. I was treated like a second-class citizen until Mgt arrived and made me feel that what I was doing was worthwhile. I think she really cares about Nell and the other children. She thinks about how to encourage them to learn. They love coming to her. Personally, she stands up for me and forced the teachers to take me seriously and give me some respect. I now know that my input is of value and that I can make a difference to the children. I'm not just a babysitter. I feel my work is important and I can make a difference to the children I work with.

(Betty's Diary, April,).

Appendix 14 B : Colleague Validation

Extract from conversation with colleague BB.

This perception of the SNA as a babysitter for bold children did change dramatically as attested to by BB, a teaching colleague.

'Without Betty, I could never have coped with Nell. She was vital, making sure that both Margaret

and myself were aware of everything that went on with Nell. Having her in the class was of

tremendous benefit to the other children also. Working with another adult in the classroom was

refreshing. It allowed me to check my responses and reactions on an ongoing basis.'

(Diary : 15/5/xxxx).

Appendix 14C : Colleague Validation

Letter from MS. Dated March 4th, xxxxxx.

Dear Mags,

I hope you've settled into your new job. --

Well things struggle on here without you but I really miss our chats and working together. None of the other teachers have asked me to work in the class with them—----------------------------------- --- ---

------------------------. You are not going to believe what has happened here. Mrs. O. has taken up *the cause*. She really pushed for more work like your Egypt project . She believes 'it was the making of Maxine.' Of course x tried to put her off but Mrs. O has used her position on the Board to get a hearing. She says lots of parents have approached her about this and she felt duty bound to bring this to the attention of the Board of Management. Now X. thinks it is a great idea and he will ensure that all pupils in the senior classes participate in such a project at least once a year------------- ---

--------------. Mrs. O (-----------way) suggested that a parent council should be set up to assist X. in his task as principal. Parents felt it would be fairer if they were more involved in the school and have more contact with individual class teachers instead of relaying everything through our overworked principal. They want more involvement in the children's education. Some would like to volunteer to help in classrooms- like those who came in to tell your gang about their visits to Egypt etc….

Meanwhile Jane has been using more participative methodologies as you suggested. ------------------ --- Jane -------------said
'They worked well in Miss Cahill's room and the parents requested them. They thought they were great. Surely, you want parents on our side. ....'

Your Friend,
ccccccccccccc

Appendix 14 D : Colleague Validation

BV speaks positively about our collaboration as these comments demonstrate ;

When I first came here, no one told me how to do anything. No one was interested in Traveller education. I was terrified facing Travellers. I didn't know what to expect. Mags gave me confidence to deal with the situation, to realise that these children are just like the others and will respond to respect and interest.

Mags gave me great practical support ….loads of ideas and notes and materials that I still use in my class today. Best of all she showed me how…. How to actually teach certain things…..how to deal with tricky situations. She encouraged me to respect the children, to treat them as worthwhile individuals, and that no matter how great the difficulties the child has good teaching can help. She restored my sanity in dealing with Nell, saving me from nagging sarcastic responses that left me drained and guilty…. So that instead I went home feeling good at the end of the day.

(January 9th, xxxxx)