Volume 1

EDUCATING IMMIGRANTS
Educating Immigrants

Edited by Joti Bhatnagar
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To Rita and Anuj

who, despite everything,
seem to have prospered in the new land
1

INTRODUCTION

Joti Bhatnagar

Human migration is as old as the human race itself. The social structure, political organisation and ethnic composition in three of the world's six continents — North America, South America and Australia — have been radically altered through mass migration in the last four hundred years. Although it dates further back, mass migration in the other three 'older' continents also had a great impact. For example, Aryans migrated from somewhere in Europe to India in about 1500 BC, thus completely changing the course of development of Indian languages, culture and civilisation. Many nations in Asia and Africa (such as South Africa, Rhodesia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon) have been transformed through large-scale immigration in the last hundred years.

After the Second World War economies of the Western countries expanded at an unusually fast rate. This expansion led to such an increase in demand for manpower that in the late 1950s and early 1960s there were, in many European countries, many more job openings than there were people to fill them. For example, to meet its manpower needs, London Transport had to send recruiting teams to the West Indies. Most receiving countries viewed immigrant workers as a good way to supply the needs of the economic system. Immigrant workers at first often came alone, but their families soon followed. It came as a surprising discovery that immigrant workers and their families needed housing, health care, social services and educational facilities. No advance planning had been done to meet these needs. The arrival of a large number of immigrant children, largely from the relatively non-industrialised parts of the world, into urban centres of Europe and North America caused serious problems. The children and their parents were psychologically unprepared for the transition, just as the school boards and the local education authorities were caught without any sound educational policies regarding these children — with disastrous results for all concerned. A number of policies were developed on a trial-and-error basis with a number of trials and a number of errors. Although a number of countries in Western Europe were facing the problem, there was surprisingly little co-operation and exchange of ideas. The situation regarding consultation and exchange of ideas seems to have improved in the last few years, largely through the efforts of bodies such as UNESCO and the European Economic Community.
Published works (e.g. *International Review of Psychology* 1976, vol. 25, no.3) indicated that there is a large common element in the problems faced by the immigrant child in the various countries of Europe and North America. With this in mind I organised a symposium under the title ‘Socio-personal and Academic Adjustment of Immigrant Children in European and North American Schools’. Under the chairmanship of Professor R. Taft, a world-renowned expert in the field of adjustment and integration of immigrants, the symposium took place at the International Congress of Applied Psychology in Munich, West Germany during the summer of 1978. Participants from Britain, Canada, France, Sweden and the United States presented papers and looked into the following controversial issues:

1. Whether immigrant children are unevenly distributed and thus form a high proportion of the population in some schools? Is their academic, social and emotional adjustment affected by this? Is the academic performance of the local children affected by the presence of a large number of immigrant children in some schools?

2. The relationship between linguistic behaviour and adjustment. Does speaking a language other than English, French or Swedish (as the case may be) at home, with friends, parents or siblings have any bearing on the adjustment of immigrant children?


4. The role and validity of psychological tests for measuring the ability, aptitude and attainments of immigrant children.

5. The concept of cultural pluralism and its bearing upon the adjustment of immigrant children.


The symposium removed any doubts about the value of international co-operation in developing policies regarding the education of immigrant children — a problem faced by many countries in the world. Since a book examining the problems and prospects of the education of immigrants across the world had not been published it was decided to invite participants at the symposium, together with authors from Australia, Germany, Israel and the Middle East, to contribute a chapter each to *Educating Immigrants*. This book encompasses several major receiving countries in Australia, Asia, Europe and North America. Without making the book extraordinarily long, it would have been very
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difficult to include all the major immigrant receiving countries of the world. South America, sub-Saharan Africa and some Asian countries (e.g. Thailand, India, Hong Kong), which have also received a large number of immigrants in recent years, were left out.

This book covers some interesting combinations of migrant populations and receiving countries. Immigration into Israel has been primarily for ethnic reasons. Jews all over the world regard Israel as their 'homeland' and many have chosen to emigrate there. Immigration of Jews into Israel does not involve any racial problems. On the other side of the coin, many Palestinians who have lived in Israel and continue to live there consider themselves to be strangers in their own land. As Professor Hamalian points out in her chapter, in a sociological sense, they have become immigrants in their own land. The Middle East presents an interesting case of population movements in an area where migration has always been a time-honoured tradition. But the oil-based boom in economy can no longer be managed solely through the traditional sources of migrant manpower. Immigrants to oil-rich economies such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia now come from far-away places like Korea, Europe and North America. The bulk of immigrants in both Sweden and Switzerland come from neighbouring countries and language problems are their major concern. Britain, France and the Netherlands have received a large number of immigrants from their ex-colonies. These include European settlers in the colonies, who decided to return to their 'homeland' when the colonies attained independence, and citizens of the newly independent colonies, who decided to seek a better economic future in the 'mother country'. Racial, ethnic and language problems have been in the forefront of difficulties facing immigrants. Australia, Canada and the United States are all 'countries of immigrants'. Since the Second World War each of these countries has received millions of immigrants and, until recently, all three placed strict limitations on the admission of non-whites. In Canada, 'multiculturalism in a bilingual framework' is the official government policy. The concept of multiculturalism is also gaining ground in Australia and the United States. Germany has been neither a colonial power nor a 'country of immigrants'. It has traditionally been a source of immigrants. In common with other European countries, it has, nevertheless, received a large number of immigrant workers, mainly from Turkey and Southern Europe. Hamburg is now the third largest Turkish city in the world.

Most immigrant workers in Switzerland and Germany are on work permits renewable at the government's pleasure. The work permit does
Introduction

not carry a right to permanent residence. Many are uncertain whether their work permit will be extended or whether they will have to leave for their home countries, and this has been at the forefront of their problems. ‘Living with packed suitcases’ creates a serious dilemma for their children’s education. Should the children be educated for work in Germany or the environment back home? What should be the language of instruction? If they learn German they might not fit into the labour market back home, and if they do not learn German they will find it impossible to find a job in Germany. Solving the problems regarding the length of stay does not necessarily solve the dilemmas facing immigrants and their children, as experience in Britain, Canada and the United States would suggest. In these countries most immigrants are accepted for permanent stay — they do not face anxiety and insecurity about possible deportation. Yet education of immigrants still poses serious questions. Should schools assimilate or integrate them? Should we encourage them to maintain their language and culture? If so, how? Would it not be better for their social mobility if they spoke English from day one and concentrated all their energies on mastering the English language? What is the difference between assimilation and integration? Since the terms ‘assimilation’, ‘adjustment’ and ‘integration’ are often used in the literature dealing with immigrants, it might be worth while to clarify these terms.

Assimilation refers to the adoption by the immigrant of the mannerisms, language, traditions, cultural mores and values of the host society. Over a period of time the immigrant becomes indistinguishable from the members of the host society. His original language and culture are all but forgotten.

Adjustment refers to the process through which the immigrant learns to live in harmony with his new environment. It implies coexistence of the old values and traditions with the new. It means that one has to make concessions to the requirements of the new society but it does not necessarily involve giving up cherished cultural values.

Integration implies adjustment on the side of both the immigrant and the host society. If a society admits a number of individuals with different cultural backgrounds, it no longer remains what it was before such admission. Although the immigrant will have to do most of the adjusting, some adjustment on the part of the host society will be required. Only when there is a willingness to do this will that integration be achieved. Integration also requires emotional adjustment and social acceptance of each other, on the part both of the immigrant and of
the host society. It implies that the immigrant will integrate his old culture with the new, that the two cultures will be made compatible in his personality. The host society, on its part, will also accept, not only intellectually but also emotionally, the significance of the culture which the immigrant brings to his new land. Integration implies a multicultural society, a society based upon an explicit assumption that its cultural mosaic consists of many constituent elements, the contribution of minority groups no less valuable than that of the majority. A society based not only upon mutual coexistence, but upon respect and understanding between the various elements of the cultural mosaic, will permit true integration of immigrants. This, in turn, will lead to the development of a truly free, democratic and egalitarian social structure, to the benefit of all. Obviously, integration would be the ideal state, although no society seems to have come even close to achieving it.

Education systems reflect the social values of the society of which they are a part. In the following chapters an attempt will be made briefly to outline the number and type of immigrants, the immigration policies and the social climate in which the immigrants find themselves. In this setting an attempt will be made to evaluate the responses that have been made in the various countries to meet the challenge of providing suitable education for immigrant children.
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4 Chapter Four PRESENT PROVISION IN INITIAL TRAINING


5 Chapter Five PRESENT PROVISION IN IN-SERVICE TRAINING

I took over the course leading to the advanced Diploma in Education for a Multicultural Society at Southlands College in September 1976. However, my involvement with the course goes back to 1974, when I was invited to become a visiting lecturer, and subsequently the invitation was extended to join the Diploma Tutorial Board. As a member of the Board, I became aware of the broad educational objectives of the course, i.e. to provide a year of intense academic scholarship with visits and lectures, "to develop a theoretical and practical understanding of the implications of education in a multicultural society, and of community relations with special reference to minority groups and the education of immigrant children". The following is a personal commentary on the changing rationale of the Diploma course, and in particular on the centrality of race awareness within it.

The Assimilative Model

My own view then and now is that this Diploma course was a truly 'pioneering' initiative, and the ethos and the content of the course had a definite appeal for me. It seemed to suggest an alternative perspective to
education, where the responsibility of a teacher would be to project and reflect the realities of a multicultural as opposed to an ethnocentric Britain.

It shifted the emphasis from discord to harmony, from isolation to association. It blended neatly with my then uncritical and sincere acceptance of integration as defined by Roy Jenkins, on 23rd May, 1966, at (where else) the Commonwealth Institute: "... not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance".

For a person, who had been involved in community relations for nearly a decade, operating under the subtleties of British racism, mediating as a marginal third man between power and 'black' community and pupils, the definition was the best available, and I held on to it, through most of the first year of the course. The year was difficult, and often quite exhausting. My responses were based on my experience in Southall in west London, as a teacher, as a youth leader, and through my involvement with organisations and individuals within the community. I 'taught as I learned and learned as I taught', and realised how difficult it must be for even the most dedicated teacher to keep up with the current research in
the dynamic, fluid field of race relations and multicultural education. It was not until the end of that first year in the summer of 1977, that I was in any position to critically explore not only my own views, but also the whole discourse on multicultural education and my personal role and responsibility as a teacher. I realised that I had changed my locale from Southall to Wimbledon, but my perspective had not changed. During that first year, I had continued to view multicultural studies as a process of integration within the framework of an 'assimilative' model, and I came to realise that I must move from such a position of 'integration' and marginality to one of 'affirmation' within a pluralist framework. My responsibility, as I saw it then and still do, is to recognise that every person who is seconded to the course is the author of her/his own experience, both as an individual and a teacher. It was and is my duty.
to provide the security, the confidence, the scholarship, and experiences not only to allow that authorship to articulate with a specific focus on racism and race relations; but also to make the students critically aware of the educational, social and political issues of a multicultural society, and to encourage them to develop perceptive multiple "antennae' to analyse, examine, interpret and project in their content, and in their method of teaching the realities of a multicultural society. We all have to recognise that education is real and authentic only when it evokes an adequate, creative and critical response to the reality represented by it.

Ethnocentrism and Feeling

I had begun to feel that my 'black' presence on the course with my 'black' experience in Britain which spread over a decade, inevitably injected a new orientation to the course, because skin colour has its own meaning and message. I had brought with me the
objective reality of British racism. I would claim that the 'black perspective' is essential to any multicultural course, not only because of our experiential contribution but also because we need to articulate with equal confidence our differing experiences to the children we teach, without becoming 'invisible' just because we happen to be a minority in the staff room. Simultaneously, we need to delearn the process of judging ourselves through white criteria, norms and values.

My own experience of life, as an Indian, suggests that multiculturalism is a state and an attitude of mind. It is not a discipline, and yet it permeates every discipline. It transcends reason, and yet my experience at Southlands indicated quite clearly that the concept of multiculturalism in the 'white' world had been grasped intellectually but not necessarily incorporated in the world of feelings. Intellectual
free, capable and willing to accept the concept, but is not free to act. Furthermore, white socialisation and education in an ethnocentric world inevitably leads to a racist and sexist view of life, and clearly indicates a definitive position and how other cultures and peoples are to be viewed and treated. Most are capable of reasoning their way out of the 'binary' position of superior and inferior, but find it difficult to act on their intellectual perception of multicultural education, because the 'cult' of reason in the Western World has more or less destroyed the world of feeling. Multicultural education by its very definition must not only lead to heightened cross-cultural awareness, but activate the subjective world of feelings sufficiently well to enable course members to participate fully in cross-cultural activities.

Without this we shall never be able to move beyond an exotic presentation of minority cultures, a superficial package of 'black studies' for
"black pupils", or a multicultural evening produced by 'sleight of hand' at Diwali.

I came to realise that the debate on multicultural education had been out of balance. It had been dominated either by an emphasis on the teaching of English as a second language, or by an obsession with minority cultures, subcultures, religion, customs and traditions. The conscious or unconscious motivating force behind such a presentation was that a study and understanding of minority cultures and institutions would somehow make our presence more 'tolerable' and 'legitimate'. It was a moral appeal made on our behalf. Such a projection follows a predictable pattern of presenting the Asian community as an undifferentiated group of people totally tied to their religion, whose past, present and future is a blurred continuum; and as people, we emerge as either static or imprisoned irrevocably in our religion and..."
culture. The West Indian community, on the other hand, often find themselves presented as being in a state of permanent muscular tension because of 'alienation' and the 'lack of culture'. Above all, minority children are seen as a 'problem' to be dealt with. Inevitably, the victim becomes the cause, and multicultural education becomes a process and a department to diffuse the tension - the dialectic of information, control and power. Minority, and 'black studies' had often been used by white liberals for the education of the 'black child', with his community, institutions and people as an object of study and research, either to correct, to expose our deficiency, or to add to the mechanics of control which must feed on knowledge to function. It had become a theory and practice of containment without making any dent in the pervasive assimilative model, or raising the most central issue.
affecting all our children, both black and white -
that of racism.

The Centrality of Race Awareness

With this realisation, for the past few years I have been trying to shift the thrust of the debate and the emphasis. The core of the Diploma course is now firmly rooted in antiracist awareness and teaching. It seems to me that by a quiet process of consensus, the educational world has remained, until very recently, totally silent on racism, and on its devastating and dehumanising effects on our 'psychological world' and on our institutions—probably the most important issue of the twentieth century. I am convinced that racism has its own substance, function and power to humiliate and mutilate right across the colour line.

Its effect on the 'black' community is visible, identifiable and quantifiable, but what about the long term damaging effects on the white psyche? It's
pathological effect on whites has been recognised by

the United States Commission on Mental Health, since

1965. As they expressed it: "... the racist attitude

of Americans which causes and perpetuates tension

patently a most compelling health hazard. It's
destructive effects severely cripple the growth and
development of millions of our citizens young

and old alike". Myrdal's American dilemma of conflict between

what whites believe and what they actually do in their

collusion, conscious or unconscious, with racist

practices, can be transposed and is just as valid for

Britain today as it was for America in 1944. I would

argue that the ethnocentric assimilative model, by

totally ignoring the presence of minority children

in its content, method, curriculum, resources, staffing

and organisation, is racist by 'omission' and that it

is damaging to both white and black. Whichever they

are, they both grow up with distorted notions
of their self-worth, identity and eventual position and status in society, and the long term effects will be counterproductive. The sharp focus of ethnocentrism on the white world which does not offer any alternative except perpetuation of racist and sexist ideology and reproduction of class position, will only accelerate the process of already massive alienation.

One only needs to look at the youth culture to see this happening.

The educational world needs to be ‘modernised’, at the moment, it is 'backward and underdeveloped'. It does not reflect either the reality of multicultural/multiracial Britain, or her international dependence on a multicultural/multiracial power structure.

Britain may have territorially decolonised her empire, but the psyche, orientation and view of life remains frozen within a colonial framework. White Britain is far more in need of multicultural/multiracial
education than is ever admitted or realised except in White or Green Papers. The 'black' presence is often seen as a threat or projected as the 'enemy within', but it offers White Britain the only chance she has to break free from her 'colonial imprisonment' by acknowledging that her historical, cultural and industrial heritage was built on black oppression.

Once that suppressed area of knowledge is allowed to surface then perhaps we can negotiate a more meaningful 'interdependent model' of education - a perspective which brings relevance and meaning to our experience. It is the only model which carries the logic of national and international survival, and offers the possibility of resolving the conflict between unity and diversity, when unity does not mean uniformity.

Multiculturalism

This vibrant and meaningful multiracial/multicultural 'interdependent' model of education is
already functioning within territorial boundaries carved out by minorities in places like Southall, Brixton, and Brent in London. These areas may appear to the dominant society as a `patch of colour', but each of these collectives represents a diversity of cultures and peoples with striking differences in customs, traditions, social institutions and views of life with its own power structure; and by its very composition each is multilingual, multireligious and multicultural, with the oppression of racism acting as a unifying force. But the model has much wider implications for British society as a whole. I would suggest that to redress the present imbalance in multicultural/multiracial education, we must include not just minority studies but a critical examination and evaluation of white society, white attitudes, and above all, of the crucial issue of white racism, both individual and institutional, which divides and
incapacitates us from initiating any meaningful change in our system of education.

I am fully aware that nearly all attending the Diploma course come with a certain amount of awareness of the social, political and educational issues raised by the 'black' presence. Once on the course, it becomes our responsibility - both teachers and students - not only to inform but also to explore with honesty, integrity, care and concern, both intellectually and emotionally the racist/antiracist attitudes and perceptions we bring to our awareness. For eventually it will be our attitudes, backed up with hard information and evidence, which will determine our responses and initiatives. To deal with this very sensitive area of attitude and race, we have developed a 'racism awareness programme', which draws on Judy Katz and her research on 'white awareness'. A full analysis of the programme will appear in due course in New Community. But very briefly, Ms Katz offers a specific
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T h e e x p e r i e n c e m a y b e p a i n f u l , b u t i f w e i n B r i
are to operate an antidiscriminatory, antiracist, interdependent multiracial/multicultural model of education, then whites must learn to know themselves and what they stand for, just as we blacks had to find our selves, before they can function constructively and within integrity in such a system.
Chapter Seven

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Multicultural Teaching and Further Education John Gaffikin

For the purposes of this paper, I am taking the phrase 'further education' to mean the non-school, non-advanced education provided by the state and L.E.As for people mainly in the 16 - 19 age group. This education is by full-time, part-time day, block release and evening attendance patterns. It caters for people requiring literacy and numeracy to 'A' level/OND equivalent. The courses can be vocational, non-vocational, or a combination of both. Although my experience does not include higher education nor very much with mature students, many of my comments may also be applicable to that area of post-school education.

The F.E. sector has a long standing interest in the provision of education in a multicultural society.
Classes in many areas became ethnically and culturally mixed in the middle `sixties, and there is probably a stronger tradition of change and adaptation in the F.E. sector than in schools. The C.R.E. booklet, A Second Chance, published in 1976, made the following general observations: - substantial numbers of students from ethnic minorities use the further education service - this use is very patchy, i.e. some courses recruit large numbers of minority group students, while on other courses in the same college such students are rare - such students are more often to be found on full-time courses than on day-release courses, and more often on lower level full-time courses than on advanced ones - students from minority communities are more likely to embark upon, and remain on, courses beyond the usual age for these courses - students from ethnic minorities have a higher failure rate in examinations than indigenous students - ignorance about what F.E. has to offer is widespread, but ethnic minorities are even more likely to be unaware of the status and significance of such qualifications as OND, HND, NNEB, or COS.

The limited statistical evidence that is available bears out these impressions.

Teacher Education and F.E.

As a general rule, the teacher training experience of F.E. staff is either that provided by Colleges of Education, Colleges of Higher Education and Universities, or that provided by the specialist F.E. teacher training colleges of which there are four. Some of these are now constituents of Colleges of Higher Education. Those trained via the F.E. college provision have followed one-year full-time courses, or two-year part-time day-release or evening courses,
often of an 'in service' nature. To put the situation in perspective, only 35% of teachers covered by the F.E. regulations (includes higher education) have received professional teacher education (NATFHE 1981).

Before I outline the more specific needs that I perceive, a major general need is that all teacher education courses must have a multicultural dimension, and that this component must be as compulsory as any other components that are deemed compulsory. I recently had a conversation with a trainee teacher who claimed not to know of the existence of the multicultural option at her college. My recent experience as a one-year diploma student in a College of Higher Education would also indicate that a high proportion of teacher educators are themselves in need of re-education in terms of the changed cultural and ethnic constitution of our society. In-service training is necessary also for many inspectors, advisors and L.E.A. officials. The college that I attended has one of the major and most effective multicultural education units in the country; and yet its impact on the mainstream work within the college appeared much less than it ought to have been, if the academic board and senior staff had recognised the
value of its work.

My demands of a teacher (stronger than perceptions of need!) in a multicultural society comprise the following four elements: - factual knowledge - an appropriate attitude to the students - an appropriate attitude to the curriculum - an appropriate personal life-style

To take each in turn:

(a) Part of any teacher education course should be an up-to-date survey of fact and terminology in relation to the population of this country. Demography, settlement patterns, population movements, cultural and religious practices must be explained and related to children’s and student’s experiences and the consequent impact upon their behaviour, attendance etc. Many supposedly informed visitors to my own institution (Brixton College of F.E.) on viewing upwards of five hundred black students at any one time, are astonished to learn that we have only twenty-two overseas students. They then think our students are some odd category of immigrant. The last thing they think of is that they were born and bred in South London and are as English as the enquirer. It is obviously not possible for all new teachers to be aware of local peculiarities, but it is surely possible for them to be aware of the broad pattern.

(b) Teaching practice must give the trainee teacher the opportunity to develop the appropriate attitude to the student. It is obviously asking a great deal of a course to do this in one year, especially with mature students, but the attempt should be made. My main concern is that many teachers have lower expectations of students from ethnic minorities, and may also be taken aback by a group composed totally of students from an ethnic minority. Multicultural perspectives involve coping effectively with unexpected monocultural situations. It is also vital for classroom discipline and personal relationships that teachers are not condescending towards their students. Many teachers consciously (or subconsciously) feel that they are superior or better educated than their students, and are really doing them a favour by being in the classroom. Racial and ethnic differences can compound this barrier. The atmosphere in some teacher education colleges furthers this elitist attitude. Teachers must also be
aware that most of our present students received their early education in the period 1970-75, when inner city schools suffered severe staff shortages and a high turnover of staff. The scars still show in terms of attitudes to the system. At the initial teacher training level, my requirements of a teacher would place a great burden on the interviewers and selectors of potential students, for people's life-long attitudes are rarely immediately apparent at eighteen years of age. In schools and colleges in the U.K., one in seven hundred teachers are black, while one in twentyfive children are from ethnic minorities. NATFHE evidence to the House of Commons Race Relations and Immigration Sub-Committee rightly states that "such a disproportionately low number of teachers is harmful to the establishment of a socially just and fair society, and seriously hinders the development of positive self-images among black children themselves. In addition, it can lead to a reinforcement of the stereotyping which goes on amongst some white children and adults". College interviewers should therefore see membership of an ethnic minority as a positive advantage; and Institutes of Higher Education should attempt to involve themselves with 'access' courses, which involve mature people of an ethnic minority without the usual qualifications for entry, being accepted on to a pre teacher education course run at a college of F.E., and subject to satisfactory progress, being accepted by the institute.

(c) Teachers should have an appropriate, flexible attitude towards the curriculum. In F.E., the replacement of many traditional examinations by those run by the Technical Education Council and the Business Education Council has resulted in much more flexible student and teacher - based programmes of study. Many curricula are now designed by staff committees reporting to an Academic Board and thence to T.E.C. and B.E.C. The latter now recommend and often insist on an integrated approach to the teaching of various subjects, and this places burdens on many staff used to teaching a subject in isolation. Apart from being aware of the opportunity to ensure that the curriculum is multicultural, staff are required, often painfully, to examine their own education and subject and to make adjustments in the light of rapidly changing educational and social circumstances. So it is essential that a flexible attitude to the curriculum is inculcated in teachers at the earliest possible stage, i.e. during their training. Student teachers must be encouraged to feel that they will be initiators of curriculum rather than the agents for passing it on.
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Chapter 1 Introduction


Part I Setting the Scene: The Multiple Worlds of Children's Learning


Part II Up to Five: Learning to Live With Different Languages


Chapter 4

Continuities and discontinuities: teaching and learning in the home and school of a Puerto Rican five year old

Dinah Volk

The teacher in a bilingual kindergarten reviews the numbers on the calendar with her class. 1 Teacher: Let me see. Is Herminio sitting up straight? OK. Let’s see. The last number that we did was the number...? What number is this one? Group: Ten. Teacher: Ten. And who knows what number you count after ten? Nelson? Nelson: Eleven. Teacher: Eleven. Very good. Eleven has two numbers. What are the two numbers in number eleven? Group: One one. At home Nelson, his parents, older sister, two older brothers, and brother’s wife sit around the kitchen table. The adults are talking and


1 All dialogue in this study was originally in Spanish. It appears here in English translation. Mother: How do you write it? Nelson: A two and a zero. Mother: Mhum. These excerpts from longer exchanges illustrate the complex web of continuities and discontinuities in language-use patterns between the home of Nelson Maldonado, a Spanish-dominant Puerto Rican five year
old, and his bilingual kindergarten classroom. In both excerpts, the adults are conducting lessons. They have identified certain knowledge as important for young children to learn and are using the recitation script, a way of speaking identified with the teacher role. Teacher and mother, Nelson and the other children, all use Spanish, their native language. In the classroom, these lessons are frequent and are dominated by the teacher's questions. Though lessons do occur at home, they are infrequent. In contrast to his classroom behaviour Nelson plays an active role at home, collaborating with his mother to form answers, initiating topics and asking questions. In this chapter I explore some of these continuities and discontinuities, with a focus on the patterns of questions used by the teacher, parents and children during lessons. The discussion is based on audio recordings, observations and interviews conducted both at home and school over the course of one school year. My purposes in the chapter are (i) to add to a growing body of information on the competencies of children from a variety of cultural backgrounds and their opportunities for learning at home; and (ii) to suggest ways in which teachers can build
on these competencies and experiences to help children bridge the gap between home and school. An introduction to some of the research on continuities and discontinuities; the use of questions when listening to children reading; and background information on Nelson's community and school, provide a context for understanding this information.

Continuities and discontinuities

Some researchers (Heath, 1983) argue that the way language is used in families from different cultures and classes and the way it is used in schools is often mutually exclusive and that this discontinuity can help explain why many poor, minority children fail at school. For example, studies of poor African American, Mexican American, and white families suggest that parents provide a rich language environment for children, but rarely, or never, use the 'recitation script'. As a consequence, children's lack of achievement in school is tied first, to their inability to participate in interactions when they are unfamiliar with the way language is used; and second, to teachers' common assumption that this inability reflects resistance, laziness, or lack of content mastery. Other researchers (Tizard and Hughes, 1984) argue that
discontinuities are characterized by varying frequencies in the use of the same kinds of language. When they observed in working-class homes, they saw that elements of the recitation script were used by parents though not as frequently as their children's teachers used them. Children's school failure, according to this position, lies in the inadequacies of their schools and low expectations, not differences in the way language is used. Still others (Weisner, Gallimore and Jordan, 1993) argue that these generalisations about continuities and discontinuities have led researchers to oversimplify the issue, to focus on differences and ignore similarities, and to create stereotypes by ignoring differences between families from the same culture. The work I discuss here supports this position, suggesting that continuities may coexist with discontinuities in the complex relationship between families and schools.

Questions and teaching

The recitation script, whether used at school or at home, is characterised by familiar questions: known information questions used to assess children's knowledge ('what number comes after nineteen?'); unfinished declaratives used as known information questions ('the last
number that we did was the number...?'); questions used as polite, non-explicit directives ('is Herminio sitting up straight?'); questions requesting attention that are used to focus on important information ('remember how we wrote the number 10 yesterday?). The script is also characterised by the initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) sequence in which the teacher asks for information, the student answers, and the teacher evaluates the answer before moving on. When using this script, teachers typically ask a string of known information or assessment questions to elicit correct answers, and have children display their knowledge without assistance so that it can be assessed. Children usually answer these questions with words or sentence fragments, trying to provide the desired information. They rarely ask questions about what the teacher means. In contrast, assistance questions prompt children to think in new ways by asking them to elaborate on what they have said and to promote a dialogue with teachers. Despite the fact that teaching needs both assessment and assistance questions, the latter are rarely used in schools where teachers concentrate on assessing what
children know (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988; Volk, in press).

Nelson: His city and school

Nelson Maldonado lives in a large city in a midwestern state that has had a thriving Puerto Rican community since the late 1940s. In 1990 there were 22,330 Latinos in the city, making up 4.4 per cent of the population.

About 90 per cent spoke Spanish at home and the vast majority were Puerto Rican. In 1991-2, the schools of that city served 71,662 children, 6.5 per cent of whom were Latino. Over 73 per cent came from families living below the poverty level. As a group, the Latino children had both the highest dropout rate and the lowest average reading scores of any in the system.

Slightly less than 50 per cent were placed in bilingual classes, making up about 75 per cent of the children in the Bilingual Education Program (de Acosta, 1993). In Nelson’s school, 47 per cent of the children are African American, 22 per cent Latino, and 27 per cent white. Lucia Martin, Nelson’s teacher, is a Puerto Rican who was educated in Spanish and English and speaks both fluently. Her morning kindergarten class has 28 children, all native Spanish speakers with varying degrees of English proficiency, and all eligible for the free lunch provided for low-income
families.

School activities and the teacher's attitudes and motives

The morning session integrates whole and small group activities,

independent work, and play. Learning is active and usually involves

interaction with people and materials. Mrs Martin uses Spanish when

teaching and slowly introduces English through songs and games. She

explains that she believes in expanding children's abilities in Spanish

as they learn English and feels it is important to provide positive

images of Puerto Rican culture while introducing the children to

mainstream American culture. Mrs Martin believes that the children

will be successful if she provides an environment in which they are

comfortable enough to take risks as they grow in confidence and

competence. Mrs Martin feels that many of the children lack basic experiences and

the vocabulary to describe them. Consequently, she feels it is necessary to

provide experiences and to help the children connect the experiences with

words and articulate them. She organises many activities to facilitate the

development of what she calls 'academic language, not just outside

experiential language'. Mrs Martin feels that the
children's limitations are caused by their parents' tendency to keep their families safely indoors, and the belief that it is not their place to help their children academically. She feels that even parents like Nelson's, who do provide some experiences and verbal stimulation, need to do more to prepare their children for academic learning. To assist them, she shares materials and ideas for them to use. Mrs Martin describes Latino children as very dependent on their parents and passive in the classroom. She feels they need to learn to be more independent and curious. Mrs Martin says that, as a Puerto Rican, she is struggling to be less authoritarian. With some children who are more verbal, she is learning to step back and let children function more independently. With those with limited experiences and vocabulary, she finds this difficult. In addition, Mrs Martin feels constrained by the half day class and the pressures from teachers in the next grade to have all children learn a set amount of information. She says she has little time for needed experiences, discussions, and one-to-one interactions with the children.

Nelson and his family: activities, values and motives

Nelson lives with his parents, seven- and 17-year-old brothers, and 14
year-old sister. His 19-year-old brother and his uncle and their wives live nearby. Nelson’s father works in a factory; his mother is a housewife.

Both parents attended school in Puerto Rico and dropped out at the age of 15, two years before the end of high school. Nelson’s activities at home include playing with action figures, studying his baseball cards, playing draughts, throwing a football, doing jigsaw puzzles, and watching television. He talks, argues, and plays with his older siblings and visiting relatives. Family and friends frequently sit around the kitchen table talking. Nelson sits with them, occasionally joining in, doing homework, colouring, or writing. Señora Maldonado cleans, cooks and serves food, sews, watches television and talks with family and friends. She makes sure the children do their homework and referees their arguments. When Señor Maldonado comes home, he joins in the talk, watches television, helps with homework and does household repairs. On one occasion, Nelson’s mother reads Hansel and Gretel in Spanish to him, asking him to repeat each phrase after her. Then, using a Spanish primer, she helps him read the syllables and words. Nelson’s play with his older siblings often has teaching embedded in the activity. For example,

Nelson’s older brother works with him on a puzzle, sharing strategies for
matching pieces. His sister quizzes him on the colours of the draughts
game pieces they are using. Nelson’s parents explain that they value education and proudly describe
how they are teaching Nelson to write his name, identify colours, numbers
and letters, and speak English. Nelson’s father asserts that parents bear a
responsibility for teaching the basics. We don’t place all the burden on the teacher. When they go to school they have something and the burden is lighter. That’s why we almost never have problems when our children go to school. The teachers say ‘I don’t have any problem with him because he learns things fast.’ But he learns them because we have helped him a lot. The parents attribute their determination to help their children to their
religion. As Jehovah’s Witnesses, they help each other and do many
activities together, including a weekly series of Bible study sessions.
When asked to name the most important thing they can do to help their
children in school, Señora Maldonado, reflecting a common Puerto Rican perspective (Lynch and Hanson, 1992), talks about the central role of
family togetherness. She asks, ‘what good does it do to teach someone
maths or teach them to write if the family is not together and there isn’t
love?’ The Maldonados say they expect their children to do well because they
have provided some academic preparation and because they teach their
children to respect their teachers. In fact, Nelson did do
well in the years after kindergarten, receiving an award in first grade as the best student in his class.

Patterns of language use at home and at school

In the following discussion, I focus on patterns of questioning used by adults and children during lessons, that is, times when the adults provide direct instruction in academic content and skills or discuss relevant experiences. Almost all the talk in both settings is in Spanish. At home,

Nelson usually uses English with older siblings. He uses English in school most often with peers during play.

Two patterns of question use at school

In the classroom, Mrs Martin and the children use the recitation script in both large and small group lessons. Questions are used by the teacher, rarely by the children. Of the more than 3,000 questions used during the 21 hours of taping during classroom lessons, only one per cent are asked by all the children in the class. Nelson asks only five questions during that time. Most of Mrs Martin's questions during lessons assess children's knowledge of important information. She rarely asks them to clarify or elaborate on what they have said. Example 1 below illustrates her use of
the recitation script while reviewing the calendar. She uses a series of assessment questions, many requesting known information, to elicit correct answers. The initiation-response-evaluation sequence is also evident. Mrs Martin asks a question – a child responds – Mrs Martin validates the response by repeating it.

Example 1: recitation script at school

Teacher: Friday. So the last day that we came to school was January eighth and was Friday. What comes after number eight? What number is next? Mónica? Mónica: Nine. Teacher: And the ninth. The ninth was what day? Mónica: Saturday. Teacher: Saturday did we come to school? Group: No. Teacher: No. What number comes after nine? The ...? Group: Ten. Teacher: The tenth. And the tenth, what day of the week was it? Julio? Julio: Sunday. Mrs Martin is more likely to move away from the recitation script and to ask assistance questions when she is talking to the children about their experiences during lessons. Her intention here is to expand the children's ability to express themselves, to think about what they have said, and to connect their experiences to concepts they are studying. Though Mrs Martin controls the direction of these lessons, the children do talk more and are able to demonstrate their thinking to a greater degree. In Example 2, during a discussion of the spring weather, Mrs Martin asks open-ended questions ('Nobody did anything good yesterday outside?'); requests elaboration ('When? A long time ago or this
weekend?'); and models the use of vocabulary in Spanish ('with swings and slides?' and 'with a basketball?'). The double slashes indicate overlapping speech.

Example 2: open-ended question script at school Teacher: Who? Nobody did anything good yesterday outside? Nobody went out to play?... Teacher: Mónica, what did you do yesterday? Mónica: On, on Saturday I saw a programme called 'Light Clouds' and then when my aunts and my cousin came I went outside to play. Teacher: Ah //so you.// Mónica: //With my bicycle.// Teacher: With your bicycle too. How great. Ofelia what did you do? ... Teacher: Mm and did someone someone play in the park with swings and slides? Samuel, did you play like that? Samuel: One day I went to the beach. Teacher: You went to the beach? When? A long time ago or this weekend? //Yesterday?// Samuel: //One day.// Teacher: Huh? Samuel: [Uses incorrect verb in Spanish]. One day. When, when there wasn't school. Teacher: [Models correct verb]. When there wasn't school. And what did you do at the beach? Samuel: [Uses incorrect verbs and 'basketball' in English]. I putted a basketball. And playded. And I beat my brother. Teacher: You what? Samuel: I pu-putted a basketball hoop. Teacher: [Uses 'basketball' in English, then Spanish]. Oh you played with a basketball. With a basketball? Who else played outside yesterday? Tell me. The children's use of questions during lessons is different from the teacher's. They never ask known information questions but are more likely to ask unknown information questions to which they do not have the answer ('how do you do it?'); to ask for permission ('can I do this?'); to ask for clarification ('on the left side?'); and to ask for confirmation ('all of this, right?'). These differences reflect the children's awareness that they are supposed to focus on what the teacher is saying during
lessons rather than on what they are saying or thinking.

Question use at home

In Nelson's home we find one 35 minute formal lesson during the 11 hours of taping as well as many pieces of adult instruction, some short and some longer, that are embedded in other activities. Interestingly, the parents use aspects of the recitation script during these times. Example 3 contains excerpts from a lesson Señora Maldonado conducts with a Spanish primer bought in Puerto Rico when her daughter was learning to read. She uses the traditional approach to teaching reading in Spanish, introducing simple syllables and combining them into words. Like the teacher, she uses known information questions to assess Nelson's knowledge ('how do you say M I?'); polite, non-explicit directives ('how would you say it?'); and unfinished declaratives ('A?'). The IRE sequence is used repeatedly. Nelson's brother, Robert, helps out at first.

Example 3: recitation script at home


They model their teaching on the traditional recitation script that they have experienced and that they have seen their children's teachers use.

Like the teacher, they ask many assessment questions and ask the children to clarify what they have said much less than they do ordinarily. Nonetheless, the lesson script at home is not an exact replica of the lesson script in school. The parents lead the lessons but collaborate with Nelson along the way. He participates actively by initiating topics,

helping to decide what and how much to do, and by talking almost as frequently as they do and by asking the same amount and kinds of questions. Of the 114 questions asked during home lessons, 53 per cent are asked by Nelson, 46 per cent by his parents, and 1 per cent by siblings.

As in the excerpts that open this chapter and in Example 3, Nelson often asks for clarification ('the same as this one?'); or confirmation ('a one and a nine?' and 'poppa?') of what the parent has said. He gives partial answers which work together with the information provided by his parent.
to produce more complete answers, as in the sequence of questions about adding in Example 3.

Summary and implications for practice

Table 4.1 illustrates the complex web of continuities and discontinuities in language-use patterns between Nelson’s home and school. In this section I discuss some of these relationships and offer suggestions for Mrs Martin to extend her practice of building on Nelson’s competencies and experiences and to help parents learn from her.

Table 4.1 Continuities 1 and discontinuities in lessons in school and at home

Lesson Components School Home

personnel children with adult child with adult
large/small groups one-to-one, others present

large/small groups one-to-one, others present

cultural education important education important

cultural education important education important

values maintenance of LI and culture maintenance of LI and culture children unprepared child prepared adult as authority, children empowered child respects adult

d values maintenance of LI and culture maintenance of LI and culture children unprepared child prepared adult as authority, children empowered child respects adult

school and at home

task use of Spanish use of Spanish relevant experiences and academic content academic content teacher initiated and centred parent initiated, collaborative

task use of Spanish use of Spanish relevant experiences and academic content academic content teacher initiated and centred parent initiated, collaborative

immediate

immediate

motives to teach knowledge and skills to teach knowledge and skills to provide concrete experiences to prepare child for school to develop language and thinking to prepare children for next grade

motives to teach knowledge and skills to teach knowledge and skills to provide concrete experiences to prepare child for school to develop language and thinking to prepare children for next grade

script recitation script and open-ended questioning

script recitation script and open-ended questioning
recitation script teacher asks questions, children answer
parent and child ask and answer questions teacher
requests known information parent requests known
information children request clarification rarely child
requests clarification often

1 Continuities are in italic for emphasis and
clarification. Overall, it is clear that both the teacher
and parents create continuity for

Nelson by mutually supporting each other. Mrs Martin
relates to the
children as a Puerto Rican and native Spanish speaker,
promoting their
language development and learning in Spanish. She urges the
parents to
work with her and sends home materials for teaching more
formally. She
encourages children to talk about their experiences and
communicates her
expectation that they can succeed. The Maldonados attend
conferences and meetings, check Nelson’s
homework, teach him to respect teachers, expect he will do
well in
school, and teach him necessary academic skills and
information using
the recitation script, a pattern of questioning they know
is valued in
school. These efforts create learning experiences with
strong links
between expectations and language use, establishing
continuity
between home and school. Though Nelson’s parents may not be
representative of all Puerto Rican parents – any more than
Mrs Martin
represents all teachers – they certainly represent some
Puerto Rican
parents who see themselves as active agents in their children’s
learning. Most often, discussions of home-school relationships are based on
the assumption that such continuity is better for children than
discontinuity. In this case, however, an important aspect of the
continuity is the use of the recitation script that is described almost
universally as constraining children’s language and learning. While the
use of this script at home probably does facilitate Nelson’s learning in
school, merely matching this script in both settings may not, in the
long run, benefit him. For teachers, this suggests the importance of understanding and
valuing patterns of teaching and learning in homes, and building on
these patterns as they draw children into the world of schooling and
academic inquiry (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). Thus, Mrs Martin
might use assessment questions, and slowly and explicitly introduce
children to more challenging assistance questions when discussing
academic content, not just personal experiences. In this way she could
scaffold the children’s understanding and participation as they learn to
use language and think in new ways. When teaching reading,
she

might use the traditional Spanish method of combining syllables that

is used by Nelson's mother, while introducing the practice of reading

and writing rooted in one’s own experiences and language. Stories sent

home and read and repeated word for word could be read again and

discussed in school (Gregory, 1996). As shown in Table 4.1, there are also a number of discontinuities

between lessons at home and in school. Two important and related

discontinuities stand out. First, the teacher believes that many of the

children, including Nelson, are not prepared by their parents for

kindergarten. This belief affects her attitudes and the constraining

language she uses. The parents have a different perspective. It is their

job to prepare Nelson, not to formally teach him as a teacher would,

and they feel that they have done so. This suggests the importance of Mrs Martin acknowledging and

appreciating the parents' efforts, and the concern and values that support

these efforts. Once a positive relationship is established, Mrs Martin can

work with parents to identify the many interactions and materials in the

homes that facilitate children's learning, and to suggest new ones that
build on parents' knowledge and strengths. The critical role played by older siblings in teaching Nelson through play could also be acknowledged. Along with the parents, Mrs Martin might explore ways of encouraging their interactions, integrating older siblings into homework and even asking them to help in the classroom.

Inviting children from older classes into the kindergarten to work with the students would be another way for Mrs Martin to build on children's learning experiences at home. The second important discontinuity relates to beliefs about the relative power of adults and children. Mrs Martin believes that teachers should maintain their authority but that children should be empowered to make choices and be active. The language she uses is inconsistent with these values though it is consistent with her belief that many of the children are ill-prepared for school. The parents, for their part, believe that teaching their children to respect the teacher and be quiet and deferential is part of their preparation for school. Though this belief is not consistent with Mrs Martin's emphasis on active children, it is consistent with the parents' motives and cultural values. Ironically, the children are more active in lessons with their parents than they are in lessons with the teacher. This suggests that Mrs Martin could teach in ways more
consistent with her own beliefs by encouraging the children's questions and active participation, listening more to what they have to say, and asking them to clarify and elaborate on their answers - not just assessing them (Morgan and Sexton, 1991; Wells, 1993). Lessons that integrate academic content with more open-ended and responsive questioning might result in higher levels of participation and competence for the children, helping to persuade Mrs Martin that they are more prepared than she thinks. Finally, it is important to recognise the need for school-wide support for Mrs Martin's desire to provide more experiential learning and one-to-one interactions. A full-day class and agreements among teachers in different grades to focus on expanding children's competencies, not just filling them with information and assessing it, would support her efforts to change.

Conclusion

Much of the previous work comparing teaching and learning in homes and schools has emphasised continuities or discontinuities as if they were mutually exclusive. Such work usually shares suggestions for recreating
home interaction patterns in school or, more commonly, training parents to recreate school interaction patterns at home. Nelson's story illustrates a more complex and dynamic process. While problematic discontinuities certainly exist for children from cultures different than the culture of their schools, varying degrees of continuity may also exist for many of those children. In addition, some discontinuities may lead teachers, parents, and children in new and productive directions as they actively affect each other's practice. The use of the recitation script by Nelson's parents, though infrequent, is significant because it suggests that parents do not just use one style of teaching linked to their culture. They are influenced by what occurs in school and may incorporate into their teaching language and techniques that they perceive to be valued there. School becomes one of several sources, including cultural heritage, that influence how parents talk and interact with their children (Vasquez, Pease-Alvarez, and Shannon, 1994). As professionals, teachers must develop ways to learn about, and understand, children's cultures and the language of learning in their homes. They must work jointly with parents and children — teaching them...
and learning from them – to combine styles of everyday language use

with language styles used for learning and inquiry at home and in school.

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Zeynep is four years old and lives with her parents and baby sister in a block of flats close to the main station in Munich. Her father and mother, Erdal and Ayla, are both Turkish. Erdal was born in Munich and is one of the so-called second-generation migrants whose fathers came to Germany during the early 1970s. He works - as his father did for over 20 years - for the large automobile company BMW. Ayla grew up in Turkey and came to Germany as a 15 year old ten years ago. Ayla, Zeynep's mother, speaks a few rudimentary words of German. At home she speaks Turkish. Erdal, Zeynep's father, who is quite fluent in German, prefers to communicate in Turkish at home, not only with his wife but also with his children. On weekdays, Zeynep spends about six
hours a day with her grandparents, mostly with her grandmother, who

speaks no German at all. So for Zeynep, Turkish is very definitely her

'home' language. Although there are, of course, exceptions, this is the

language situation of many children whose family culture is significantly
different from the dominant culture.

Starting kindergarten - what will it bring?

In September Zeynep will be starting kindergarten. Her parents - and

grandparents - generally feel this is a good idea. They say 'It's time she

started learning some of the things she will need in school', and 'It will be

good for her German'. At the same time there are apprehensions. Her grandmother has heard

that it is a Catholic-run kindergarten. Will Zeynep be expected to take part

in Christian acts of worship? Will she hear a lot of New Testament stories?

Her mother has not yet been into the kindergarten (Erdal took care of the

registration), but she has heard from a friend that the children change
clothes for physical activities. Do boys and girls get undressed in the same

room? Zeynep's father is sceptical about the young teacher in her early

twenties who will be in charge of Zeynep's group. Can she possibly
manage a group on her own? Even the female kindergarten director seems
to be no older than himself. German parents will almost
certainly not share these particular ap
prehensions (although they may have others). After all, they have easy
access to cultural knowledge, transmitted over the
generations, about
kindergartens and kindergarten rituals in Germany. But Zeynep's parents
and grandparents do not. The reservations they may have are
not issues
they will discuss with Zeynep, but they are issues which
will affect their
behaviour. And Zeynep will notice these apprehensions, even
though they
are not explicitly expressed. She will notice that her
mother cannot talk to
her group teacher as the other mothers do; she will notice
the way her
father communicates with the kindergarten director - and
maybe feel
embarrassed; she will notice that her grandmother
disapproves when she
talks about a visit to the local church. She will be
experiencing
institutionalised culture for the first time, and she will
notice that 'her'
language and 'her' culture are not part of the
'kindergarten culture'.
Maybe in the end she will prefer not to talk about the
kindergarten at
home, or to talk about home in the kindergarten. How many
Turkish children in Germany experience this kind of
ambivalence at an early age, and how do they cope with the conflicting feelings that arise out of situations like these? We do not know exactly.

But we do know that a lack of self-esteem – of cultural self-esteem – is prohibitive when it comes to getting to grips with the world, to constructing knowledge and testing learning through language or, in the case of Zeynep, through two languages. How can we help children negotiate these transitions? The need to seek answers to this question becomes all the more pressing as migration, and with it the number of children experiencing the consequences of migration, increases worldwide. Before we focus more closely on the kinds of expectations and assumptions which may hinder Zeynep in her transition 'between two worlds', and suggest ways of helping to support her emergent bilingual and bicultural identity, let us first take a look at the changing composition and size of the non-German population in Germany.

Who are the 'foreigners'?

Germany has a population of 81.6 million. Persons classified as 'foreigners' (Ausländer) are those with a passport from a country other
than Germany. Today they represent 8.6 per cent of the total population, the majority residing in former West Germany. Approximately one per cent live in the eastern federal states (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung, 1995). Since the early 1970s, between 10 and 15 per cent of all children born in Germany come from a non-German family (12.9 per cent in 1993). However, it is becoming more and more difficult – both statistically and culturally – to differentiate between the German and the non-German population. There are a number of reasons for this.

- One quarter of the minority population has been living in the country for more than 20 years, and almost 60 per cent for 10 or more years.

- Two-thirds of all children from non-German family backgrounds are born in Germany.

- The number of marriages between Germans and members of the migrant population has increased considerably (from roughly 28,000 in 1980 to about 39,800 in 1990). Despite this, Germany still does not consider itself officially to be an 'immigration country' (Einwanderungsland). Members of the non-German population are generally referred to as 'foreigners' or 'migrants', and not as 'immigrants'. Apart from the European Union member state nationals, who may now vote at local elections, the foreign population as a whole has no voting rights at any political level. The amount of so-called 'structural discrimination' is still considerable – whether in the
search for employment, for accommodation, or in schools (Bommes and Radtke, 1993). Families from Turkey form by far the largest group, accounting for just over 28 per cent of the foreign cultural community at the end of 1994. A quarter of the foreign population are members of the European Union - predominantly from Italy, Greece, Austria, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and Britain. Following the radical political changes in Europe at the end of the 1980s, there was an upsurge of east-west migration to Germany between 1988 and 1992. During this period total numbers of the foreign population rose from four and a half million to six and a half million. In particular, large numbers of ethnic German families from Poland, Romania and the former Soviet Union migrated to Germany. At the same time the number of political refugees and asylum-seekers rose steadily up to mid-1993, when more restrictive practices were introduced by the German government. In 1992 more than one and a half million refugees were registered in Germany, many of them victims of the war in former Yugoslavia. This means that in German kindergartens and schools there are: • Children of second- and third-generation migrant worker families, mostly from Turkey and from southern European countries. • Children of ethnic German origin from eastern European countries and
the former Soviet Union who often speak little or no German on arrival. • Children of asylum seekers and political refugees, mostly from former Yugoslavia, and from African and Asian countries. The percentage of migrant children attending kindergartens is significantly lower than that of German children (approximately 58 per cent compared with 74 per cent in 1992). At the same time, in some kindergartens in inner city areas there are kindergarten groups in which over half the children come from non-German family backgrounds. Working with children and parents from diverse backgrounds has thus become a common feature of professional practice for many early childhood practitioners.

Cultural assumptions and expectations

What is often underestimated - or sometimes completely overlooked - when working in groups with a mixed cultural intake is the fact that families from other cultural backgrounds often have expectations which may differ considerably from the mainstream patterns of many professionals (see Gregory, 1994 for an account of the differing cultural assumptions between Bangladeshi families and British teachers in early years classrooms). Between home and kindergarten Zeynep will be met by a number of expectations and aspirations concerning her stay in kindergarten, her
development, her schooling, and her future. These implicit and explicit values will, of course, be manifold and depend on the family’s social status and migration history, and on the parents’ individual educational and cultural background. We will not attempt to cover inter-group variations and individual differences. Our purpose here is to focus on selected culture-based assumptions and educational expectations. We shall be constructing and delineating types of expectations, we shall not be describing a real-life scenario with all its complexities and ambivalences. We have selected both parental and professional expectations, which tend to draw a dividing line between home and school, between different languages and cultures. We are discussing this particular set of assumptions and excluding others, because the teacher’s assumptions and beliefs about Zeynep’s home language and culture will make it harder for Zeynep to cope with the transition from home to school and to develop a positive, truly bilingual and bicultural identity.

The family’s cultural and linguistic background: problems of status
Examining practitioners' images and expectations concerning Turkish and Muslim culture means relating educational settings to the wider dominant political culture. In this eurocentric culture, Turkish as a language has no public presence or prestige: it is neither a generally accepted and high status language like English or French, nor is it automatically considered an asset to be able to speak both Turkish and German. Turkish is the language of the 'family', of the private sphere, it may be important for the child in relation to some past or future ties to the home country, but not in relation the child’s identity here and now in Germany.

Eurocentric stereotypes about Muslim culture are well known and need only be touched upon:

- 'There is a wide gap between Middle European and Turkish Muslim culture.'
- 'Women and girls are oppressed.'
- 'Men have the say.'
- 'Traditional sex role models cause problems for Turkish girls and women.'
- 'Most Turkish families are conservative in outlook.'

Needless to say these are not merely stereotypes - they can be very real problems as well. The question in our case is not whether these stereotypes are true or false, or whether they are based on
fact or fiction. Our purpose is to identify a few standard assumptions Zeynep may be met with on entering kindergarten; they will belong to Zeynep's social world as constructed by adults, no matter whether they are justified or not.

What about the parents? The more traditional Turkish families sending their child to kindergarten may see a world of difference between Christian and Muslim culture. They will be worried that, by attending a German kindergarten, their child will be estranged from Muslim culture and norms - especially customs concerning religious practices (food, religious festivals, etc), kinship ties, respect for adults and elders, sexual mores and sex roles. At this level there is fear of assimilation.

What is a child supposed to 'learn' in kindergarten? Turkish parents tend to view kindergarten both as an institution where parents may leave their children to be taken care of while they are at work, and as a place where children 'learn' something. The question is: 'what is the child supposed to learn?' 'Learning for life' - as German pedagogues phrase it - as opposed to schooling and formal instruction, is something
that in Turkish culture is traditionally associated with family and kinship
ties, with non-institutionalised everyday life and local social networks.

The idea of kindergarten as an 'holistic' environment, as a chance to
communicate and negotiate with peers and develop social competence, as
a chance to learn through play, is not familiar to Turkish parents. Rather,

institutions with teachers are meant to instruct children, to teach them

skills that will be useful in school. This is not an attitude unique to Turkish

parents. Kindergarten educators report that German parents - especially

those with five-year-old children who are to start school the following

year - also tend to be increasingly concerned about what their children are

actually 'learning' in kindergarten in preparation for school. Now for Turkish parents this concern about their child's future in the

educational system is of course more poignant. It is directly and painfully

related to a child's German language competence. Kindergarten is, among

other things, a ticket that is being bought in advance to give the child a

chance in mainstream German education. Thus, once in kindergarten, the

child should learn German as quickly as possible.

'She must learn German - as quickly as possible'
Parents tend to look upon learning German as a unique and distinct process which must have priority over all others. Turkish language competence is not immediately related to this process, there is no holistic view of the child's language development. At this level, a desire for the child's speedy assimilation seems to be the parents' guiding principle. Teachers will hear parents asking: 'How is she getting on in German?' 'Is she really learning German, or is she just playing around most of the time?'

They will not only feel pressured by parental demands; they will have experienced again and again that fluency in the German language is looked upon by school teachers as a crucial factor in academic achievement, or even as a pre-requisite for admittance to mainstream schooling. Generally speaking, German teachers have received no special training on characteristics of bilingualism and second-language acquisition; this is not part of the standard curriculum in pre-service training. The whole situation can be frustrating and stressful for the kindergarten teacher. She may feel that she should be 'teaching' Zeynep to speak better German. She may not have the professional knowledge and the self-confidence to tell parents (as well as herself) that, especially
at the age of four, Zeynep will learn most during play or through informal, pleasurable conversation with adults and peers. Worrying about Zeynep's German language competence may mean that she starts focusing on language as such. This in turn could lead to a series of language-related attitudes and educational measures which may deeply affect Zeynep's motivation to express herself and communicate, both in German and in Turkish.

Monolingual perceptions of bilinguals

As a rule, language competence is not measured for a child's overall language repertoire, it is assessed only for one language and with reference to monolingual standards in that language. Moreover, it is often assumed that one language can only improve at the expense of the other.

All these assumptions are part of a 'monolingual' view of bilingualism (Grosjean, 1985 and Baker, 1996).

This monolingual view often contends that bilinguals will have problems in cognitive processing as a result of the potential muddle between two insufficiently-developed languages. A common assumption is that children who are exposed to two languages risk semi-lingualism.
Although more than one half of the world's population grows up with two or more languages, this is not part of German 'linguistic culture'. A child exposed to, and living in, two or more languages is still seen as something unusual. Several assumptions follow from this:

• Only the very best children will learn German properly.

• Speaking Turkish is an obstacle on the way to becoming fluent in German.

• Children who grow up with two languages need special training and instruction in order to learn one language (namely German) properly.

Focusing on language

Since emergent bilinguals are judged to be at risk of semi-lingualism it is assumed that special attention must be paid to their language performance. This may lead to the following measures and attitudes in educational settings.

• Zeynep is singled out for sessions of formal teaching and language instruction. • When Zeynep speaks German the teacher is especially sensitive to mistakes in grammar and feels that Zeynep should be corrected (directly or indirectly). • When Zeynep addresses other children or the teacher, less attention will be paid to what she is trying to say, to her message, and more importance will be given to how she is saying it, how well or how poorly she is expressing herself. She will be praised – or corrected – accordingly. • The teacher will make an effort to improve and extend Zeynep's vocabulary; this may mean teaching specific words and creating situations which for Zeynep will feel more like an oral vocabulary test than like a normal conversation. All this may have short-term effects in improving language competence; it will not, in the long run, make Zeynep feel at ease with
German. Above all, it will not enhance her imagination and motivation.

Living with two languages

Adults worrying about Zeynep learning German may tend to forget that she is actually living with two languages. We deliberately say living with two languages, rather than speaking two languages. It seems very important to shift attention away from bilingualism as a question of language proficiency that can be assessed, to bilingualism as way of life, as something that is being lived and experienced by the child. Grosjean (1982) expressed this change of perspective in the title of his book Life with Two Languages. This entails developing a truly holistic view of bilingualism, accepting two languages as part of a child's life and development, with all its consequences (Grosjean, 1985). An holistic view suggests that bilinguals should not be seen as people composed of two separate parts. The bilingual is not two monolinguals in one person but a unity different from a monolingual— with a specific linguistic and cultural profile. This approach looks upon a child's development as an ongoing process of 'biculturation' and of language acquisition encompassing first and second languages. We
have dwelt on this point because, besides being an issue in research and literature on bilingualism, it also touches upon a more elementary level concerning Zeynep's life at home and in kindergarten. It helps us to take her perspective and actually accept her living with two cultures and languages; thus we may give her a chance to integrate two languages and different cultures, thereby creating something new. So far we have discussed implicit theories and attitudinal patterns. All of them dealt with the relationship between two cultures and two languages, as well as the status of a minority language and culture within mainstream educational settings. Now we will leap from theory to practice. What can be done to make the presence of various cultures and languages in kindergarten a concrete and pleasurable experience for minority and majority children? One procedure is to introduce ethnic stories and language events which will be rewarding and self-enhancing for both minority and majority children.

The public and the private sphere

A teacher introducing a Turkish-German audio-cassette, or a Turkish picture book, is offering a fairly neutral and non-threatening platform for
intercultural exchange – unlike the more personal and individual request addressed to immigrant children to talk about their families. Many immigrant children want to be like all the 'others', and in this situation the well-meaning request 'now tell us about your grandmother in Turkey'

may be met with silence. In comparison, books, songs, films or fairytales are forms of public cultural expression, which can be either readily accepted or overlooked by the child – depending on the situation and his/her frame of mind. A story or a film is basically open to many different reactions which need not be immediately related to a child's individual situation. A child may, indeed, use a Turkish picture book to introduce his Turkish grandmother, but he can do so by choice, at his own pace. There is no pressure to talk about Turkey or Turkish customs, one may talk about the story simply as a 'good' or a 'boring' story. An active and flexible presentation of children's literature from different countries may lead to a series of follow-up activities which need not be restricted to the immigrant community. They may involve German families, as well as different nationalities. Organising a series of shadow theatre
performances from different countries may perhaps transcend the food
and folklore fraternisations on special occasions.

Experiments in dual language presentation through
intercultural films and videos

The idea of the series medien interKulturell (Ulich and Oberhuemer,
1991, 1992) was to develop imaginative and pleasurable dual language
presentations for mixed audiences (including monolingual
German
children) by integrating foreign language elements into a run-on story or
into a game playing on children's curiosity and imagination. This idea is
based on an approach developed by Erman Okay, a Turkish writer of
children's plays in Germany. Various techniques were developed: two
languages within a fairy-tale atmosphere, a slapstick dramatisation of
communication problems and a live presentation of children exchanging
childlore from different countries. The Turkish-German
audio-cassette
Keloglan and the Giant exemplifies this approach. This story was adapted from the original by a Turkish immigrant in
Germany. It has become a blend of traditional and modern elements.

Keloglan is so well-known as a folk hero that most Turkish families can
relate to him, regardless of their background. At the same time, Okay's
adaptation is an original contribution to modern children's literature. In
his version Keloglan, the little man who makes his way in the world, is
self-assertive towards the Padishah. In the end, he refuses to accept the
Padishah's daughter as a gift. Instead he chooses to marry the bright girl
who helps him outwit the giant. The title story of the cassette (Okay, 1991) features Keloglan in his
trials against the fearful giant in the Kaf mountains. A narrator's voice
announces that this tale originally came from Anatolia and that he will tell
the story in German and in Turkish. There is no translation, but rather a
dramatic give-and-take between two languages. For the most part the
dialogue is such that German-speaking children can infer from the
(German) answer what is being said in Turkish – the plot and acoustic
effects also help. This dual language presentation is not realistically motivated (unlike
plays where the boss speaks in German, the workers or maids in Turkish).
In this case, switching between languages is part of the whole make
believe atmosphere of a fairy tale and it comes as naturally as Keloglan
flying or being turned into a horse or a flower. In view of the German
speaking mixed audiences we are trying to reach, the dominant language is German, i.e. the narrative voice is German. Yet both languages are, dramatically speaking, equal. They are both essential to the plot. This presentation of Turkish and German on an equal level symbolises the parity of a dominant and of a minority language and it dramatises a familiar situation for bilingual minority children: permanent switching between two languages. Even younger German children and other children who do not speak Turkish greatly enjoy the presentation - in both kindergarten and school. They enjoy following the story and become curious to know what is being said and often hedge a guess. There is no frustration or impatience at 'not understanding' as they experience a foreign language in a make-believe situation full of suspense. Turkish-speaking children enjoy hearing Turkish in a German-speaking context; and they can play on their bilingual competencies and use them in a group situation with German children and not only in an ethnically homogeneous group. Both German-speaking and Turkish-speaking children witness the acceptance and valuing of a Turkish tale and of Turkish as a language within a mainstream educational and cultural
setting, within the institution. In Keloglan and the Giant the two languages belong to an organic whole; after a while, once the story gets going, the audience tends to forget which language is being used.

Stories – a starting point for intercultural dialogue

Our approach focuses on:

- Fostering positive attitudes and matter-of-fact interplay between different cultures.

- Enhancing German children’s and families’ awareness of other cultures and languages in a mainstream setting.

- Helping to meet the needs of emergent bilinguals, strengthening their bicultural identity, and offering them opportunities to demonstrate their specific skills within an institutional setting in the dominant cultural context.

In our work we chose to focus on stories – a common element both of childlore and educational activities across cultures – as a starting point for intercultural dialogue: as a vehicle for creating common ground in culturally mixed groups, and as a way of establishing a sense of uncomplicated, everyday inclusion and acceptance of different cultures and languages among children, parents and educators.


ethnischer Differenz in der Schule', Zeitschrift für Pädagogik, 39, 483-497.


Ulich, M., Oberhuemer, R and Reidelhuber, A. (Eds) (1987, 5th revised edition, 1995). Der Fuchs geht um... auch anderswo. Ein multikulturelles Spiel- und Arbeitsbuch. Weinheim und Basel: Beltz. (Anthology of games, rhymes, songs, festive days and customs, etc. from Turkey, former Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal, with supplementary texts for teachers)

Ulich, M. and Oberhuemer, P (Eds) (1991, 1992): medien interKulturell. 4 Tonkassetten mit Begleitheften. Weinheim und Basel: Beltz. (A series of four videocassettes and four audio-cassettes, each accompanied by a supplementary booklet of about 60-80 pages providing relevant background information, texts in the minority language, and suggestions for practical work. The cassettes present Turkish and Italian fairytales and stories, literary folk heroes, traditional and modern games alongside children's literature and folk culture from Germany.)

Chapter 6

A child writes from her everyday world:
using home texts to develop biliteracy at school

Charmian Kenner 'I want my Gujarati'. 'I want to write like my mum.' These statements were made by Meera at the age of four, when her mother came into her south London nursery class to write in the family's home language. As well as showing a strong positive response to her mother's presence as a writer in the nursery, Meera displayed considerable interest in literacy materials, which were part of her cultural background, brought in from home. She made use of these as a base from which to develop her own writing in Gujarati and in English. As a researcher working with the class teacher to investigate young children's knowledge about home literacies, I was able to observe and interact with Meera in the classroom over the course of a whole school year. In this case study I shall discuss how the opportunity to work with home texts in school aided Meera's literacy development in both languages.

Background

There is evidence that as young children participate in everyday events involving written language, they come to understand how particular texts are used within particular patterns of social interaction. Taylor (1983)
gives examples such as children writing messages and get well cards for family members, and making signs to advertise a lemonade stall as part of imaginative play. Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984) show that five year olds can produce recognisable versions of letters and maps, whilst Bissex (1980) describes her six-year-old son's 'newspapers', containing sections for weather, news, cartoons and advertisements. Such examples demonstrate children's awareness of the content and symbols appropriate to each type of text. Children can gain a wealth of information about literacy from a variety of home backgrounds, as shown by Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines' study of inner-city families in the United States (1988). Patterns of interaction around text, however, tend to differ between communities (Heath, 1983).

A range of literacy practices within multilingual contexts in Britain has been documented by Saxena (1994) and Bhatt and Martin-Jones (1997) from research with Panjabi families in Southall and Gujarati families in Leicester. In these communities, children participate in the uses of home language texts for cultural and religious reasons, and to keep in touch with relatives elsewhere. Reading and writing takes place in a variety of
scripts, depending on the purpose of each text. The project described here aimed to discover what kinds of understandings three and four year olds were bringing from their home literacy experiences to school. As well as looking at literacy knowledge in English, we were interested to find out whether bilingual children at this age recognised that writing in their home languages was used in specific practices within their families and communities, and whether they already had some knowledge about the visual appearance of different types of script. Our educational concern was to enable children to build on these understandings in their literacy learning at school. Together, the nursery teacher and I set out to construct a school environment which would connect with children’s home literacy experiences. The roleplay area ('home corner') was already a site where children could act out a variety of situations with the help of props such as household furniture and cooking utensils. We made sure that a constant supply of everyday literacy materials was also provided in this area: calendars, telephone directories, magazines, catalogues, writing paper, envelopes, notepads and pens. We found that children made frequent use
of these in their roleplay. Bilingual parents helped us by bringing in materials which they used in their first language at home; these included newspapers, calendars, alphabet teaching aids, and a variety of videos. We also asked parents to write in their home languages for particular purposes in the nursery. The school was situated in Brixton, a multiracial area in south London, and children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds were enormously varied.

Languages used at home included Yoruba, Spanish, Gujarati, Thai, Arabic, Tigrinya, Pilipino and Cantonese. Materials in all these languages were made available by parents to the nursery, and children made many written responses as a result. As parents became involved in the project, I arranged informal interviews with them at the nursery, to find out more about children's home experiences of literacy events in English and in other languages.

This information, along with observations and tapescripts of children's interactions as they engaged in writing in the nursery, and the texts which resulted, made it possible to build up a picture of what children knew about literacy and how their writing developed over the course of that school year. Meera was a constant presence in activities taking place in the home.
corner and the writing area. The texts she produced, and her comments about them, gave a particularly clear indication of the connections which can be forged between literacy at home and at school. I shall now look at these connections in detail.

Meera and her family

Meera was three years ten months old when the project began, and four years eight months by the end of the school year. Her immediate family consisted of herself, her nine-year-old sister Pinal, and her mother and father. Meera's grandparents lived in Gujarat, in north-west India, where her parents had lived before coming to England. Pinal and Meera had been born and brought up in London; the family ran a small local supermarket not far from the school. At home, Meera's parents spoke to each other, and mainly to the children, in Gujarati, whilst Pinal, as the older sister who had entered the British school system first, played with Meera in English as well as in Gujarati. Meera's mother read Gujarati newspapers and used Gujarati to write letters to relatives in India; Meera's father wrote in English only. Meera thus had a rich variety of literacy experiences, at home and in her family's shop, in both Gujarati and English. In this chapter, I shall
consider the following aspects of her literacy development: how she related to the world of the shop in home corner play at school; how she related to school literacy at home, how she reacted to texts which were part of Gujarati family culture when these were used at school; and how her writing development showed an interaction between English and Gujarati. In each of these areas, family relationships, particularly Meera’s relationship with her sister, played a key part in structuring her literacy development.

Relating to shop literacy at school
Meera’s sense of pride in her family’s shop was emphasised when the nursery children stopped outside it on our way to a school outing. We took a group photograph, and Meera later copied the shop name from the photo to make her own text, saying ‘That’s my shop.’ At school, she enjoyed participating in bank, shop and office games. I heard her pointing out confidently in the home corner ‘travel agency’ that ‘this is the counter,’ you have to be on this side,’ and refusing a friend’s attempt to put her in the role of client, by saying ‘No, I work man, I work girl, I work in here.’ Meera’s mother described how her older daughter Pinal would play at
filling in delivery and order forms in the shop, and was learning to take orders over the phone. Meera would copy her sister in role play at home, and often brought leaflets, coupons and stickers from the shop into the nursery, incorporating these into home corner play. Her games involved prices such as '1p' and '£4.50'. She also referred to other literacy practices associated with the shop, saying, for example, 'I'm going to Cash and Carry,' with a 'ticket' in her hand (she had been to the wholesaler's with her father). The National Lottery began during that school year; tickets were sold at small shops like Meera's, and this immediately figured in Meera's nursery roleplays. She designated her own texts, and shop leaflets, as lottery tickets, with remarks like 'You win £40.' On one occasion Meera brought me a large envelope from home, inside which was a lottery ticket and a prize (a pen wrapped in silver paper), along with some leaflets from the shop. This was one of a number of envelopes containing messages and gifts which Meera arrived with at school in the morning, waiting excitedly to show the teacher and myself. Through this transfer of texts, Meera created a constant connection between uses of writing at home and at school. She felt confident about
doing so because we were encouraging her to use collaborative play within the nursery to build on the knowledge of literacy and numeracy which she was gaining from her home world.

Relating to school literacy at home

Meanwhile, Meera engaged in writing activities at home which showed how she had identified key elements of school literacy practices, and was extending her participation in these through imaginative play. Her older sister was an important reference point for Meera in exploring the world of school. Their mother described to me how Meera, having seen her sister working on a school project, stated 'I want to do project.' Picking up a set of papers and putting them in a file, she then said 'I've done my project.' One day Meera brought into the nursery a sheaf of texts which she had written at home, referring to these as her project. Included in the bundle of papers was a printed title page for 'The Tudors', one of her sister's National Curriculum topics, on which Meera had written her own name. On another occasion, when Meera mentioned homework in the nursery, I asked, 'Who does homework?', to which she replied 'My sister
and me'. Her mother also commented that Meera and Pinal played 'school' together, with Meera liking to assign roles by saying 'You are Sharon (the nursery nurse), I am Helen (the teacher).’ Meera would give verbal instructions that she had heard at nursery, and the games would involve writing. Meera came into school one morning flourishing a large brown envelope with a 'register' of the nursery children's names on, apparently written by her sister. Children were marked present or absent, and the envelope was completely covered with additional writing, including a noughts and crosses game. Thus school roleplays were an integral part of a wide range of literacy activities in which Meera developed her knowledge of writing, aided by her sister.

Relating to Gujarati texts in school

At home, Meera saw her mother reading newspapers in Gujarati, and she recognised a copy of one of these in the nursery, carrying it round with her and saying 'mummy, mummy, mummy!' She also sat alongside her mother at home when letters were being written in Gujarati to the family in India, saying 'I'm writing a letter,' and doing her own wavy-line writing. She would write in a similar way when looking at a
Gujarati magazine, saying 'I'm writing it,' and her mother would respond 'You can try.' Both Meera's parents encouraged her writing at home, and she was being taught the English alphabet; Meera's mother explained to me that they thought it was too early to teach her to write in Gujarati as well, since this might be too hard for her. However, on the first occasion when her mother did some Gujarati writing in the nursery, Meera's reaction surprised us all. She climbed up on a chair to reach her mother's text, which was part of a display on the wall, and began to add her own wavy-line writing, saying 'I'm writing in Gujarati.' At least ten times during that school term, Meera wrote a similar kind of emergent 'Gujarati', filling up the display text and producing separate sheets of her own (see Figure 6.1), while making statements such as 'I write like my mum.' The event of her mother being invited to sit down and write in the nursery seemed to enable Meera to connect with her home language at school, and to give extra impetus to her interest in Gujarati script.

Figure 6.1 Meera's early Gujarati'. At this point she could write several letters of her name in English. As she made her own marks next to her mother's, Meera mentioned 'fillums' and 'TV' several times. I wondered if she associated these with
the Gujarati language, and her mother confirmed that the family often

watched Indian film videos together at home. Although these were

actually in Hindi, the talk around the television was in Gujarati, and when

Meera brought her favourite video to school, the title was written in

Gujarati on the spine. The nursery children watched extracts from this video, involving

singing, dancing and slapstick comedy, with great enthusiasm. Meera

wanted to repeat the event of seeing her film with her peers at school, and,

as I shall later describe, it was to become the basis for a considerable

amount of literacy work on her part. Meanwhile, towards the end of that first term, a Christmas postbox was

set up in the nursery, and Meera's mother, amongst other bilingual

parents, worked with Meera in the classroom to write cards to be 'posted'.

Seeing her own name written in both English and Gujarati, and helped by

Figure 6.2 Card written by Meera: 'It's Gujarati – Pinu, my sister'.

her mother to copy the latter, Meera responded by making two texts for

her sister. Significantly, she wrote in both English and Gujarati, just as she

interacted with Pinal in both languages at home. One card was filled with

separate symbols which differ from the English alphabet: of these, Meera
said 'It's Gujarati – Pinu, my sister' (see Figure 6.2). Another card, with

Figure 6.3 Envelope addressed to Pinal, including some English alphabet letters.

Meera's name on in Gujarati, was placed in an envelope which Meera addressed to Pinal, using some English alphabet letters (see Figure 6.3). In the second term, Meera continued to develop her sister's name in English, until she could write the complete version alone. During this time, she showed an ongoing interest in Gujarati letters, and in the writing of Gujarati and English numbers, working with alphabet and number books which I had found in a local South Asian shop, and with a Hindu religious calendar which she brought into the nursery from home. By the end of this term, Meera was producing bilingual texts at school and at home. At school, she made a large poster one day which seemed to display her current repertoire of written language: 'MeerA', 'PiNAL', the numbers 1 to 12 in English, 4 (her age) and 01 (ten, Pinal's age), ABDDD ('birthday'), the Gujarati number symbols for 1 and 4 (her age, again), and some symbols which looked like emergent Gujarati script. Central to the poster were drawings of her parents and her home, and Meera referred to these first when explaining her text to her teacher. Soon afterwards, she
brought a collection of writing from home, including strings of English alphabet letters and several Gujarati symbols for 4. Thus Meera was choosing to represent concepts of key significance to her family and her home life, in both English and Gujarati. It was at this point that Meera had the chance to bring her video to school again for a second showing. Sensing that this favourite film could provide further literacy opportunities, I asked Meera's mother one morning if she could make a poster about it for the nursery; she immediately wrote the name of the film ('Nashib', meaning 'luck') in Gujarati and English, along with the name of the hero (see Figure 6.4).

Once again, her mother's text proved a crucial inspiration for Meera, and this time she had a strong motivation to reproduce the writing, which symbolised her film, as closely as possible. On five occasions altogether, over a period of three months, Meera produced her own versions of the film poster, saying 'Where's my mum's video writing?' and 'I want to write my video.' Her Gujarati writing became steadily more confident each time. On one occasion she added pictures about characters and scenes in the film which were memorable for her (see Figure
showing her poster to her classmates, she said 'This is my film.' As she made these posters, Meera commented on features of her mother's text. For example, she noticed when the same Gujarati letter was repeated: 'Why two of those?' She asked insistently about the recurrence of an English letter in the film hero's name, Johan Janne: 'Why got two J's?' Although she did not yet refer to 'words', she wanted to know why some symbols were grouped together with a space between them: 'Why mummy done a gap?' She also asked 'Why three?', noticing that three groups of Gujarati letters (for the name of the film hero) seemed to correspond to only two groups of English letters. When I checked this with Meera's mother, she explained that she had not been sure how to write the third part of the name in English script.

Figure 6.4 Poster by Meera's mother for the film 'Nashib'.

Figure 6.5 One of Meera's film posters, with drawings of characters and events from the video. Meera's comments about Gujarati and English script in the video poster were interspersed with remarks about watching films with her family:

whether she was allowed to put videos in the machine herself, who had or had not watched the film on Saturday. Thus she was constantly aware of
the connection between the written symbols and what they stood for: the name of the video, the practice of her mother writing in the nursery, and the practice of watching the video at home. The cultural significance of the text was the inspiration for Meera to 'write her video', and the process also led her to examine written language in detail.

Implications for schools

Meera's writing development during this school year took place in a classroom environment which was deliberately structured to link with children's knowledge of home literacy practices. This structuring was necessary for two reasons. Firstly, school literacy work has tended to focus on certain genres of writing, with particular emphasis on narrative (Martin, Christie and Rothery, 1987). Whilst narrative is a significant genre in education and in society, children also need to develop texts for a wide range of social purposes, and work such as that of the National Writing Project (1990a, 1990b) has shown the success of using genres in school which relate to other aspects of everyday life (Czerniewska, 1992). In particular, the contribution of sociodramatic play to literacy development in the classroom has been emphasised by Neuman and Roskos (1993).
The setting up of a home corner which facilitated children's interaction with print, and the teacher's recognition of the importance of texts which were used and produced there, was a key factor in helping Meera to draw on her experiences of reading and writing in the family shop and at home. She already had definite and highly motivating purposes for literacy in mind, which she was able to explore further with her classmates at school. Secondly, school literacy work in the United Kingdom has tended to take place entirely in English. Under these conditions, bilingual children are unable to derive maximum benefit from the knowledge of literacy which they possess in their home languages. This knowledge is now thought to transfer between home languages and English (Edwards, 1995), and it has been acknowledged that multilingual work in the classroom can help children to understand more about how language works (DES, 1989). For Meera, the possibility of working continuously in Gujarati alongside English was opened up by the integration of familiar home texts, and parents as writers, into the classroom. Integration meant that each home language text had a purpose which was part of the nursery.
curriculum. There could be a direct link with the current topic of study as when Meera's mother, along with other parents, translated part of a display on the nursery wall. When the topic was 'travel', several bilingual parents, again including Meera's mother, worked with their children to make pages about their countries for a travel brochure, in their home languages. Parents also wrote airletters to relatives in other countries, to ask for information and pictures for the travel topic. As well as writing a real letter to send from home, parents wrote shorter versions in the nursery, and children reacted by sitting next to their parents and writing their own airletters. This connected with the practice of family letter-writing at home, which several bilingual parents had described to me. In Meera's case, an interplay developed between the topic and symbols used in her mother's airletter and in her own. Meanwhile, texts such as alphabet-teaching materials and calendars became part of ongoing classroom work on letters and numbers. Home language videos, of which Meera's was one, were watched in the weekly nursery 'video time', posters made by parents about the videos were displayed in the nursery, and in some cases invitations were issued to
another class to come to a viewing.

Conclusion

While Meera was a particularly prolific writer, she was not unique in her positive response to the environment just described. Her classmates, including other bilingual children, also took up the opportunity to create their own texts based on literacy practices which they had participated in at home. Within the classroom, children could return to these texts and reflect on their content, and experiment further with written language, a process which was undertaken in considerable detail by Meera in her video writing.

Although school and home contexts inevitably differ, it is important for teachers to construct a 'home-school discourse', open to children's everyday literacy experiences, and to provide opportunities for multi-lingual writing, which can help children from different social and cultural backgrounds develop their literacy knowledge to its fullest potential.


Part III From Five to Seven: Languages and Literacies in Homes, Schools and Communities


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Chapter 8
Learning to read, reading to learn:
the importance of siblings in the
language development of young
bilingual children

Nasima Rashid and Eve Gregory

Introduction 'He's a very sociable child, and he loves books he always brings them from school.'

Six-year-old Maruf is the youngest of five children and lives with his family in a council flat on one of the estates adjacent to the Petticoat Lane market in London's Spitalfields. Maruf and his siblings are second generation Bengalis, whose parents chose to come to Britain in the hope of a better quality life. Typically, his family comes from the lush green and picturesque region of Sylhet, a land-locked region in the north eastern corner of Bangladesh, an area which lies some 200 miles from the sea.

Why then, should a significant number of Sylheti people arrive as sailors in London's East End, when they lived so far from the sea? In her book, Across Seven Seas and Thirteen Rivers, which depicts the lives of men who came from Bangladesh to settle in Britain, Caroline Adams (1987) suggests one explanation: a practice called the independent single tenure
system whereby land was invested in those who worked it, which resulted

in a class of relatively well-off small landowners.

However, subdivision

between brothers and sisters meant that plots became smaller until they

provided insufficient sources of income. This left many families in a

dilemma about alternative labour, since they claimed the status of Arab
descent and would not lower themselves to engage in farm labouring in

their own country. Furthermore, these men often were not educated

enough to qualify for 'office jobs'. Gradually, the idea of working at sea

became fashionable and increasingly difficult to resist because of the lure

of money, adventure and admiration from local villagers.

Many believe that the relationship between Britain and Bangladesh is

recent and although the first Sylheti men arrived only in the 1920s, the link

between the seafaring Indian and London goes back to the times of Vasco

De Gama in the 16th century. The few that settled in London at the

beginning of the 20th century increased slowly until the 1950s, when there

was a sudden influx of men demanded by the labour shortages brought on

by World War II. By the 1970s the imposition of tighter immigration
controls meant fewer new arrivals were entering. However, many were
deciding to bring over their families, even though they had originally
intended to be only sojourners who would stay a while before departing to
their motherland. Sadly, the harsh reality revealed that many had not saved
anything substantial to send back and, having been absent for so long, it
would be difficult to set up again. More gravely, the onslaught of civil war
swayed the majority into believing Britain would be a safer and more
prosperous haven in which to bring up their young families.
The 1991 census shows that there are approximately 163,000 people of
Bangladeshi origin in the United Kingdom. This accounts for just 0.3 per
cent of the total British population of 55 million (Skellington, 1996).
However, these figures tell us little about the area and school Maruf is
attending. Maruf lives in the London borough of Tower Hamlets which has
the largest population of Bangladeshi families in Britain (22.9 per cent of
its overall population). Moreover, most families live in Spitalfields, an
area of just one square mile adjacent to the City of London which means
that, like some other schools in this area, all the pupils are Sylheti speakers.
Strong notions of patriotism and deeply-held religious views are entrenched in the minds of families in this community against the backdrop of what seems an alien host country. The community proudly upholds the traditions in which it believes. Simply taking a walk around the vicinity of Brick Lane will reveal many voluntary establishments set up for religious and cultural purposes where the reading and writing is in Arabic and Bengali. Maruf and his brother and sisters attend such classes for two hours daily after school and at weekends, a routine which is typical for Bangladeshi origin children in the area. But what is the purpose of such classes and how might Maruf experience them?

The Arabic class It's a slightly blustery June evening when I walk towards the community building that houses the Arabic class of the once notorious Flower and Dean Estate. I am being escorted by one of the children's uncles who is the supervisor of this whole venture; a responsibility undertaken voluntarily as he works for the police force. The surrounding area is quiet – deserted of all children, who, I presume, are inside the building. As I walk in I remember to cover my head. The walls do not reflect any of the work we from the western school would expect to see displayed. However this does not seem to hinder the children in their endeavours to reach the end of the assigned task. In this particular class there are two male teachers, one of whom I discover is working with the more advanced children who are tackling the complicated word structures of the Qur'an. The other group consisting of younger children was in another part of the room with the other teacher, grappling with sounds and letters and oral verse. Everyone sits on mats swaying to the sound of his/her voice. Although, on initial appraisal, the noise level may seem too high, relatively little of this is idle
It is the expressed wish of the teachers that children read aloud, not only for them, but more importantly for Allah. Although English is very important for this life, Arabic is required for the life hereafter. Children are encouraged to develop a harmonious recitation in unison with the gentle rocking to and fro which accompanies the reading; they are told that Allah listens to His servants and is pleased if they take time to make it meaningful. I notice both teachers carry cane sticks which sway gently in the hand—a quiet but firm reminder that this is not a time to play... Soon after the children gather closely together into their respective groups as it is time to recite prayers. I focus particularly on the younger members of the class, where the teacher in true pedagogic style paces before them waving his stick. He asks one child to recite the first 'kalimah', but is not satisfied with the response... he asks another, but still not good enough! Okay repeat after me!' he solemnly requests, 'Kalimah Tayyabh, la ilaha ilallaho, mohammadan rasolallahe'. He tells them to look at him as they repeat... I leave the room on the third recitation of the prayer and notice the children have not wavered at all; but remain seated on the floor as they have for the last hour and a half. (Rashid, 1996)

This pattern is reminiscent of children’s Qur’anic classes in Morocco

(Wagner, 1993) and may be common wherever reading of the Islamic Holy Book takes place. The purpose of learning to read the Qur’an is to please Allah as a follower of Islam. It is essential that one reads this in order to enter heaven. Although observance of the five pillars of Islam are necessary, the reading of the Qur’an forms the basic training on which to build further understanding.

The Bengali class Situated behind the Petticoat Lane market, this Bengali evening school is funded through the voluntary sector and comprises two mobile rooms. The room which I enter has several rows of desks at which children sit quietly—some writing copiously, while others
practise words under their breath. The teacher sits at the front of the room. The walls are bare apart from a few information posters, some of which are made by the children and others not. It appears the mumbling from the children is practice of work from the previous lesson, because as the teacher passes around the room, the voice of the child on which he focuses his attention is momentarily amplified so he can correct if necessary, before moving on to the next. The children read one by one at different speeds: some at a great pace whilst others with careful deliberation. When he reaches the child I have come to observe, I see her read confidently and eloquently, although the few mistakes she makes are swiftly but firmly corrected. Parts that are not understood are explained thoroughly, but briefly, in Sylheti, thus the child’s concentration needs to last for a considerable amount of time... and so the lesson continues in this way to the end. (Rashid, 1996)

The importance attached to learning to read and write in Bengali reflects the way members of this community value the written form of their language. Nineteen seventy-one heralded a new beginning for Bangladesh, as it elevated the language to national status, but through a bloody and treacherous war with West Pakistan (now known as Pakistan).

On a more domestic level, literacy is the means of maintaining contact between children in Britain and relatives back home.

The picture of community learning given above begins to explain why children might transfer their experiences of reading from home to school.

Both Bengali and Qur’anic classes share a clear and common pattern of interaction where the teacher demonstrates the task which the child
practises through repetition before being tested. Furthermore, children focus on reading tasks for greater periods of time in contrast to time spent on work in the English school. Also, there are clear boundaries regarding the roles of both the teacher and the child. However, what seems to be of utmost importance is the high expectations teachers have of their pupils regardless of ability. Everyone is expected to finish the Qur'an and learn to read and write in Bengali, however long it takes. Parents and children alike share the experience of these practices (Gregory, Mace, Rashid and Williams, 1996). Maruf's mother recalls how she enjoyed school although, like many, she completed only her primary education: I finished class 5... and then my mother died just after my engagement, leaving five brothers and two sisters, so I had responsibilities and from what I can remember everything was taught with a lot of rigorous testing and memorising.

As a result, parents like those of Maruf have transferred memories of their own experiences of learning to read to their expectations of the English classroom. However, the pattern of reading instruction in their children's school is very different from the one they remember, as we shall see later in this chapter.
The role of siblings

There is a plethora of literature that points to the significance of interaction which takes place between infants and caregivers. 'Knowledge itself originates within an interactional process. The child only achieves a fully articulated knowledge of his world in a cognitive sense as he becomes involved in social transactions with human beings (Newson and Newson, 1975:438)

Many researchers (Wells, 1987 and Rogoff, 1990) have recorded and analysed ways in which young children from all cultures and social backgrounds learn from their caregivers and, as a result, show teachers the value of what every child brings from home into school. However, although Maruf's mother talks fondly of schooldays and expresses great aspirations for her children, she also highlights the little time, skill and confidence she has in helping her children learn to read in a language which she herself is unable to speak.

What is different, but equally valuable, are the numerous literacy interactions that take place between siblings. Older siblings are mediators of the new culture for both their parents and their younger brothers and
sisters. Jamilla is 15 years old and attends the local secondary school for girls where virtually all the pupils are of Bangladeshi origin. The school has built up a reputation for offering the solid education and support to see its pupils into higher education (several have qualified for Oxbridge).

Jamilla would like to be a doctor and is very busy with her own school work at the moment. However, part of her responsibility is to sit with Maruf and read with him any books he brings from school. They often read together before he goes off to his Arabic class, sitting informally in their small living room. Here they are reading Don’t Eat the Postman. Maruf: Don't eat the postman. It was Tom... Jamilla: Tums - Maruf: Tum's birthday. Ram made him a birthday card. Don't eat the birthday card said Ram. But it is my birthday shouted Tum, I want some - I... Jamilla: Something - Maruf: Something to eat. Tum was... Jamilla: Saw - Maruf: Saw some beetles. Don't eat the beetles said Ram. um w-saw a [pause]... Jamilla: Rat - Maruf: Rat. Don't eat the rat said Ram. Jamilla: Ram - Maruf: Then Ram saw the postman. Tum ran to the door. Don't eat the police-postman shouted Ram. Don't eat... Jamilla: I - Maruf: I don't eat... Jamilla: Want - Maruf: I don't want to eat the postman shouted Tum. I want my box. Tum looked in the box. It's a birthday card... Jamilla: Cake - Maruf: Cake. Then There... Jamilla: They - Maruf: They have some cake and everybody was happy.

The tightly structured interaction between brother and sister reveals the complex nature of turn-taking in which they are engaged, and highlights the importance of strategies learned in both community
class and school

literacy lessons. Both participants begin in English as this is the language

being learned. They focus entirely on the text (that is, there is no

interruption with other book language or picture cues). Jamilla frequently

corrects Maruf’s mistakes as and when they arise, and has no fear of

undermining his confidence. This example has a direct parallel with the

explicit use of demonstration and repetition to which she has been

accustomed in the Arabic school, where children are taught that the

change of one sound can alter the meaning of the word.

Having finished the text in English, Jamilla begins to ask about the


children have experienced. As teacher, Jamilla needs to ascertain how

much of the text Maruf has understood. This is a strategy she has

borrowed from her Bengali class, where teachers always work through the

written standard Bengali text using Sylheti. It is
interesting to note how explicit her questions are. Rather than accept evasive answers, she will probe him on exactly what he means, and will further correct him if she is not satisfied. Only towards the end of the session does she use the picture to aid her questions, as she believes they do not always correspond with the text and 'might confuse the reader'.

To the outsider, her strategies may appear too probing for a young child, as she has not praised her brother at all for his endeavours, nor has she allowed him to 'enjoy' the book in the sense that many early years teachers in Britain understand the word. However, knowledge of the community classes allows us to understand that these children are very comfortable with such structures. Rather than feel under pressure from such explicit and specific demands, the children are challenged appropriately because they are aware of the high standards expected.

Going to school It's a warm spring morning and the teacher has just finished calling the register, and is about to write the date. Teacher: Let's have someone do the date...[indistinct reply]... well done. Let's do it together - Uzma what was the date yesterday? Uzma: Tuesday, 27 February. Teacher: Good girl... and everybody... [children repeat]... lovely, and what will the date be tomorrow? Who can be clever...? [A discussion follows about Eid, a letter and the new girl, Cynthia.] Teacher: Okay, let's find out what were doing today... [activities are sorted
... okay, let's see who's sitting up nicely – everybody sitting beautifully... [After some bustling around setting up places we find the teacher working with one particular group around shared reading.] Teacher: We're each going to read, so we'll start with Shanaz and you can read one page. Uzma, who is a domineering child, not surprisingly intervenes, 'Point at the words'. Shanaz begins to read and gets stuck, there is a long pause and Happy is asked to help... the reading then continues, so that each child in the group has participated. This follows with a discussion about the pictures, at which point the teacher produces a worksheet around the text. The whole exercise has taken less than ten minutes, and the morning progresses in this slow, relaxed way. (Rashid, 1996)

The teacher in the English school clearly believes that learning to read should be achieved through enjoyment, and children are often encouraged to choose books with this criterion in mind. Individual pleasure and self expression are stressed and children are encouraged to voice opinions on texts from the very start of schooling. There is an immediate contrast between Maruf's community classes and home reading sessions, and his English school. Unlike Maruf's Qur'anic, Bengali and home reading sessions, there is no common pattern or ritual of repeating words correctly after the 'teacher'. From the excerpt above, then, we begin to see that Maruf will need to learn a whole variety of new strategies if he is to learn what counts as reading in his English class. More precisely, these new strategies are outlined below.

Similar examples show how the Bengali pattern whereby the child repeats

the correct answer after the expert is actually reversed in school reading

sessions. During school reading sessions, Maruf will need to learn that

teachers frequently repeat the child's response and that

this is a way of

acknowledging its correctness rather than a correction; that it is a signal

to continue rather than repeat the word again after the teacher.


Here Maruf must learn that the teacher is trying to encourage him to

interpret the text, to question why someone might be doing something.

Maruf is asked to identify with the character in the story and to try to

predict what he might do - an approach very alien to his community

classes and his home reading sessions.

Referring the text to real life events Teacher: Do you think it was a surprise - the jellybean tree? Child: Yeah. Teacher: Do you think he's happy? Child: Yeah he had a jellybean tree. Teacher: Do you like jellybeans? Child: [Shakes his head] Teacher: No? Have you had them before? Child: [Pause] nods her head. Teacher: You don't like
them, well I do.

Again, Maruf must learn that 'reading' means discussion; in this case, relating the text to events in his own life.

Excerpts from the classroom show that the teacher frequently switches from text to talking around it, implicitly demanding a simultaneous reading of the text and personal opinions. These strategies do not come easily to Maruf. He does not elaborate on any of his answers and the teacher appears unsure of ways in which to support or extend his contributions. If we refer back to Maruf's reading with his sister, we or judgements; hence, perhaps, his lack of skill in using exploratory statements as he reads with his teacher. Rather than a lack of understanding as such, it seems most probable that the child is not used to this type of exchange which the teacher implicitly assumes he will share.

So how can teachers create a more effective learning environment which draws on practices that are known to the children, as well as introducing them to the new practices of school?

Bringing home and community to school

Work taking place in both adult literacy and school classrooms in the
United States suggests benefits which accrue from drawing on 'funds of knowledge' available in the community (Auerbach, 1989 and Moll et al, 1992). A similar programme which aims to build upon existing knowledge and skills that children bring from home has been supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation in Maruf's school. Like many of the contributors to this volume, teachers in Maruf's school are questioning their own implicit assumptions about learning and devising ways to make their own understanding of tasks more explicit. Part of this process involves examining emergent bilingual children's strengths and strategies brought from home in order to build more systematically upon these in classroom lessons.

One practical approach has been to delineate more clearly the stages involved in learning to read and understand a text through 'structured story' (Gregory, 1996). Structured story simply divides story reading into stages which are easily recognisable by the child, and which are grounded on the advanced metalinguistic awareness shown by many young bilinguals (Ben-Zeev, 1977). Materials relating to each story (book, figurines for magnet-board, tapes, children's work cards,
suggestions for
teachers and, possibly, a video of children acting the
story) are kept
together in a story pack (usually a plastic folder).
The following stages show how the finely-tuned scaffolding
of the
older sibling can be taken into the classroom and used as a
springboard for
the type of discussion expected in school.
Stages in reading: The Billy Goats Gruff story
The Ladybird 'Read-it-yourself' version of this traditional
European story
was chosen because;
• The text was clear and straightforward and avoided the
colloquialisms which exist in many modern reading schemes.
• The illustrations were brightly coloured and attractive.
• The text was one in a series of classic European tales
which are cheap and easily available for parents.
The children worked through six stages in order to read the
text with
confidence.
1. Stage One: Telling the story
Initially the teacher told the story using magnet-board
figurines based on
illustrations from the book. Alternate telling in English
and Sylheti
enabled the children to make important parallels between
both languages
and gave them the opportunity to join in during refrains.
2. Stage Two: Acting the story
Research suggests that drama can play a vital role towards enabling children to understand the language of stories (Garvie, 1990) as it allows children to become totally immersed within the context. Children take on the characters of the story and also provide the dialogue. Acting the story provided opportunities to make costumes using the necessary language accompanying this.

3. Stage Three: Listen, discuss, do

To develop listening skills, children listened to short excerpts of the story on tape which instructed them to provide exact illustrations (for example, ‘draw little Billy Goat Gruff standing on the bridge and the troll underneath it. Colour the goat brown and the troll yellow’).

4. Stage Four: Across the curriculum

Work extended to other areas of the curriculum, for example, music, dance, art and craft.

5. Stage Five: Reading the story

Only at this point was the written text introduced, where the teacher read the story and highlighted individual words. Specific language games were incorporated at this level to build upon and strengthen the children’s metalinguistic awareness. Key words from the story were written on to
cards. Activities using the words included:

Word focus

The teacher removes a word card from view, and provides a description of word chosen, for example, 'what is under the bridge?' (for water).

Guess the word

This activity fixes the word in context in spoken language. A child secretly chooses a word and gives others clues to help them guess it, for example, 'goats like to eat this' (grass).

Opposites

This draws children's attention to important adjectives and prepositions in the story. A pack of 'opposites cards' are placed face down and one is chosen randomly by a child who must provide clues to the others, for example, 'it's the opposite of little'.

Emphasising intonation

Here the children read individual sentences chorally, individually or in groups after the teacher to gain correct pronunciation and intonation patterns.

Text-building

Children identify a single word in the text, and then read the whole sentence. This provides the opportunity to develop
children's use of metalanguage, for example, 'word', 'sentence', 'full-stop'.

Picture description

Only at this late stage are children confidently able to describe pictures.

The teacher begins by asking 'show me...' then 'tell me what is happening in this picture'.

Story-reading

The children are asked to read the whole story individually, in pairs or in groups.

Final story telling

The children now tell the story using only the figurines (in both languages, if possible) and the teacher tapes in order to analyse errors made.

6. Stage Six: Writing the story

Cloze Cards

Tasks asking children to complete appropriate words were set at various levels of difficulty enabling children to familiarise themselves with English syntax before they went on to write their own versions.

Story writing

This stage allowed the children to put to use the new vocabulary and grammar they had learned. The method of whole class shared
writing (the
teacher writes the children's suggested text and
individuals gradually take
over writing letters and words) as well as computer
programmes such as
Talking Pendown (Longman) were used.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we see how a detailed knowledge of
children's home
reading patterns can inform teaching strategies in school.
We are gradually
now accumulating evidence which suggests that Maruf's home
and
community class experiences may be typical for many
linguistic minority
children in Britain (Gregory, forthcoming). Maruf's family
highlights the
importance of older siblings rather than parents in his
school literacy
development. Siblings smoothly blend together strategies
from community
and school classes into a syncretic literacy (Duranti and
Ochs, 1996) and, in
so doing, act as mediators of the new host culture. They
know from their
own experiences that beginners to literacy in a new
language cannot be
expected to run before they can walk; school-like
strategies are used only
later when the child is confident enough to tackle them.

As teachers we have much to learn from a detailed
examination of our
own taped reading sessions. Do we recognise strategies used by different children and build upon them? How do we make our own interpretation of reading explicit to those who may not share it? Finally, if we recognise that children feel confident when they practice what they know (Cole, 1985) do we actually allow children time to practise in different contexts, and in the safety of the class or group, before we expect them to perform during individual reading sessions? Answers to questions such as these will say much in deciding the success of Maruf and his classmates in our classrooms.

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Friends as teachers: the impact of peer interaction on the acquisition of a new language

Susi Long

Kelli sat alone on the kerb in front of our house. One after the other, she picked up stones and threw them into the street. After a few minutes, she stood and walked up the hill to a deserted playground where she sat on a swing, climbed the rope ladder and played on the bars. Then she walked back to the kerb at the edge of our driveway and began throwing stones again.

Kelli was seven years old. She had just moved from the United States to Iceland and, more than anything else, she wanted a
playmate. 'Where is everybody?' she asked when no other children came out to play, 'How come nobody’s out?'

Eventually, neighbourhood children did come to play with Kelli and their interactions with her became the key to her adjustment in her new cultural setting. As the children interacted in the contexts of home, neighbourhood, school and extra-curricular activities, a supportive environment evolved which provided opportunities for Kelli to explore and develop an understanding of many aspects of her new world.

Kelli is my daughter. She is American by nationality but, at the time of our move to Iceland, she had lived overseas for all but two years of her life. Her father and I were teachers working for American schools, positions which led us first to northern Germany where Kelli was born, then to the Netherlands and, seven years later (after a two-year sabbatical in the United States), to Iceland. We arrived in Iceland on 21 August, 1991, one month before Kelli’s eighth birthday. For the next nine months, I observed Kelli at the Icelandic school she attended, at home as she played with Icelandic friends, and as she participated in
extra-curricular

and community activities. I listened and questioned as she talked about

the joys and struggles of her new life. Formally and informally I talked to

Kelli's teachers, friends, and parents of friends about her experiences.

Video tape, audio tape, hand-written field notes and a collection of school

work, artifacts from informal play, letters and stories provided insights

into Kelli's experience and allowed me to make important contrasts and

connections concerning the process of her new cultural learning.

This chapter focuses on Kelli's interactions with three Icelandic girls

and the impact of their interactions on the development of a system of

communication and Kelli's acquisition of Icelandic. Accordingly, it asks

what might be learned from Kelli's experiences in terms of the second

language students in our classrooms.

Kelli's Icelandic peers

Birna, Elva and Guðbjörg were Kelli's first and best friends in Iceland.

They lived within walking distance of our house and were Kelli's classmates at the local school. The girls spoke Icelandic, a language that

has changed little since it was brought to the island by Norse/Celtic
adventurers in the 10th century. As is typical of many Icelandic seven and eight year olds, they recognised a few English words (picked up from watching subtitled American and British television programmes). Kelli met the girls when we visited their neighbourhood and school during previous visits to Iceland. 1 Two days after we moved there they initiated contact and, for the next nine months, Kelli played with one or more of them almost every day.

Kelli and her peers develop a system of communication

At about 8 o'clock on the evening of our second day in Iceland, the doorbell rang. Kelli and I opened it to find two girls – Elva and Birna – standing on the front porch. They were wearing roller skates. In a carefully-memorised English sentence (taught by her father for the occasion), Elva asked Kelli, 'do you want to play?' Kelli nodded, put on her skates and followed the girls outside. Rather than attempting speech or even gestures, the girls simply skated up the hill to the playground and Kelli followed them. Then they skated back to our driveway where they

1 Kelli’s father moved to Iceland a year before Kelli and I joined him there. During that year, we travelled to Iceland twice for three-week visits.
stood looking at one another, smiling and giggling. Their smiles and giggles seemed to be nervous reactions to one another but, just as a mother responds to her baby’s coos, the girls took turns in a sort of giggling proto-conversation and thus established potential for further communication.

Several days after their first encounter, Kelli looked out of her bedroom window and saw the girls skating in front of our house. She hurried to join them and, as before, they smiled and giggled and skated up the hill. Later, Kelli led the girls into our kitchen and poured out glasses of juice for them.

As she threw the empty juice carton into the bin, Kelli wrinkled her nose from the smell of the rubbish and giggled. The girls also wrinkled their noses and giggled. Then Kelli looked around the room and spotted the cooking timer. She turned the dial to make the timer ring and laughed a strangely artificial laugh. More forced than a natural giggle and more assertive than a reaction to something humourous, the exaggerated laugh seemed to be a way for Kelli to establish her place as a communicative member of the group. Elva and Birna laughed in response. By that point, the
construction of a system of communication was well under way. With giggles and laughter as early strategies, and roller skates, the rubbish bin and a cooking timer as first resources, the children were making interaction possible. As described in the following paragraphs, their system quickly expanded to include intonated sound, facial expression, gesture, mime, invented words, 'foreignised' English, and abbreviated English.

After finishing their juice, Kelli led the girls upstairs to her bedroom where Elva and Birna walked from bookshelf to desk to bed examining the artifacts of Kelli's world: dolls, cuddly toys, photographs, and desk trinkets. They did not verbalise but continued to smile and giggle until Elva spotted a calendar hanging on Kelli's wall. She indicated her birth date and said, 'me Happy Birthday'. Then she noticed Kelli's globe and pointed to Iceland saying, 'Ísland' (Iceland). At the same time, Kelli looked for something that they could play together. Rummaging through her toy cupboard she considered and rejected several games and toys until she found a puzzle made of illustrated wooden cubes. Kelli put the puzzle on the floor and sat down beside it. Elva and Birna joined
began picking up puzzle pieces and trying to fit them together.

'Hmmm', said Birna as she examined a puzzle piece and shook her head. Then Kelli picked up a puzzle cube, tested possibilities for its placement and said, 'mmm...mmm? Raising her eyebrows as well as her tone of voice, Kelli gave meaning to the sounds and seemed to say, 'I wonder where this goes. Here maybe?' She tried to place the cube again, this time deepening her voice and furrowing her brow as she said, 'hmmmm'. The girls continued to work on the puzzle in this way, communicating by raising eyebrows, frowning, grinning and using 'mmm', 'hmms', and an occasional 'ah' as they added intonated sound and facial expression to their communicative repertoire.

Although Kelli and her Icelandic peers did not share fluency in either Icelandic or English, their first interactions were also typified by the use...
of words. The language they utilised ranged from Kelli's 'foreignised'

English and invented words to the use of simplified English. When

putting together the puzzle, for instance, Kelli leaned forward to place a

puzzle cube and said, 'thay-errr' with an exaggerated 'ay' and a roll to the

'r'. It seemed to be a foreignisation of the English word 'there', Kelli's

attempt to move away from her native language, or perhaps her perception

of how the Icelandic girls might pronounce and, therefore better

comprehend, the word. During the first days, Kelli foreignised many

English words as she played with the girls. Among others she used 'mo

uh' for more, 'shih' for she, 'wahm' for warm, 'fust' for first, and 'den' for

then. Within a few weeks, Kelli's differently-accented words moved

further away from English and began to reflect her growing familiarity

with the sounds of Icelandic. Instead of saying, 'better' and 'here' for

instance, Kelli said, 'baytar' and 'hehtah' which were closer to the

Icelandic 'betra' and 'hérna' than to their English equivalents. She

seemed to be striving not only to facilitate communication but also to

sound as much like her peers as possible.
Kelli also invented words as she attempted to communicate. In the first play episode, for example, she placed a puzzle piece and said, 'Da' (‘there’). Several days later, as Kelli and Birna arranged marbles into long rows, Kelli pointed to the marbles one at a time and said, 'da, da, da, da, da'. Later the same day, Kelli and Birna were playing with large cardboard blocks and, directing Birna, Kelli pointed to a block and then to a spot on the floor saying, 'dee dere' meaning, 'put that one over there'. Words like 'da', 'dee', and 'dere' did not approximate their English or Icelandic equivalents. They were Kelli's inventions that, again, seemed to be attempts to move away from her native language toward something that she perceived to be more comprehensible to her Icelandic peers.

Immediately, Kelli's invented words were picked up by Birna, Elva, and Guðbjörg and, as illustrated in the following excerpt from block-play,

early interactions were often dominated by inventions:

The use of invented words was effective but short-lived. 'Da', 'dis', 'dere' and so on were replaced by another strategy that also had its origins in their first evening of indoor play. Spotting her birthday on Kelli's calendar, Elva had said, 'me Happy Birthday'. A few minutes later, as they worked on the puzzle, Elva and Birna used more words from their limited English vocabulary ('yes', 'no', 'me', 'this'). They also used several Icelandic words, 'já' (yes), 'hér' (here), and 'svona' (like this). At that point, rather than picking up the simple Icelandic, Kelli responded by using the same few words of English. Two days later Kelli tried more complex English sentences but, when the girls' responses indicated a lack of comprehension, she reduced the use of her native language to the five or ten words they had in common. Soon this abbreviated English became a standard method of verbal communication. Typical of their conversations at that time is the following exchange. It took place as the girls played 'mummies' and indicated their choice of dolls. Abbreviated English Intended meaning Kelli: No me this. I am not playing with this doll. Birna: No me this. I am not playing with this doll. Kelli: Me this and me this. I'll play with these two dolls. Birna: And me this. And I'll play with this one.

At the same time Kelli and her playmates also discovered that, by using
mime and gesture, they could support and extend the use of abbreviated

English. This made it possible to express more complex ideas without the

need for an extensive common vocabulary. Typical of their use of these

conversational strategies is a discussion that took place in September, not

long after we arrived in Iceland, in which the children 'talked' about

musical instruments. Kelli initiated the discussion as she pointed to

herself, pretended to play a piano and said, 'me la la la

la la la'. Guðbjörg

responded by pretending to play a recorder and saying, 'me
doo doo doo
doo'. Then she added, 'Elva doo doo doo doo'. Moving her

fingers along

an imaginary recorder, Kelli asked, 'Birna doo doo doo
doo?' to which

Guðbjörg replied, 'no. Me doo doo doo doo doo doo and Elva doo
doo doo
doo and Birna var 4 doo doo doo doo.' By supporting words

and sounds

with mime, the meaning of the conversation was clear:
Kelli: I play the piano. Guðbjörg: I play the recorder and
Elva plays the recorder. Kelli: Does Birna play the recorder? Guðbjörg: No. I play the recorder and Elva plays
the recorder and Birna used to play the recorder.

Throughout Kelli's first four months in Iceland, the children almost

always sought, and depended on, mutually familiar activities and

objects (such as the roller skates, cooking timer and
puzzles of their
first evenings of play) to initiate and sustain
interactions. For instance,
during the second week, Kelli opened a photograph album and,
showing it to Birna, pointed to photos saying, 'my father,
my mother,
my grandfather'. Birna extended the interaction by picking
up an
illustrated coaster from the coffee table, pointing to the
illustrations of
men and women and asking, 'is grandfather? is mommy'? In
another
instance, Kelli described the route we travelled from the
United States
to Iceland by using maps illustrated on place mats. Sitting
with Birna
at our lunch table, Kelli pointed to North America on her
place mat map
and said, 'Me here'. Then she moved her finger through the
air saying,
'I go shooooo [flying sound] here,' landing her finger in
Iceland. Birna
asked for confirmation by retracing Kelli's route and
saying, 'Kelli, you
kom (come)?' Kelli nodded and 'flew' her hand across the
map again
saying, 'shooootソ' Similarly, long before they had a
verbal language
in common, Kelli and Guðbjörg sustained play for almost 20
minutes
using a deck of cards. Unable to ask for cards by naming
them (as in,
'do you have any threes?'), the girls revised the rules of
accommodate their communicative needs. They spread the cards face up on the table and pointed to them. Other resources that supported interaction included craft materials (paper, paint, coloured markers), board games, balls, dolls, cuddly toys, puppets, books, and musical instruments.

4 'Var' is the Icelandic word for 'was'. In this case, Guðbjörg used it to indicate that Birna 'used to' play the recorder.

The communicative strategies and resources described in the preceding paragraphs were utilised to facilitate interaction at a time when Kelli and her friends did not share a common language. Experts at their own system, the girls rarely hesitated between word, sound, and gesture. The use of one strategy flowed into another almost as smoothly as if they were speaking their native languages. At the same time, the construction of a communicative system laid the groundwork for Kelli's acquisition of Icelandic. As she used laughter, facial expression, gesture, mime, invented words and simple English to interact with Birna, Elva, and Guðbjörg, Kelli observed their use of Icelandic with one another. Thus, she heard the
language used in the contexts of activities which she found
purposeful and
enjoyable and in which she was a motivated participant.
Equally
important was the fact that, as the girls constructed their
communicative
system, they created an environment which encouraged
experimentation,
a condition that would be essential to Kelli's eventual
acquisition of the
new language.
Kelli begins to use Icelandic
From studies of first language acquisition we understand the
development of language to be an interactive phenomenon, a
negotiation between two parties (Bruner, 1983 and Wells,
1986).
Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky introduced the notion of the
more
knowledgeable partner as critical to the acquisition of
language: the
success of the partnership stemming from one participant's
knowledge
of the language and the other's desire to join a
communicative world
(Wertsch, 1985). Second-language researchers echo
interaction-based
theories by describing the role of the native speaker as
critical to the
acquisition of a new language (Ellis, 1985; Genishi, 1989;
Hakuta,
1986; Long, 1987; Rigg and Allen, 1989; Wong-Fillmore,
In second-language acquisition as well as first, the learner and the knowledgeable partner interact with one another in the negotiation of meaning (Ellis, 1985 and Wells, 1986).

Kelli certainly expected as much from her new cultural experiences.

She wanted to become a part of a communicative world and she expected to reach that goal through interaction within that world. Kelli described this perspective saying that she would learn Icelandic 'by listening to other people'. She later added, 'You'd have to talked too. You can't just go, "mmmmm".'

Kelli's words accurately describe the impact that involvement with native-speaking peers had on her acquisition of Icelandic. Play-based activities with friends provided a comfortable setting as well as a motivation for experimentation and it was through comfortable, purposeful, supported experimentation that Kelli eventually acquired an understanding of grammatical structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, and appropriate usage.

I first observed Kelli using Icelandic during our fourth week in Iceland.

She was directing Guðbjörg as they played Mömmó ('mummies') and she
said, 'pú kom' ('you come'). This first utterance was a literal translation of an abbreviated English phrase that had been in standard use. As Kelli continued to try the language, her utterances were often combination sentences: when she did not know the Icelandic equivalent, she used an English word. For example, 'Not this' became, 'ekki this'. Through October, although Kelli was sometimes able to construct completely Icelandic phrases such as 'ekki núna' ('not now'), simple English continued to be useful for clarifying and completing most messages such as, þú help me og Elva me ð þetta (You help me and Elva with this). Also typical of Kelli's first Icelandic was the use of phrases frequently uttered by her playmates to one another. When I asked how she had learned 'sjáðu ' ('look'), for example, Kelli said, 'everybody says it . . . I just heard sjáðu something like that.' Similarly, she explained that she knew the exclamation, 'Hœttu þessu!' because, 'everybody says it when they don't want people to do things.' From late September, Kelli rapidly incorporated Icelandic vocabulary into every interaction with peers as they played together. By mid-October,
Icelandic dominated her play-based utterances and Kelli used the language with abandon, whether or not she was certain she was using it correctly. The following conversation between Kelli and Guðbjörg clearly demonstrates the opportunity for experimentation that informal interactions with peers provided. In the role of 'mother,' Kelli was trying to convince her baby (Guðbjörg) to sleep. Over and over, in an environment in which she felt at ease and had opportunity, time, motivation, and the resources to do so, Kelli reworked her construction of Icelandic in an attempt to say, 'If you don't sleep, you will not get any ice cream'. Icelandic

Using Icelandic in play-based peer interactions not only provided opportunities for experimentation but, in that environment, peers provided specific forms of support that helped Kelli judge the success of her experiments and adjust accordingly. For example, friends often supplied
words when a need was evident. Elva did this when she and Kelli baked a cake in late December. Kelli mimed the cutting of the cake and said, ‘Við svona með hnifur’ (We [cut] like this with knife).

Supplying the missing word for 'cut', Elva simply said, 'skera' and Kelli used the word in her next utterance: 'skera svona og svona' (Cut like this and like this). Peers also rephrased their utterances when Kelli did not understand them, as when Kelli and Guðbjörg were making a picture out of plastic pegs and

Guðbjörg clarified the word 'ramma' (frame): Icelandic Translation Guðbjörg: Eigum við ekki að hafa Aren't we going to have ramma? a frame? Kelli: Hah? Huh? Guðbjörg: Svona rammi. þetta Like a frame. It is mynd þá a picture then kemur svona comes like this utanum. around it

Other peer support included simplifying and then extending the complexity of their Icelandic to accommodate Kelli's growing understanding of it; responding to Kelli's direct requests for help; direct teaching; allowing Kelli to reciprocate by teaching English words and phrases; and engaging in language play (using sing-song, rhyming, chanting, creating nonsense words), which allowed Kelli to rehearse pronunciation, vocabulary and usage.

The impact of peer interaction on Kelli's language development is probably best illustrated in a discussion of her
acquisition of grammatical knowledge. At school, Kelli's language and literacy programme did not include lessons in feminine and masculine word forms, verb-noun complements, singular and plural, and possessives. At the end of her first school year in Iceland, however, Kelli had not only developed an awareness of the existence of those forms but was also consistently correct in her use of many gender-governed forms, prepositions, possessives, and plural and singular noun-verb complements. Clearly, the most significant arenas for learning the grammatical structure of the language were her play-based interactions with friends. At play with friends, Kelli enjoyed an environment in which was built an awareness of the existence of different word forms. In the same environment, she was comfortable enough to experiment with the use of those forms until, through feedback from peers and repeated exposure to correct usage - 'Elva said it one time and I heard Birna say it to Elva' - she began using correct forms consistently. From early November, I observed such experimentation as she alternated, seemingly indiscriminately, between correct and incorrect
Playing 'schools' for example, Kelli experimented with the use of gendered forms of words as she inconsistently matched feminine and masculine nouns and pronouns with complementary verbs. In the role of 'teacher', Kelli called the students' names: 5

Icelandic Translation

5 In this excerpt, '(m)' indicates that Kelli has used the masculine form of a verb or noun and '(f)' indicates the use of a feminine noun or verb form.

As she played with friends, Kelli experimented with Icelandic in this way from her second month in Iceland. At school, where lessons were usually taught to the class as a whole and written work consisted predominantly of short-answer worksheets, Kelli did not experiment with the language. Except when interacting informally with friends (on the playground, whispering at their seats), she did not use Icelandic regularly in the classroom until the sixth month, waiting until she was certain she would be correct before attempting to speak.

By the end of May (the eighth month), Kelli was comfortable and
proficient enough with Icelandic to use it to initiate, lead and organise
play-oriented activities. Although her use of the language was not always correct, she had amassed a sizable vocabulary as well as an understanding of many grammatical forms and she used the language without hesitation. Clearly, the most supportive arenas for her construction of that knowledge were play-based interactions with peers.

In that environment, Kelli learned vocabulary, sentence structure, grammatical form, pronunciation, and appropriate usage as she observed, listened, experimented, received feedback, assessed, adjusted, discarded, adopted, and extended her knowledge. By doing so, she continually evaluated language use in terms of its effectiveness in the native-speaking world in which she wanted to belong.

Conclusion
What do these experiences mean in terms of the second-language children in our classrooms? Certainly, we all recognise that no two cross-cultural experiences are the same. They differ in terms of family background, support systems, native language proficiency, personality, age, cultural traditions, school and community situations, and in countless other ways. Common, however, to many
second-language experiences is the impact of meaningful interaction. Over and over we see children learning language as they interact with native-speaking peers: a five-year-old Chinese boy in America (Huang and Hatch, 1978), a class of 15 year olds in a British school (Burgess and Gore, 1990); Mexican children in an American setting (Wong-Fillmore, 1986), and five year olds on a London playground (Hester, 1984). At the very least, Kelli’s story suggests the same: that peer interaction is supportive of language learning. At the same time, by focusing on the day-to-day experiences of one child, this study provides a close look at conditions that made peer interaction effective.

The first, and probably most significant condition supporting Kelli’s language learning was the desire to interact. Kelli and her peers wanted to play. Second, they approached associations with one another assuming that interactive play was possible. Basic to that assumption was Kelli’s expectation that she would eventually learn the language of her peers and would do so through interactions with them. Third, because she played with peers for several hours almost every day, Kelli had
the opportunity

and plenty of time to work through understandings about language.

Fourth, the children's interactions were successful largely because they were supported by the children's interest in activities that were mutually comprehensible, purposeful and enjoyable. Fifth, resources (such as games, puzzles, bikes, balls and dolls) were readily available to support those activities. Sixth, by experimenting with other communicative strategies prior to using Icelandic, the children created an environment in which experimentation was the norm. This allowed Kelli to freely and comfortably assess and adjust her use of the language as a natural part of their play.

Recognising these conditions as supportive and taking into account the differences among children and their new cultural experiences, implications can be considered in terms of classroom environments. Specifically, Kelli's experiences urge teachers to consider the development of educational programmes in which:

- Second-language students have regular, frequent and prolonged opportunities to interact with native-speaking peers in the contexts of activities that are perceived by the students to be meaningful, rewarding, enjoyable and manageable.
• Students feel comfortable and confident enough to attempt participation and to use language.

• Materials and resources are readily available to encourage and facilitate interaction.

This means providing opportunities for frequent, comfortable, purposeful interaction not only in terms of informal associations among peers but with respect to the exploration of subject matter, transforming academic language use from what is often 'context-reduced' to that which is meaningfully 'context-embedded' (Cummins, 1980). Thought provoking examples of second-language students and native-speakers investigating subject matter in meaningful, interactive contexts include Barry Taylor's (1987) description of 'real communication' in the multilingual classroom, Kathryn Au's (1993) suggestions for creating classrooms as communities, Josie Levine's (1990) discussion of interactive environments, and Burgess and Gore's (1990) emphasis on collaborative, mixed-ability grouping. As these educators demonstrate, recognizing the impact of peer interaction on second language acquisition, and understanding the conditions which must exist in order for learning to take place, prompt careful and creative thought about an
exci t ing range of pedagogical possibilities. The subsequent construct ion of educat ional pr og rammes and development of support ive c lassroom envi ronments have the potential to contribute significantly to s tudents ' unders tand ing of language and life in the new culture in which they are a t tempting to get along.


Chapter 10

Working in partnership:
parents, teacher and
support teacher together

Maureen Turner

'What you think? I am better.' Rameen, at six years old, already sees
herself as a successful learner of a second language. This unprompted
evaluation of her progress formed part of a written dialogue with her
much-loved teacher, towards the end of the summer term in
year one, her second year in primary school.

Rameen had come to England two and a half years earlier at the age of
four with her parents and her brother who is four years older. They lived
at first in the south-east, Rameen went to nursery school
in a new world -
which looked, smelled and tasted quite different from her
pleasant
familiar life in Pakistan, with its elegant white houses,
constant contact
with family and friends, and endless blue skies.
Overwhelmed by the
strangeness of her new life, and struggling to communicate
in a new
language, she did not enjoy her first few months. Tears and
unwillingness
to go to school signalled her difficulty in coming to terms
with a new
language and culture.
The family then moved to Southampton where she joined the
reception
class of a primary school of approximately 300 children in
the middle of
an estate of mainly rented housing. This time the new class
did not seem
so strange, and she settled down to enjoying the activities
and socialising.
Her 'playground' vocabulary increased rapidly, and she made
at least one
good friend. However, as her English vocabulary increased,
and with no
opportunity to speak and develop her own language, she
spoke less in
Urdu, even to her parents. She frequently spent whole
evenings speaking
English with her best friend, and was beginning to turn her
back on her
first language. At this stage Rameen moved up to year one, and our paths
crossed for the first time.

Beginning school – the first days

I had been visiting the school as a peripatetic teacher, part of the Section
11 provision for bilingual children in Southampton. Rameen's new class
teacher was concerned about the needs of bilingual children and, feeling
that she would like more information about meeting those needs most
effectively, had enrolled on the Hampshire course for classroom teachers,
funded by the Grants for Education Support and Training 16 
(the British
Government's initiative for training mainstream teachers of bilingual
children). The course, called 'Teaching English across the Curriculum in
Multilingual Schools', was competency based and each course member
was supported by a tutor. As I was acting as tutor we decided to work
together for one morning a week.

Rameen was her only bilingual child, although elsewhere in the school
there were six others, joined during the year by three Vietnamese children.

None of the other children spoke Urdu. Rameen was doubly
isolated: the

only child in her class whose mother tongue was not
English, and the only

Urdu speaker in the infant school - her older brother was
on the top floor

of the adjoining junior school and not accessible during
the day. It would

have been useful to give her some time with a bilingual
assistant but, as

she was not a beginner in English and was able to join in
with classroom

activities, we could not spare our only Urdu speaker, who
also works with

Farsi- and Panjabi-speaking children. As an isolated child
Rameen clearly

needed language and cultural support. We asked her mother
to join us for

a discussion about her progress, resulting in a two-way
flow of

information about teaching and learning as Rameen was
experiencing it.

(I did not bring an interpreter as I would normally do for
a parental

conference because Rameen's mother speaks English well.)

Rameen's mother and class teacher already had a good
relationship, and

we quickly sorted out practical points such as diet and
absences for

festivals or extended visits home, some of the list of
topics contained in

our parental conferencing form. We talked about the
language spoken at

home, and the importance of continuing to develop Rameen's
first

language. Rameen's mother was already sharing books with her in both Urdu and English. Rameen had had some dual-language books in the nursery and they both enjoyed using them. Rameen's mother was pleased to be reassured that Rameen was not going to be confused by speaking Urdu; she had felt that it was sad, but inevitable, that Urdu would be eroded by the dominant 'school' language. She was interested to hear that it would be useful to talk about number work and class topics in Urdu, to help Rameen to sort out her ideas in her stronger language. She said she would consider taking Rameen to Urdu classes later on when her English was more fluent. She agreed to join in with the 'parents book sharing' that happens at the beginning of most days in the infant classrooms in the school, where mums or dads can be found at the beginning of the morning sitting with their own child and one or two others enjoying a favourite story from the class book box. After the meeting the class teacher and I discussed our assessment of Rameem.

- She had been using English for two to three years and was conversationally fluent.
- She had friends and related well to a small group of
girls.

• She had begun to read and write.

• She was performing within normal range for a year one child.

• She was quiet and self-contained for much of the time.

In view of needs elsewhere in the school, Rameen could have been considered as 'coping' in the classroom. We felt, however, that with extra effort and the application of research-based knowledge on our part she could do more than cope.

Adding a second language – or losing the first?

From our joint observation of Rameen and the background information from her mother, we felt that she had come into English before she had fully sorted out early concepts in her mother tongue. There has been much interest in recent years about the effect of the age of entry into a second language. Cummins (1984) argues strongly that second-language learning will be more effective if a child's mother tongue is well developed. When the first language is less secure, and when a child is immersed in a second language every day at school with a corresponding lack of incentive to develop home language, the learning of, and in, the second language may be impaired.
As she was only four when she came to England Rameen had still been exploring her world - making sense of new ideas, making connections, finding out about number, size, shape and the world of print. Pauline Gibbons (1991:6), writing about her work in Australia with children who have English as an additional language explains this in practical terms: So, if you have sorted out the world in one language, it becomes much easier to sort it out again in a second language. Children who arrive in school with a strong command of their first language and a developed range of concepts in that language are thus in a very favourable position to learn English. They are adding on a second language to the one they already have (in much of the literature in the area they are referred to as 'additive bilinguals'). Younger children, whose language skills are less well developed, are in a less favourable position to learn a second language. With less conceptual and linguistic development, they have fewer pegs on which to hang new learning. It would seem that one of the worst times to switch language environments is around the age of five or six, when the comparative fragility of the first language does not support the learning of a second.

Rameen began to acquire English at the age of four and at six was continuing to become a fluent communicator in her second language. She was, therefore, switching language environments at a particularly difficult time. Gibbons goes on to stress that the first language should ideally continue to develop as the medium in which learning experiences take place. With this as a firm base there is no reason why fluency in other languages cannot be successfully acquired. However, so
often the first language atrophies with lack of use as the new language takes over. This is increasingly likely to happen when the second language is seen as politically dominant. The danger here is that children can be left with neither language adequately developed for internalising new concepts.

They may find it difficult to take on new vocabulary and structures needed for learning in the wider areas of the curriculum. It is, therefore, extremely important to provide support for developing the mother tongue wherever possible. Pauline Gibbons' observation that mother tongue is gradually replaced by English where bilingual children have little first language support gives weight to the belief of Rameen's mother that her use of Urdu would soon be eroded by English. If this happened, and neither language was adequately developed for learning, her progress in school could be impeded. It seemed, then, that without mother tongue support in school, and with fewer 'pegs' on which to hang each new idea, Rameen could be treading water rather than making progress.

Parent partnership

Ideally, we would have liked to give Rameem the opportunity to explore
new concepts and discuss classroom tasks with our
Urdu-speaking
bilingual assistant, whose professional training and
experience, linked
with knowledge of immigrant children's mother tongue and
culture,
would have been a valuable resource for her. But Section 11
funding in
Hampshire (as elsewhere) is very thinly spread, and other
commitments
made it impossible to fit Rameen into her timetable.
However, Rameen's mother willingly became involved, not
only in the
morning booksharing but in writing a 'welcome' sign in Urdu
on the door,
visiting her son's class to talk about Eid and answer
questions about
Pakistan, and teaching Rameen's class to answer the
register in Urdu.
Rameen's confidence grew visibly during the year, and in
the summer
term she added Urdu 'emergent writing' to long written
dialogues which
she enjoyed producing. She considered it 'all right' for
the class to use
Urdu, but she did not want to teach words to them. When her
teacher
asked her why she would not, she said 'I don't want people
to hear, only
those who know my language.' Perhaps children learn to be
quiet because
they are unwilling to speak their first language and have
not yet learned
enough English to join in with the classroom chat. Often bilingual children are described as 'no trouble at all, they’re so quiet'.

Rameen was certainly a quiet girl. She was included in a group of other 'quiet children' for a 15-minute session several times a week, led by an excellent special needs assistant who used a variety of stimuli to get conversation started. This was part of the flexible groupings for set purposes which the class teacher set up throughout the year. I sat in on two sessions and felt that, though Rameen was contributing to the discussion, she needed fluent language models so that she could hear and copy more varied structures.

'Modelling' by fluent language users during play and collaborative learning tasks is a natural way into a new language for children. Where a game or a task requires each child in the group to make contributions, good language learning is likely to take place.

We decided to make use of the hospital area already set up in the corridor bay. With notices saying 'X-ray', 'ward' and reception desk', and beds, cots and drawers full of bandages, it was an ideal place for role play,
guaranteed to fascinate the chatty group of girls we chose to spend some time there with Rameen. The conversation was fragmented, with more 'playing alongside' than collaborative activity, but Rameen entered into the game with enthusiasm. The context was familiar to her, as she had visited an aunt in hospital to whom she refers at the end of the extract. Rameen: I know what the police number is - 999. The doctor is asking someone if they're a patient, and someone comes in. Linda: Let's put it over there. Susan: Can I use the cooker? Rameen: Look I've found a sticker. Kate: I'm going to ring my real mum. Susan: If you do the cooking you can wear this. Rameem: I'm putting some clothes on this one [baby doll]. [Finds a 'please be seated' notice.] I put this on the table. This can be the waiting room. [Later] We are mums but we have jobs in the hospital. We look after our own babies. She's going to have a hair wash [baby doll]. Susan: She's a newborn baby. Linda: Are you a patient? Rameen: Yes. Linda: What's wrong with you - a tummy ache? Rameen: No - you know the muscles [shows arm] the muscles aren't very good. My auntie - we went to see my auntie the other day - she showed us the muscles in her arm - all blue and pink - the muscles weren't good.

From the talk generated in this role play we were able to see that Rameen would communicate more freely in friendship groups and where the context was familiar. After this she worked with a group of 'good talkers' who would model language which she could then use. For example, during a topic on 'waste and recycling', the class teacher sat with her group, and using 'concrete' objects which were familiar to Rameen in home context - milk cartons, crisp packets, chicken tikka sandwich
wrappers – the teacher
helped all the children discuss how packaging and other rubbish is
generated at home, and what happens to it. During the discussion Rameen
was absorbing the vocabulary and structures needed and was able to use the
topic language herself. This was important. The opportunity to use specific
language in context, rather than merely hear it, seems to be a vital and
integral part of the learning process. Rameen was fired with enthusiasm by
this topic and discussed it at home in Urdu with her mother.

Coping or achieving – mapping Rameen’s language

We were now clear that Rameen was 'coping' with the curriculum, but we
were not sure that she was even yet working at the level which she was
potentially capable of achieving.

As part of the ongoing work on storytelling, Rameen's group produced
a group picture book for the story Not Now Bernard, having first
discussed which pictures each would contribute. While each child drew
her allotted share, I asked her to tell me the story so that I could write it
down (this method of assessment is mentioned in the excellent publication
from the Birmingham Section 11 Project A Language Map). The focus of
this assessment was to compare Rameen's ability to produce story-telling language with that of a cross section of other children in the class (all monolingual), and to pinpoint areas for development.

Linda's story: The monster bit Bernard's father and Bernard's father went purple and then he went 'Ow! Who bit me?' He went 'me' and then he said to the monster 'don't bite me'. And he went to see Bernard's mother and she said 'do you want a drink Bernard? 'Yes' said the monster and once he drunk it he said 'but I 'm a monster!' Bernard's mother said 'I can't be bothered, just go up to bed.'

Sarah's story: He annoyed his dad. He hurt his finger. He's gone green. His mum said, 'not now Bernard'. He said, 'a monster's in the garden'. He ate Bernard up. The monster went inside the house. His mum thought it was Bernard and his dad thought it was Bernard. The monster bit dad. Mum watered the plants. She said Bernard's tea was ready. The monster goes to bed then he said he was a monster.

Rameen's story: Mum said 'not now Bernard'. She was getting a drink of water. When the dad was doing something busy Bernard disturbed dad. Then dad hit his finger. Then his face got blue. I liked the bit where the monster's behind her. Bernard went in the back garden and said, 'hello monster' then he ate him, then he went inside. He said, 'roar'. Mother said, 'not now Bernard'. The monster was behind her. The monster bite dad's leg then Dad screamed. His face got purple. Then Bernard's mum called Bernard. 'Your dinner's ready Bernard.' The monster came and ate it, then he watched telly. The monster was reading one of Bernard's comics and broke one of Bernard's toys. Well, the monster hat (sic) to go to bed and mother said 'your milk is upstairs'. The monster said 'I don't want to go to bed.' Cathy's story (part) Watering plants. Bernard said, 'hallo'. The father said, 'not now Bernard'. He hit his finger. Mum was getting some water. The water's come out.

Rameen's lively re-telling of the story was further evidence of her love of books and reading. She employed several interesting words such as 'busy' 'disturbed' and 'screamed' not used by the others, which showed that she was acquiring a wide vocabulary. The indications of second
language acquisition came in problems with handling idiom: 'he got purple' and 'his face got blue'. The story was dictated in November, but her difficulty with this idiomatic usage was echoed when she was making a get-well card for a sick classmate in the summer term: 'I hope you get happy from this letter', and in her cheerful self-evaluation at the opening of this chapter.

The strategy of working in a group of children who are using language competently and freely, on which her class teacher and I had already agreed, would help her to become confident in handling idiomatic use of auxiliary verbs as she moved through year one into year two.

The fluency trap
We were however concerned that her written work was not keeping pace with her oral skills. It was clear that she was an able child, capable of performing at what is considered to be the average National Curriculum level in English for her age although working in her second language; but the present level of her control of the new language was more apparent when she was writing. This was an activity which she pursued enthusiastically, often repeating herself and
increasing the size of her letters so that she could fill up a page. The extra effort of communicating through writing threw up areas of syntax and idiom where she was less secure. This pattern is common among children speaking a second language, who may be caught in a 'fluency trap' when conversational fluency outstrips the acquisition of literacy skills, often leading to a mistaken concern that a pupil may have special educational needs.

As part of the work for her course Rameen's class teacher was examining the provision in school for bilingual pupils. There has existed in the past in many British schools confusion between the needs of children whose mother tongue is not English, and those of children considered to have special educational needs. This had been addressed over a period in school through discussion with staff using the assessment of a group of pupils as a focus. Deryn Hall's excellent book Living in Two Languages (1995) was useful in clarifying issues and procedures for separating out the needs of the two groups and charting a course of action for individual pupils.
We recognised, however, that the introduction of individual education plans for special educational needs pupils in the wake of the 1994 Code of Practice was useful in focusing on the next stage of the pupil's development and strategies for achieving success.

My colleague felt that this could also be a useful tool for bilingual pupils, and one which she could use to focus on Rameen's writing, if she could devise a format which clearly differentiated the two groups. She realised, however, that it was important to preserve the hard-won distinction laid down in the 1981 Education Act that bilingualism does not, in itself, constitute a 'special need'. Teachers of English as an additional language have fought hard over the years to clarify the difference between the small-step, over-learning approach which benefits many special educational needs pupils, and the need of bilingual pupils for wide experience of language in the classroom environment fostered by collaborative working on challenging tasks with able pupils.

She decided to produce an alternative individual educational plan format which could be used in school with bilingual children. The purpose of this would be to help class teachers formulate the next
stage of development of their bilingual pupils. An important feature was that an entry had to be made stating the length of time a child had been learning English, which is surprisingly often overlooked when a bilingual child is being discussed.

The individual education plan which was formulated for Rameen at the beginning of the summer term set targets and success criteria which focused directly on the writing.

**Targets**

- To improve handwriting. Form all letters correctly.
- To begin to join letters. Learn and write simple joining patterns.
- To learn more sight words. To read sight words for next reading level.
- To improve spelling. Learn 10 new spellings and use in writing.
- To structure a story. Write a story with a beginning, middle and end.

Rameen and her mother were involved in a discussion of the targets, and also the review at the end of the term. Her mother was able to support and encourage Rameen’s writing at home, in addition to sharing books with her, which they both enjoyed enormously.

By the end of the summer term, Rameen’s writing was becoming more
structured and she, herself, was conscious that she was now more successful. Rameen's class teacher, evaluating her progress at the end of the year, concluded that the most significant improvements had been in reading and writing.

Conclusion

Teacher, child and parent working together

Rameen's progress during the year was good. She gained a full year of reading age over a few months, and her writing improved to her satisfaction. This was important for her self-esteem, a vital component of successful learning. Her confusion at times during mathematics groups alerted us to the continuing need to check that she understood concepts at each step, and the importance of working on tasks in a small group where she could test her ideas and ask questions, rather than relying exclusively on the 'try and think' method in isolation.

The components of Rameen's success

Her own individual strengths were her skill as a language learner, her enthusiasm and her security in the support of her parents for the learning process. This was maximised by the partnership between Rameen's
mother and her class teacher, with the support of the specialist peripatetic teacher. The parents' strengths – their prior knowledge of their daughter and her development, their own enjoyment of books and their high expectations of her – were recognised and built on by the class teacher who was able to draw them into the life of the school. Consequently, the potential weaknesses of their position – uncertainty about the British education system and shyness in approaching their school – were offset by becoming part of the school community.

The partner who was most directly concerned with Rameen during the day was her class teacher. Her friendliness and sympathy were vital in establishing a working relationship, as was her commitment to the quality of her pupil's learning.

Equally important, perhaps, was her realisation that she did not know how to get the best for her bilingual pupil and her willingness to undertake a demanding course over two terms to find out. The course, which was offered to all mainstream teachers in Hampshire, proved valuable not only by contributing to the professional development of teachers who undertook it, but also by providing their schools with the
opportunity to
examine resources and school policies for bilingual children. The course
not only addressed the class teacher's need for specific information, but
also mitigated that overwhelming difficulty encountered by any class
teacher - lack of time. Specific knowledge of strategies and cultural
information gained from the course meant that provision for bilingual
learners could be quickly slotted in at each stage of long-, medium- and
short-term planning in the school, and in individual classrooms.

Though the contribution to a partnership of the specialist peripatetic
teacher is necessarily less than the class teacher's and of shorter duration,
the combination of experience and access to information and research,
which is offered by specialist teachers, plays a major part in the education
of bilingual pupils throughout the country, both directly and through
influence on school, local education authority and national policies. Their
more recent role as providers of training for mainstream teachers is likely
to have an increasingly important effect. The contribution of bilingual
assistants also, where they are available, is of crucial importance to
happiness and successful learning.

As I evaluated what I had learned from the process, I became more convinced of the need to support children beyond the initial stages of acquiring English. Mills and Mills (1993) suggests that learning through a second language is always less efficient until the child has been working in the language for four years. Jim Cummins (1984) talked of the need for five to seven years' experience in a language before all subjects of the curriculum can fully accessed. This view is taken by other researchers, and was reiterated by him in an address at Reading University in April 1996. For Rameen there is a long way to go before she is learning on the same terms as her classmates. Without support through Urdu in school she has been working with at least one hand tied behind her back. The dangers of this for the development of cognition in young children have been frequently stressed (Gibbons, 1991:61): Most kindergarten children who enter school with little or no English are, by necessity, expected to learn within the confines of a very limited range of language - their current level of development in English. These children have full capacity for learning, but in an English-only class they are without the language which will allow them to do so. In this situation their cognitive and conceptual development may be slowed down or hampered while they are acquiring sufficient fluency in English.
Fortunately the partnership of family and school in this case has helped
the child through this difficult period and, hopefully, will continue to do
so right through her school career. We need, therefore, to foster continuing
partnerships of parents, support teachers and class teachers who have
access to specific training; and we need to ensure that the pupils
themselves have the motivation and self-esteem that comes from
encouragement by sympathetic and knowledgeable schools. If we can
achieve these goals we are more likely to be able to give all bilingual
pupils a fair chance of achieving the best possible outcome from their
education.

Multilingual Matters.


Cummins, J. (1996) Address at Reading University, April 1996.


English Teaching Association, Australia.
Why you don't eat bananas:

an exploration of a child's
possible worlds in story

Inge Cramer I maded before that ages ago story and then that film came on and I said yes that film came on then I been dancing about *table and been close the little girl's door so other people can't see me and I closened the curtain on my door so then I keep on my mother said what's happening to you she said it's not which film that which you put on and made up that story and I saided no this is that other one and then she said OK that one then she joined me then my dad came and I said it's a film which I maded that new one and he started to dance with me us lot oh my god and my cousin came they started laughing and I changed my clothes it was my dancing where they dance in the shows and I was dancing with my cousin 1

This story indicates, I hope, even in its edited, transcribed and therefore flattened form, the excitement to be generated for a child by oral storytelling. That film' referred to a video Zohra had just retold in story

form and, although she was aware of the distinction between true and
invented stories, she seems here almost to view herself as its inventor.

Zohra speaks increasingly rapidly, half-laughing and half-shouting as she relates what her mother said. She displays her awareness of appropriate cultural contexts by mentioning that she had closed the curtains so that people outside the family should not see her. Watching mainly Hindi videos seems to be an extended family experience involving, in this case, both parents and cousins.

1 Extra space has been inserted to separate sense units. See the key on page 160 for an explanation of the symbols used in these transcriptions. I would like to express my thanks to Kalsoom Bibi and Rashda Mohammed for the translation of Panjabi words.

Oral storymaking offers a child immense possibilities to become a significant meaning-maker. It does so all the more powerfully because it intertwines cognition with affect. Yet, because many children seem to tell stories so readily in their early years, we may not always value the activity in school. A casual listener may pay too great attention to Zohra’s developing but, as yet, imperfect control of English syntax without appreciating that, as she invents or retells often long and complex plots with many characters, she is exploring all kinds of discourses and themes.
However, it is crucial for teachers to understand children like Zohra’s first steps into story-telling if they are to facilitate their learning of a new language in school. In this chapter I shall first look at ways in which Zohra begins to enter a new world using story telling as a mediator, and then go on to examine implications for teachers working in multilingual classrooms.

Getting to know Zohra

Zohra is a bilingual six-year-old child growing up in a city in the north of England. Her family originates from the Mirpur district of Pakistan. She speaks Panjabi with her grandmother, a mixture of Panjabi and English with both of her parents, and English with her cousins and aunts. She is a Muslim and attends a multi-ethnic primary school. Most children at the school are of south-Asian origin as were, at the time of this study, most of the teachers in reception, year one and year two. English, however, is the dominant language of the school. National Curriculum English, within which Zohra’s teacher must work, barely recognises the cultures and lives of those who do not belong to England’s ethnic majority; nor do many
educational resources commercially available. Yet numerous research
studies (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988; Gregory, 1996) stress the advantages of
recognising bilingual education and cultural difference. A collection of the
children's own stories is likely to be one of the teacher's most important
resources, as we shall see below.

Zohra was one of a group of six children in the school who worked
with me on 14 occasions during the school year. The children usually
told their stories in pairs, sometimes single-sex, sometimes girl-boy. To
record the stories clearly enough for accurate transcription, I had to
abandon working in the classroom. The children were free to refuse to
come, and they could refuse to tell a story. This rarely happened. They
could listen to themselves on the tape recorder, and I would give them
a typescript of at least one of their stories on my next visit. The
procedure for eliciting the stories varied; I would usually ask if they
had a story to tell me first, saying that I would really like to hear one
they might have invented or heard at home. I would sometimes tell or
read a story either before or after they had told one. There were optional
picture prompts on two occasions. Sometimes they drew; sometimes I
would write. Zohra decided that oral storytelling was 'really gorgeous'.

Zohra's stories

Zohra told at least 22 longer stories during the year, which I categorised
roughly into likely predominant sources: personal, book, video and
invented. It is not easy to do this (Fox, 1993:15–20): most stories have a
variety of sources and it is important that retelling itself is considered as
a form of invention.

Almost all the stories told had some verbal audience feedback by either
the storytelling partner or myself, as the following excerpt from the
transcript of Cinderella Rose Princess shows. On this occasion there were
many more interruptions than usual, partly because I repeated Zohra's
words as I wrote, and partly because Zohra was language-switching. We
see below how she begins to explain to me the meaning of a Panjabi word,
transliterated as 'bolah'. Teacher: who said . mum .
Rama's mum Zohra: yeah . Rama's mum . Λ (1.0) said .
that (3.0) he don't know . erm . everyone says that he
don't know anything . he's a . soft and he's a bolah and
he . don't Teacher: he's a soft what Zohra: he's a soft
kind of bolah Teacher: what's a = bolah Zohra: = bolah
means . bolah means that he's er Rashid: he got a balls .
a ball Zohra: no . not . he's a soft . that's mean . soft
means er bolah Teacher: you mean he's stupid Zohra: he's
a bolah . he's Teacher: stupid Rashid: soft Zohra: yeah
and he sings this song

This exchange between Zohra and myself underlines the importance of bilingual teachers: it takes me some time to establish what 'bolah' might mean and I never quite understand that Zohra's use of the word 'soft' is more appropriate than my 'stupid'. She does not mean that Rama is stupid; rather, that he is innocent or naive. Interruptions like this or the following Teacher: why can't she [go outside] Zohra: 'cos er . she not allowed may well have influenced the course of the story. Zohra's stories, therefore, are not entirely her independent constructions. I usually tried not to intervene too much, although audience response is itself a part of the story-telling process. Moreover, provided it is not disruptive to the flow, genuine puzzlement may well be helpful, for it indicates a need for clarification.

Cinderella Rose Princess: the power of videos

Transcription is an uncertain business. It is not always easy to understand what a child is saying. In Cinderella Rose Princess, Zohra's pronunciation of 'prince' or 'princess' sounded virtually identical to 'twins'; she told stories about all three, but the text suggests 'princess'. The removal of
garbles and interchanges is also problematic, as is the lack of prosodic information. The edited form offered, however, should allow the reader some holistic sense of the stories.

When Zohra announced her title, I was expecting a story with whose broad outline I might be familiar because of the name 'Cinderella Rose'.

On two previous occasions she had retold the Disney Snow White and the central character had been called 'Rose'. Instead, and to my delight, she retold the video, mentioned in the opening story, Annari. first Cinderella princess goes outside the man comes riding cycle a king's son and he has in his hand a red umbrella and when everyone sees red umbrella they runs away in they house this monkey he lefts outside and he gotted this mat on his face and he said to hide his face and this chotay rajah this little rajah he whoever looks or talk by his sister he will cut the heads all in half and he will cut this half [of their moustache] and they hairs the sister had nother sisters had a sahliay sahliay means friend she calls the sahliay to 'em and she was skipping in the house the sahliahs was coming to her to play with they were laughing and she said hey you came and they said that let's go and play outside she didn't give a answer back to her she was really upset she said that who gonna take me outside I can't then she said that who's this and this little sahliay said that this is my cousin she just came today in this area and why don't you play outside she said that well I'm not allowed then Ragoo came Ragoo is his noker slave she asked that my sahliay's came will you make some dinner she said that go bring dinner bring apple and a fruit and that noker said that OK I am coming now the Cinderella changed** Cinderella's big birthday came and this Rama he went to sing a song and everyone thinks so
he's a bolah everyone thinks he don't know anything for the day Rama's mum said that I know he gone in the

khausayll khausayli means that it's a big house there Rama's mum says that he don't know anything he's soft and he's a bolah and he sings the song and he was saying choti zari piari nanni ai [my small beloved has come] it were a nice song choti din nanni piari ai heh [my little sweetheart has come] that song is so gorgeous I sing my head off and he was singing and he came back home at the night

time and his mother said now what why you came now you could have stayed there and eat the dinner from the khausayli and you like in the khausayli dinner too much and he saided that what you're saying I didn't even have no glass of water today and his mum said that oh mummy you know what khausayli dhey bunday itenay thaweez kurteh heh [the people of the palace do magic to make someone love] they likes me too much the song that man burray rajah [the big rajah] they said that he's nice a person songing and he like a radio singing a song and he said that mummy will you take a karna [food] out and make me eat with your hands dinner the mummy said that you're so big and you're still eating from my hand take it out for yourself and eat it by yourself Rama said that what you said you're not gonna make your hands to eat and he was starting to sing that song again choti sahliay nemni piari heh [the little sweetheart is coming] anay
koy dhar nehin hota [there's no fear in coming] and that's when he sang and after that he's sleeping the mandar you know where you pray to God and he slept there and his mum came and she's got his dinner and his mum came and said Rama will you eat now he said no I'm not why did you say that you're not gonna make me eat like that mujhhe lachar mandar [take me to the temple] he's trying to sing that song after his dinner the mummy's joined in and then he got a job in the khawayli and then he said to clean and Cinderella Rose princess said that I'm so happy and he put her hand on his head and the chotay rajah came he saided that you holded my sister's hand why did you put on sandukh [?] on his head and he saided that sorry I'm not gonna do it again and then they stopped smacking him and then they started to laugh at him and that's the end Questioning afterwards showed that there was more to the plot: a plan to kill Cinderella involving electric shocks in factories, and a marriage between Cinderella and Rama. What delighted me about this story? First, Zohra had, for only the second time in four months, told a story that clearly drew on experiences that were important to her in the context of home. After this she used such video material much more. The Indian setting is signalled by a variety of clues: the inclusion of a monkey in the opening orientation, Rama's name, and the allusions to 'rajah' and 'mandar'. Some of the dominant themes
are characteristic of Hollywood films.

Second, she felt able to switch languages (see the example of 'bolah'
above). She may have done so either because she was retelling a Hindi
video or because Rashid was present. Writing, by encouraging a slower
pace, gave me a chance to ask for translations, which she then seemed to
provide almost automatically: Zohra: said that er . I know he gone in the
. in the khawayli . khawayli means that it's a big house there. She knows
how to use analogies, for in another story her central character says: 'I'm
gonna make you like my house like a castle'. But here she used
'khawayli', akin to the English word 'mansion' or 'palace'.
'Sahliay'
means 'friend'; more precisely, it means 'female friend'
and it is her
preferred term, perhaps because of its emotional and gender connotations.

Stories as significant discourses: independence and
the family

The themes in Cinderella Rose Princess of restrictions on
girls, of rich
and poor, of conflict between mother and son, or of someone poor and
scorned attaining success and status through music, are familiar to most
children growing up in England. Zohra often focused on the
contrast

between poor and rich. Poor people might become rich, become 'queens'

and 'kings'. The acquisition of wealth entails helping other people.

Zohra's longest story, Rose, offers us a clear example. After hearing 'two

horrible mans' call her names, Rose uses her father's money, despite his

initial opposition, to give clothes, make new houses, provide education,

work and entertainment for the people in her neighbourhood: and she made some school for the childrens and a college and a [school name] and these all schools and she made for a old mans a library for a children library and she putten gas cooker like these food and all gas cookers and drawers every one things for a kitchen and she made a nice kitchen and dining tables she buyded for everyone and they all thing was same but she putted it in a different order which anys is best

Most of Zohra's thirteen video and invented stories centre strongly on

the family. Children have obligations, they raise money for their family,

but they also run away, disobey their parents, tease the cat, steal (and

replace) money. I do not speculate why Zohra told particular stories or

what, psychologically, they could have meant to her, but norms and

values are clearly being articulated and questioned (Bearne, 1994:89-90).

The stories provide evidence of some of the significant discourses

through which Zohra is both being enculturated and exploring her sense
of identity, however fictional a construct 'identity' may be. She is

rehearsing the discourses of more powerful adults. She seems also to be

'trying out "what if..." kinds of experiences, especially those that are

forbidden, dangerous, excessive or impossible in everyday life. Saying

things doesn't make them happen' (Fox, 1993:196).

The following story, Monkey in the Fair, centres on

relationships with

family and friends, on wants, desires and their opposites. Zohra seems to

play with problems of family, nurture and independence:

there was five monkey in the forest there was a baby the baby said I don't like to stay in the forest I want to stay in the fair and he runned off and he runned away from his mummy and his daddy and his sister and he saw another little fair and he wanted to have a ride on the swings then he paid the monies and he saw on the giraffe and he said please could I sit on your back and the giraffe said yes and the giraffe he were reading a story to a monkey and the monkey said oh thank you and he runned off to a lion then lion chased after the monkey and monkey went on the fair the monkey went on the swings and you know where there bes a stick and he jump he went on the swings so higher and he jumped on the stick then the lion couldn't find him and the lion went away and the lion said that when the lion's little babies and he said sorry I couldn't find you a monkey I finded one and I don't know where he went then the babies runned the baby crieded and they said that I'm not gonna to

play for you I'm never gonna should you catch you one monkey for me so we could eat him now we're not gonna eat none monkeys we're just gonna be hungry every day gonna eat nothing they said that we're gonna be monkey's friend for ever and they runned off and the monkey played with them they finded a monkey and they played with it they said that I don't want to eat you look I'm sorry from my daddy he's really bad to me so I'm your friend right I'm not gonna eat nothing of monkeys and I'm just going to be
hungry and the monkey said that oh no no don't be hungry why you don't eat bananas the lion said banana but I didn't tasted banana could I taste please the banana and the monkey gave the banana and they said that mmm they delicious they nice then we want some more please and they moved they head and they sawed a cherries high up the trees even the strawberries and cherries they asked the monkey we could see a strawberry and cherry please could you please get them for us on the tree and the monkey went on the tree quickly and he brought back loads of pair of strawberry and he went on the other tree and he gotted a cherries and they all ate it together they said that oh leave them from the rest where we're gonna sleep and the monkey said oh I finded a little house let's see who's in there there was a princess and they said that let's go inside they knocked on the door and princess inside came out and she say oh you I like monkey even little kittens of lions and she brought them inside and she slept with them all that time and even morning time and they waked up and the princess said that let's go sit on that big ride which had turns and the monkey and the lion didn't they said oh no no I don't want to sit on there and the princess said just try it bes too funny and they sat on it and they tried it and they were laughing and laughing all the time even at the night time they gone off of it and the princess said let's eat share out the sweets even the monkey said we got a cherries even a strawberries and they shared it out and the lion gived the ring and monkey gived the necklace

The dialogue is as central to the plot as the action, for much of the 'action' takes place in dialogue. Dialogue also externalises a range of emotions: desire, apology, revulsion and denial. Although her control of English lexicogrammar is yet to be fully established, Zohra uses both analogy, 'little kittens of lions', and rhetoric effectively. The lion cubs, rejecting their father, use five emphatic declarations, four of them negative, one of which is heightened by a double negative; the positive
'we're just gonna be hungry every day' is sandwiched between two 'every day' and 'for ever'.

The lions know they will be hungry as a consequence but the monkey presents them with a novel solution: become vegetarian.

'Why you don't eat bananas?' This conversation is a crucial point in the story. It is marked by expressive phonology, raised pitch and lengthened words like 'nice' and 'please'. Is it excessive to suggest that Zohra is creating her own 'possible worlds through the metaphoric transformation of the ordinary and the conventionally given' (Bruner, 1986:49)? As Chukovsky (1963:598) suggests, to be able to do this she has to be 'keenly aware of the normal'.

Inversions of 'normality' occur in many of Zohra's stories. Some squirrels hide a watermelon from their mother. The mice eat the watermelon so the squirrels eat the mice. When their father later shares another watermelon with them, their mother wakes up and asks what is happening. The squirrels say: 'mummy tomorrow daddy gotted a job
daddy went in a work now ≠ this time at the night time . er. (...) yeah .

there's some work bes opened.'
Zohra is specific that it's a 'joke' on the mummy, although she also seems familiar with the concept of night shifts. Many stories later, she laughs at the idea that rich people turn into poor people and that Zohra: these nickers [burglars] came in. they are outside. they killed all the ladies (1.0) and then there's only man. to dance. and sing a song (2.0) 'cos er. you know the poor people. they likened the ladies' dance. dance heh. the (1.0) Ferhana: men Zohra: (2.0) rich people liked the ladies' dance. dance heh. so. the man have to dance like ladies (1.0) <laughs>

It is not uncommon for men to dance, but it amuses her when they have to dance like women.

In story telling, affect and logic work together (Meek, 1991:237) and they offer a powerful context both for learning a language and learning through language. Zohra is exploring her possible worlds. Be it through inversion, through causality and temporality or through listing the components of a neighbourhood fit to live in, she is organising and constructing categories and connections, and her stance towards them.

What teachers can learn from Zohra's stories: implications for classroom practice

The importance of affect and of play in language acquisition and development has often been stressed. Oral storytelling, however, remains largely neglected in schools, partly because of the difficulties of
organisation, and partly, perhaps, because there is a fear that storytelling

is not the stuff of which educational achievement is made. Storymaking is

more likely to be associated with writing, with the accompanying

limitations imposed by transcription. My small case study confirms that

storytelling is cognitively demanding whilst simultaneously providing

supportive contexts for language learning, if the person listening is

accepting and approving (Sutton-Smith et al, 1981:30–5). Children

acquiring another language may be presented with unnecessary difficulties at the age of six years and beyond because they are regarded

as too old for play and yet too young for the use of overt cognitive or


Why is storymaking so powerful a support for language learning and

cognitive development? It is because it operates on so many levels. It

brings into operation the positive consequences of play and affect whilst

using everyday schemas and familiar chunks of story language. It offers

longer speaking turns than normal in classrooms and can shift topic

initiation to the child. It conjoins oracy and literacy.

Children and their caregivers need to know that storymaking
is a challenging and legitimate form of work. Children should hear and retell stories for themselves from a variety of texts, from video and from personal experience. Teachers need to check that they model stories that are relevant to children's lives, and that represent and celebrate the diversity of cultural experience with a variety of heroes and styles.

Whilst the notion of modelling on texts is helpful, the principles of invention and borrowing are also critical. Children need to become confident in knowing that they can create stories of their own, in whichever language or mix of languages they like, using bits from whatever source they like. Rather than only being given a particular story to retell, they should be asked which stories they might like to tell, which they get told at home and so on. A teacher is thereby more likely to give the child a chance of bringing all her cultures into the classroom, rather than simply replicating the almost inescapable dominant cultural messages offered by the choices of texts from publishers, one's own them down, we need to use the child's own language forms. Changes that
are made can sometimes offer fruitful discussion points but, on the whole,

responses should concentrate on the child's meanings rather than on

rephrasing syntax. In responding to meaning, after all, the listener

simultaneously models the conventional adult linguistic forms.

The management of oral storymaking in a busy classroom may be
demanding but opportunities need to be provided. There are many helpful
books and articles (for example, Howe and Johnson, 1992, or Shell,
1992). The most important points are listed below:

• Regular and frequent storytelling by adults and children.

• An acceptance of retelling.

• The encouragement of invention.

• Different audiences and group sizes.

• Storytelling in all available languages.

• Collaborative as well as individual storymaking.

• The regular use of the tape recorder so children can listen to themselves.

• A variety of prompts to cater for individual learning styles, but with a stress on 'is there any story you would like to make up or tell?'

• A variety of collection styles, from spontaneous to described.

Zohra presents a further compelling case. It is particularly useful to collect

a corpus of stories and to try to analyse what the child is doing, relating this
also to our responses and to the kinds of story we customarily offer. After a while Zohra drew freely on all the cultures she had access to for material with which to construct her stories. Not all the children in my study did so as clearly. The encouragement to tell stories based on videos helped in this. She never, however, gave her female heroes south-Asian names. Given the dominance of Anglo-American culture in the media and the printed word, I needed to make the presence of children from minority cultures much more visible in the ways I used my stories. The mere inclusion of stories like Sinbad the Sailor or Mr Hussain and the Trousers was not enough.

There is little research on telling stories in mother tongue (Morrison and Sandhu, 1992:102 and Blackledge, 1993:134). We know that language and cultural identity are intimately linked, that without bilingual education Zohra's linguistic development in both her languages is under threat. We need to understand her mother tongue for her to be able to use her metaphors, her language awareness, her comparisons and draw upon her experiences effectively. Though young, she already knows about the dangers of language loss: there's one true story and this I'm telling you now (...) do you know this girl she was right stupid these nickers they made her like stupid and she
kept on saying that to her mum oh my mum keep on saying this and that I’m stupid and she’s keep on laughing then she says again ohhhh my mum told that I’m stupid I’m not she was a Muslim girl and now she don’t know her language

Surely our ultimate aim should be to enable Zohra to draw on all the cultures to which she has access, and to feel at home in using both her languages in school.

Key to transcripts . micropause (2.0) number of seconds in a pause ^ back channel (mhmh, mmm etc.) [] translations of Panjabi or additions to help indicate meaning (...) omission of T-Unit(s) = beginning of overlapping speech * unclear syllable italics dialogue in the story ≠ inferred change of speaker; no tag <laughs> non-verbal behaviour


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Chapter 12

From Karelia to Kashmir: a journey into bilingual children's story-reading experiences within school and community literacy practice

Leena Robertson

From Karelia to Kashmir

Forests have many names in Finnish. When I was little I learnt these names through stories. My grandmother would spin tales of trolls, spirits and fairies that lived in Finland's deepest and greenest pine forests as effortlessly as I could listen, and my grandfather would tell endless, amazingly accurate, but hilariously funny stories of real people of real Karelia, where my maternal family had always lived, and where we belonged - but where I had never been. In my mind Karelia had the
prettiest of waters, funniest of people and most mysterious of forests.

Karelia, a substantial part of Finland, had been lost to the Soviet Union during the Second World War and, in my childhood, the pain was still visible in the adults' eyes. For my fifth birthday my parents gave me a classic book of Finnish fairy tales written in the early 20th century. The author, Anni Swann, carried on the Finnish children's story tradition of teaching children to 'love thy God and thy land'. She combined her stories with Finnish folklore and an unyielding devotion to children, nature and animals. By setting the majority of her tales in the middle of the vast pine forests, they are firmly set in Finnish culture.

I have vivid as well as very hazy recollections of playing outside, and I remember how the real forests and trees around our home transformed themselves into the very same settings I had seen and heard in these stories. I named them according to the stories, and often asked my mother and my grandmother, as I trailed behind them on our berry picking rambles, 'Could that be the little fairies' grove? Could that be the glade where the forest trolls danced?' And my grandmother would nod her head,
smile knowingly, and then begin to tell one of her stories. The oral stories of my grandparents gave me a firm sense of belonging, whereas the written fairy-tales, and their old-fashioned language and religious undertones, gave me a dawning sense of past. At the statutory age of seven

I went to school, and learnt to read with my ABC book (Aapinen) which had pictures of forests and trolls, not very different to the ones I had become so closely acquainted with in Swann's tales. The countless other books and comics that I was subsequently given, and my readings of these, all carried some indefinable traces of Anni Swann's fairy tales with them, which in my mind had by then become hopelessly enmeshed with Karelia, its people and past.

Years later, I am teaching a mixed reception/year one class in the centre of Watford, an old-established market town some 20 miles north of London. I am the class teacher and the children in my class are four-to-six year olds who are predominantly emergent bilinguals (16 out of 26) and of Pakistani origin. About 5 per cent of Watford's population is from the areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in Pakistan, and particularly from
Kashmir. The parents of these children were generally born in Pakistan, but most of the school's pupils (75 per cent of Pakistani origin) were born in Watford and have attended the school's nursery. At home they speak Pahari, sometimes described as a Panjabi dialect which, some 50–60 years ago, still had a written form (literature from this period, and before, is available in Kashmir). Some families speak Panjabi at home, and many use Urdu, the official language of Pakistan. Although none of the school's pupils speak Urdu as their mother tongue, or as their first language, all the families see Urdu as an important tie with Pakistan. The families are mostly of the Muslim religion, the mosque is close by, and almost all the children attend Urdu and Qur'anic classes in the afternoons and at the weekends. Urdu and Arabic (the language of the Qur'an) scripts are very similar, and it is possible to read this script in either language. Some families have visited 'home', as Kashmir is always referred to, often for months at a time, but the majority will not be returning there permanently, because of the war in the area. Their future is here.

Beginning reading

On a very ordinary school day I am reading and talking
about books with my class. The children come to me individually, and together we read various books and stories. The term for this kind of reading activity, often and commonly used by practising teachers, is 'hearing children read'.

Thus, from the onset, the young, and also the not-yet-reading children are both perceived and positioned as readers and active participators within this kind of early years practice. All this takes place well before they have learnt to read. The way this activity is, therefore, often referred to and presented to the children, is that the child 'reads' and the teacher 'listens'.

Not only is this misleading because, as every teacher knows, what actually happens in these reading lessons is something far more complex and intriguing, but it may also provide a confusing starting point for children who do not yet perceive themselves as readers. Equally, too, parents may talk about learning to read first, with the emphasis on learning, rather than on reading. But as well as lacking a proper label, or name, perhaps more importantly, these lessons are not always explained, or structured in a way that would help the children to see their purpose, or
to understand what is expected of them. Within these
lessons, however,

teacher and child interact endlessly: the child listens,
tries to find out, asks

and answers questions, remembers, memorises, takes risks,
gives up, tries

again - whilst the teacher reads, repeats, corrects,
explains, asks and

answers questions, smiles, frowns. In short, these lessons
involve, in

Vygotsky's (1986) terms, an entry into culture which is
achieved by a

transaction between the more skilled members who pass on,
support, and

instruct, and the less skilled ones, who through a process
of internalisation, achieve new forms of consciousness and
control.

For many emergent bilinguals who are learning to read in a
new
language and in a new cultural setting, some of the above
dilemmas

become immediately more problematic. The aim is to teach
children to

read, but as beginning reading is generally story based in
Britain - while

much of the language teaching, later on, is literature
based - children will

need particular cultural and linguistic knowledge from the
earliest stages.

First of all, this story-based approach may be very
different to reading

practices in other parts of the world (see Gregory 1993,
for a contrast

between English and Chinese practices). But furthermore,
when children first start school, it is often assumed that by immersing the children in the reading practices of the school they automatically become acculturated into school literacy. Within our shared, collaborative early years reading practice, the teacher is the model and the child is the apprentice. The children are shown how a reader behaves, and they are expected to engage with the meaning of the story and respond to it personally: in essence the reader brings his/her own meaning to the text. But this becomes very complicated in any classroom, where the children’s experiences are varied. Readers behave very differently in different cultural contexts, and all good stories have layers of meaning. But the layers of meaning do not refer to the text as much as to the individual acts of reading. This was poignantly revealed by Shirley Brice-Heath (1983) in her influential study of different reading practices in adjacent communities in South Carolina, which she observed and recorded in astonishing detail. Print carries values, and so do different readings, and these are always rooted in wider ideological beliefs and structures. English stories and English literature
have a very specific place in the reading development in the British educational system. This is so firmly grounded in our practice and our theoretical understanding of reading development, that we often fail to see it as one cultural practice amongst many, and accept it as the norm.

The young reader

On this particular day, five-year-old Imrul (of Kashmiri/Pakistani background) is looking at the book he has chosen. It is The Frog And The Fly (Wood, 1985) and part of a very popular reading scheme used in British schools. The book tells a fairly simple story with large colourful pictures and with simple, minimal text. In the story a frog sits on a lily pad and captures a fly with its long, curly tongue. Imrul sits very close to me and rests his hand on my arm. Teacher: Let’s have a look at the pictures. What can you see? Imrul: [No answer.]


And so we go on trying our very best to make sense of the story and each
other. It soon becomes apparent that in order to read and understand this

story much more is required than just knowledge of the language the story

is written in which, on its own, of course, is not to be underestimated. But

if reading, and understanding this story, is something more - indeed, if

reading itself is more than the sum of the skills needed - how can this

'more' be defined, what does it mean for Imrul, and what implications
does it have for me as his class teacher?

Learning to read English stories

I aim to unravel some of these questions, and during the following year I

investigate the reading development of the young emergent bilingual

children in my class in general and that of Imrul in particular. My

observations begin to challenge the way I have been presenting reading to

my pupils but, on this day, and throughout this reading lesson with The

Frog And The Fly, I am still puzzling over Imrul’s responses, which are

all short answers to my direct questions. All his utterances reveal his own

thinking, his ideas are logical and reasonable: a fly might disappear into

water, and a lily pad could easily be a boat. But on the whole, he does not

appear to understand the story. Each response makes sense
but, put

Together, they do not seem to make a cohesive narrative in his mind.

Clearly he is not yet reading with understanding, but neither is he sharing stories nor responding to stories with meaning or what is perceived as meaning. James Heap (1991) has raised the question of what 'counts' as reading, which leads me to wonder, what exactly counts as responding to stories with meaning? The programme of study for English in the Key Stages 1 and 2 of the National Curriculum (1995) presents contextual understanding as: ...focusing on meaning derived from the text as a whole. In order to confirm the sense of what they read, pupils should be taught to use their knowledge of book conventions, story structure, patterns of language and presentational devices, and their background knowledge and understanding of the content of a book. (DFE, 1995:7)

1 The subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2 are studied by children aged 5-11.

The deficit explanations which linger on within our schools - 'it is because these children do not have books at home and no one reads to them' - seem both inappropriate as well as inadequate. In fact, I am aware that many bilingual children in my class regularly spend afternoons learning to read at their community-language schools. But furthermore, the National Curriculum statement, cited above, is based on an assumption that
contextual knowledge and understanding (about book conventions, story structures, patterns of language and so on) which, paradoxically, are highly culture specific, have already been acquired, somehow naturally, well before the child learns to read in English. Imrul and I carry on reading together: Teacher: What happens now, you tell me? Imrul: Spit water. Teacher: Oh, you think the frog, he spits out water on the fly. Mmmm, could be! Although, it's a different colour. It's pink, isn't it? Is it pink water? Imrul: [No answer.] Teacher: I think it's the tongue. Look at my tongue. Imrul: They got big tongue! Teacher: They've got massive, long tongues, yes!

Imrul enjoys each separate part or picture, but he does not seem to grasp the connection between the different parts. This puzzles me. It seems to me that he is not alone in this either as it happens to some other bilingual children in my class and, quite possibly, to some monolingual children in other classes and schools. There are various other occasions, too, when Imrul simply states - labels really - some of the things he can see in pictures, and though he is beginning to understand how English stories work and what lies behind the text in a reasonable and logical way, his guesses are often wrong. The level descriptors for reading at Level 1 in the English National Curriculum expect children to 'express their response to poems, stories and non-fiction by identifying
aspects they
like' (ibid. p. 19). Even though Imrul can do this, there
is a notion, implicit
in the assessment, that the child has to understand the
story as a narrative.

Purely identifying favourite aspects, perhaps unconnected
and
misunderstood, is not a response to a story which one would
expect from
a monolingual English child and, as Imrul is entitled to
the same full
curriculum as other children, he is also entitled to learn
to respond to
stories in the expected and accepted English way.

However, I fear that this lack of understanding may have an
effect on
Imrul’s future motivation to share, to talk about stories,
and ultimately on
his progress in learning to read. Understanding the story,
is often — and
there is plenty of evidence to support this (Smith, 1985
and Meek, 1988) —
cited as a motivating force for a young child to turn the
page, to find out
what happens next, which in return will enable the child to
predict the
next word, and to learn different ways of finding out what
the actual
words say. Furthermore, stories have a way of structuring
experience.

Carol Fox (1993) presents stories in the Chomskyan
tradition, along with
sentences as a universal structuring device, as stories and
storying are

such a universal phenomenon. Imrul, on the other hand, clearly knows

about storytelling, because he regularly plays out stories with his models

and his cars, but there seems to be a gap, that puzzles me, between his

imaginative play and his engagement with written stories.

On another day, I watch Imrul as he picks up an Urdu book. He cannot

read it as yet, and is simply looking at the text and the pictures. As I

observe him I begin to see some of the traditions and experiences that are

foreign to me but, that for Imrul, constitute real reading. I ask him about

the book and listen to him as he begins to tell me about reading in Urdu.

He knows about reading in the mosque, he knows about the Qur'an, and

soon he begins to tell about Pakistan and Kashmir. Kashmir is a place

where he has never been, but where he knows his family belongs and, as

I listen to him, I am suddenly reminded of Karelia. Kashmir and Karelia – two very different, faraway places that stand worlds apart but are both,

in essence, places that have been lost to the families who belong there.

There are differences of course, but the emotions are surprisingly similar.

The written fairy tales of my childhood, and the oral stories of my
grandparents, all shaped my identity as they structured my experience and

provided me with new words and new ways of expression. The stories I

learnt then, in my childhood, the way they were told and what they told,

have all shaped my understanding. I carry my previous reading

experiences, the history of myself as a reader, with me; the same applies

to Imrul and this Urdu book now, and will apply to him as he begins to

read more widely in English and in Urdu and at his mosque classes.

This opens up a fresh new perspective for thinking about my bilingual

pupils' reading, and the way they respond to English stories. It is

liberating to begin to acknowledge the diversity of response as the norm,

not an exception, or an oddity, and to accept the myriad web of values,

traditions and histories that shape all children's understanding of reading,

and which have an impact on the ways they engage with English stories.

This must also have serious implications for my teaching of reading. I

read some of Eve Gregory's (1994:119) work at this point in which she

presents successful approaches developed in other parts of the world,

approaches which attempt to respond to similar differences: 'difference' is used as a springboard for negotiation i.e.
deliberate task-based strategies are designed which highlight and build upon difference; 'appropriate' knowledge needed for participation is made explicit, often through deliberate 'stage-setting' whereby children are asked to bear certain vital points in mind as they read a text or through 'modelling' of an appropriate style by the teacher; home/school learning programmes are based upon what caregivers are familiar with and understand rather than what the school feels they should understand.

As Imrul thinks about reading, it may evoke very different thoughts, feelings, ideas and experiences to mine. First and foremost, the role of religion in reading is crucially important to him and to his community, and very different to my own experience. But as I listen to Imrul and attempt to contrast his experiences with my own reading history, I suddenly remember the underlying notion of 'love thy God and thy Land', the intrinsic aim of my childhood's stories and the bedrock of the Finnish fairy tales. It is a pleasing discovery, and one that unites Imrul and me. But what exactly is 'appropriate knowledge' which will help me to teach Imrul to tune into reading in my class? The starting points are different, and so are the cultural practices, and it is difficult for both the teachers and learners to know where the similarities end and differences start. I begin by making arrangements to find out more about Imrul and his other reading practices, and in particular I want to find out
what kinds of story
- reading experiences Imrul will encounter at his community language classes.

Reading at the community language schools

The community language schools, together with the places of worship, are vitally important, often the lifeline of a minority community. It is these places and events, constructed around the religion or the language of the community, which generally pull and keep the people together, and so succeed in keeping the community and its culture and language alive.

Imrul attends two community language classes, Urdu and Qur'anic, both of which have a very specific focus of learning to read. Urdu classes provide him an additional opportunity to develop, extend and consolidate Urdu vocabulary which will strengthen his linguistic and cultural ties with Pakistan, whereas the Qur'anic classes, in which he is learning to read in classical Arabic, a language he cannot speak, will teach him about his religion and provide him collective experiences of belonging to a Muslim community.

The hall, where the local Qur'anic class takes place, is big, bare and
dark. The tables and chairs are neatly stacked against the walls. The wooden floor boards have recently been varnished, and there is a peculiar lingering smell. The teacher, always referred to as 'Auntie' by the children, is already there, and so are some of the children. They have pulled out some tables and chairs, and have started reading. More children, 24 in all and aged between five and 14 years, arrive, talking, laughing, pinching their noses, and holding their plastic carrier bags close to their body. They all know each other well. When I look at the outside of their plastic bags, I am still on the familiar ground and I can read the familiar high street names: Tesco, Sainsbury, Boots. But as soon as the children pull out their Qur'anic reading books, their prayer books or their beautifully gold-embossed Qur'ans, all the familiarity disappears, and I am immediately surrounded by a totally different kind of culture and reading tradition. An older boy is chanting his Qur'an; others recite on their own. They point to the text, as instructed, with their right index finger - and fiddle, of their own accord, with their carrier bags - and their voices soon become mixed up with the rustling of the bags. The
strangeness of it all is an interesting experience.

Two older girls (aged 10 and 14) sit next to me and explain how they learnt to read the Qur'an. The girls' description of learning to read is similar to the approach I observed at a local Urdu class and, equally, it is easy to see some fundamental differences with my own school. At these community-language classes the children learn to recognise the whole of the alphabet first and learn to read short combinations of letters. At the Qur'anic classes this becomes progressively more difficult, whereas at the Urdu classes the children move from learning to read small words labelling pictures to slightly longer descriptions and short sentences still linked with pictures. At the Urdu classes the teachers had some story books from Pakistan, too, ready for the older, more fluent readers, but there were none for Imrul's age group. These Urdu books had several separate stories, often one on each page, and their pictures seemed to be illustrations of characters. Each story was a fable, or a myth, with an appropriate beginning (sort of 'once upon a time') that set the scene, and each story also had a distinct moral ending. These stories and, in
particular, the moral endings, were considered very important for the children's overall development, for their general learning. But before

Imrul was considered ready to read them, he had to become a fluent reader. Similarly here, at these Qur'an classes children never read stories, or engage in stories read to them. Yet, religious stories are vitally important, and will be told orally again and again, in Pahari at home, to the children to enable them to understand and learn religion, but at these classes the children concentrate on practising their reading.

Auntie interrupts us and, firmly but kindly, reminds the girls that they must close the Qur'an when they are talking: one should not talk over an open Qur'an. The girls resume their reading, and I think back to Imrul, my class, and my teaching of reading. I always begin to teach reading by talking around an open book. I encourage everyone to join in by discussing the story and the pictures. I ask questions and wait for answers. I expect children to express their own opinions and ask their questions. There are no concrete, tangible, reoccurring reading rituals like there are here. Washing yourself before the class,
covering your

head, holding your Qur'an and pointing to the text in a

particular way,

not talking when you are supposed to be reading, and the

gender

differences (boys chanting and girls reciting), all

emphasise respect for

reading the Qur'an and ultimately for Allah. Interestingly,
at my school,

the individual reading lessons do not have a proper name, a

label;

teachers simply talk about 'hearing readers'.

After a while the girls start testing each other to see if

ey can recite

the difficult parts by heart. This surprises me, and I

listen even more

attentively. At one point the girls disagree on one word or

sound. Auntie

hears this and gives the girls the correct answer. 'What

does it mean?' I

find myself whispering. 'We don't know. We don't understand

it. It's

Arabic,' the girls answer. I look around again, and listen.

I had known

this all along, but somehow, had forgotten it, or had not

quite accepted

the relevance of it all. Somewhere at the back of my mind –

though I

was only aware of it later on – I had simplified this kind

of reading. I

had simplified the nature of the task, the range of words,
sounds and

nuances of sound, to a meaningless mumble. And the fact
that the girls
were keen to test each other, that they took a firm point
of view when
they disagreed, surprised me, but revealed the depth of
their engagement
in their reading. And yet, within the current English
reading pedagogy,
this kind of reading, memorising, reciting, learning by
heart, is not
perceived as real reading (see Wagner’s 1993 account of
Moroccan
educational practices in which rote memorisation and
learning extends
to higher education). In our culture, and therefore, in our
pedagogical
reading hierarchy, individual reading for meaning is valued
highly, and
hence rated higher than reciting collectively for religious
purposes.

Conclusion
So, for many emergent bilingual children in my class
learning to read
involves learning to read in three different languages
(Urdu, Arabic and
English) and at home the children speak a fourth one,
Pahari. In each
reading community the children meet its own set of people,
whose roles
in those sets vary. Each community uses different resources
and
different approaches to achieve its aims. The aims are
diverse, and so
are the values attached to these aims. Each reading
community also has

a history of its own, and the reading practices derive their meanings from this history and from the different historical and cultural traditions.

Learning to read in English involves the very culture-specific ways of learning to engage with English stories, which as a process is perhaps more complicated than I had previously assumed. Marilyn Cochran-Smith's (1984) detailed and systematic observations of early literacy prompted her to question what is officially taught, what exactly the children need to learn, and how much of literacy is jointly undertaken through social interaction.

Much of our current reading pedagogy is based on an autonomous model of literacy which assumes a single model of literacy (Street, 1993), and because of this pedagogy—of which the phrase 'hearing children read' is so indicative—it is easy to be lulled into thinking that the early picture/story books are somehow relatively easy to interpret, and that children move smoothly, naturally, from story books to books with simple text and to story books with more text. This is conducive to overlooking the range of learning that has to happen before children,
like Imrul, can be assessed in the school context as 'reading with meaning'. I had certainly assumed that all this story knowledge is learnt, and must be learnt, before children learn to read, not alongside at the same time, and especially not after they have learnt to read. But interestingly, Imrul's progression in learning to read proved the opposite. As the year goes by Imrul learns to read: first he learns to read names, then simple labels and words, then he learns to decode words by using a combination of letter names and phonics, and only later on, does he learn to read pictures and stories and to understand how English story books work. Reading and understanding stories are two separate areas which I need to teach. Thus, the process of learning to read in my class includes learning the language of the text, learning to position yourself as a reader and an active participator within the school's reading events, learning to read the specific pictures and text, and crucially learning to understand (and perhaps accept?) some of the values attached to the school reading. In short, the children need to learn to belong to the school 'reading club'.
as Frank Smith (1985) explained, but as there are various different
reading clubs or communities, in which bilingual children need to learn
to belong, the whole process of joining in may be a highly complicated
social and cultural issue. Needless to say, these were also issues I had
not explicitly taught before but rather assumed that all the relevant and
required knowledge and understanding is acquired swiftly, smoothly
and almost naturally. The more specific customs, traditions and places
of Kashmir are still relatively unknown to me, but I now know their
importance to Imrul. I only need to think back to Karelia to remind
myself how important these issues are to a five year old. As the year
goes by, I begin to develop ways of modelling reading and understanding stories, ways of devising deliberate task-based strategies,
and of making appropriate knowledge explicit. Some of this English
reading knowledge and understanding can be achieved by discussing
reading with Imrul, and with all the other children in my class. The
children’s interaction around the text and stories reveals the kinds of
concerns and questions they have, but even more importantly, discussions can grow, as Paolo Freire (1972) wrote, into a
critical and
liberating dialogue between the teacher and the minority ethnic pupil.

The journey from Karelia to Kashmir seems now much shorter than before.


1 Introduction

children: A survey of research studies and literature on their educational problems and potential in Britain. Educational Research VIII, 3.


A brief description of the three largest minority ethnic groups in Britain


3 Assessment of ability and attainment


4 DES (1971) Potential and Progress in a Second Culture: A survey of the assessment of pupils from overseas. HMSO.


4 Language difficulties


2 SCOPE An Introductory English Course for Immigrant Children. Schools Council/Longman.


6 The teacher's contribution towards education for a multicultural society


PART 2 OUTCOMES


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Educational Achievement of Ethnic Minority Children in a Midlands Town John R. Roberts Summary

Results are reported from an investigation by Scarr et al (1983) into the comparative development and educational achievement of
children from ethnic minorities in a Midlands town. Differences are shown in pre-school language and stimulation, primary school literacy, and verbal and non-verbal reasoning skills, secondary school placement and examination success, and post-school outcomes. On the average, British children of parents of West Indian origins do least well, whilst British children of parents of Indian origins move through delays to sometimes overtake their majority peers. Subsequent developments in local policy and provision are outlined. The importance of evaluating interventions is underlined. In the following chapter, British children of parents of West Indian origins are designated BWI and British children of parents of Indian origins are designated BI.

Introduction

In the Midlands town where I work, unanimous, informed local opinion has expressed concern over some years that children from certain ethnic minority groups achieve less well at school compared with their peers from the majority community. These views were supported by clear, general evidence in the literature, for example, Yule et al. (1975), and more recently the ILEA Literacy Survey (1980).
and the Interim Report of the Swann Committee (Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups, 1981). Other contributions in the ‘Outcomes’ section of this book provide more recent details (Chapters 7 and 9-12). 101

The present author, working with the local Community Relations Council, planned a self-help scheme for the West Indian community. This scheme failed to obtain funding from the Home Office in 1978 and again in 1979 when it was described as ‘too small’. Despite this rejection, it was considered that the issue was far too important to be dropped. Thinking bigger eventually led the Community Relations Officer to Professor Sandra Scarr at Yale University. She subsequently visited England, had full discussions, then raised an American team, planned the project and returned to gather data in November 1980. The present author had no responsibility for the design, interpretation or writing up of that project. His role was that of sounding board, facilitator and subsequently one enactor of recommendations to the LEA. This chapter will first report a selection of Scarr’s findings, focusing on factors associated with successful education as it is widely
perceived. Data for Pakistani children are omitted, since their number were small in this particular study. Pre-School Children (0-5 Years)

Every town health visitor was interviewed and a total survey of health records conducted to identify all ethnic minority pre-schoolers. A comparison group from the majority community was formed. Standard informations about all these children were obtained. Tables 1 and 2 indicate that in the opinion of health visitors the minority households were less well equipped with play materials and were less good at offering developmentally appropriate stimulation.

The households in which BWI pupils lived were relatively the most disadvantaged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Percentages of health visitor ratings of preschool child’s physical environment</th>
<th>West Indian</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households with inadequate play materials</td>
<td>32% (22/68)*</td>
<td>16% (19/121)</td>
<td>6% (9/149)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* Numbers in brackets indicate numbers of children e.g. 22 out of a total of 68 children.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Means of health visitor ratings of family interaction for preschool child on 3-point scale</th>
<th>West Indian</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmentally appropriate stimulation</td>
<td>2.01 (68)</td>
<td>2.10 (119)</td>
<td>2.52 (149)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Percentages of items passed by preschool child on the Sheridan Developmental Screening Test for hearing/speech and language development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at testing</th>
<th>West Indian %</th>
<th>Indian %</th>
<th>Majority %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-6 months</td>
<td>95.4 (31)</td>
<td>98.2 (63)</td>
<td>95.1 (92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 months</td>
<td>93.1 (42)</td>
<td>95.5 (84)</td>
<td>95.2 (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-21 months</td>
<td>82.6 (14)</td>
<td>94.1 (31)</td>
<td>92.1 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-30 months</td>
<td>80.8 (25)</td>
<td>93.0 (38)</td>
<td>95.3 (57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 months</td>
<td>83.4 (7)</td>
<td>86.3 (21)</td>
<td>86.3 (14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. In this table only the bracketed figures are the number of observations available at each level, not the number of children in each age group.

Table 4: Mean quotients of intelligence test scores from three group tests in the primary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Type</th>
<th>West Indian I.Q.</th>
<th>Indian I.Q.</th>
<th>Majority I.Q.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young Non-Readers I.Q. (age 8)</td>
<td>98.1 (230)</td>
<td>97.9 (235)</td>
<td>106.1 (364)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moray House 12+ Verbal Reasoning I.Q. (average of two tests)</td>
<td>93.6 (253)</td>
<td>98.7 (216)</td>
<td>103.3 (361)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFER Non-Verbal D-H I.Q. (age 12)</td>
<td>97.2 (205)</td>
<td>103.9 (173)</td>
<td>106.8 (338)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 suggests that BWI youngsters developed more slowly in the areas of hearing, speech and language, as sampled by the Sheridan tests administered by doctors and health visitors. Proportionally more BWI children were referred to the Child Development Centre because
of delays in language development (British-West Indian 10.5 per cent;
British-Indian 4.1 per cent; Majority 2.7 per cent).

Primary School Children (5-12 Years)

Headteachers were interviewed and a total survey of school records
was made to identify all minority children. A comparison majority
sample was formed by randomly selecting school record cards of
children of the same age and sex attending the same school. Standard
informations were extracted from the record cards for all these
children. Table 4 indicated that majority children on the average
functioned consistently better than their minority peers in the
reasoning skills sampled. BWI children showed no measurable gains
from the age of 8 to 12, whereas BI youngsters significantly raised
their cognitive performance, especially on the non-verbal tests. Table 5 shows no disparity in reading between the ethnic groups

Table 5: Mean reading ages in years for primary schoolchildren

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>West Indian</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>6.2 (31)</td>
<td>6.5 (25)</td>
<td>6.2 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>6.7 (99)</td>
<td>7.1 (95)</td>
<td>6.9 (112)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>7.7 (187)</td>
<td>8.0 (205)</td>
<td>7.8 (273)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>8.5 (228)</td>
<td>8.7 (231)</td>
<td>8.0 (327)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>9.1 (230)</td>
<td>9.3 (213)</td>
<td>9.7 (338)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Middle (10:00 9.8 (204) 10.0 (173) 10.7 (305)
School (11:00 10.7 (181) 10.8 (133) 11.5 (293) (12:00
11.5 (136) 11.4 (98) 12.2 (177)
Table 6: Percentages of secondary school pupils placed in
grammar schools/streams,
including sixth formers
West Indian Indian Majority
2.5% 17.5% 30.1%
(7/281) (50/285) (1727/5735)
Table 7: Setting of secondary school pupils for English and
mathematics in
percentages West Indian Indian Majority
Remedial English 17% (30/176) 12% (23/188) 5% (13/239)
Remedial maths 19% (42/216) 12% (26/224) 8% (25/304)
Top stream English 20% (35/176) 36% (67/188) 34%
(81/239)
Top stream maths 19% (40/216) 37% (83/224) 33%
(99/304)
during the First school years up to the age of 8, despite
probable
differences in language and experience. From the age of 9
the majority
children pulled away consistently from their minority
peers. Secondary School Students (13-16 ( -18) Years)
Headteachers were interviewed and again a total survey of
school
records made to identify all minority students. A comparison
majority sample was randomly formed. Table 6 demonstrates
that BWI pupils rarely went to grammar
schools. The BI students fared decidedly better, but still
did poorly in
relation to their majority peers. The level or school set
in which youngsters were initially placed

is shown in table 7 and confirms the poorer academic
standing of the

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Table 8: Percentages of secondary school pupils sitting GCE
‘0’ level examinations West Indian Indian Majority

Any subject 9% (10/88) 42% (48/114) 42% (67/158)

English Language 1% (1/88) 23% (26/114) 34% (53/158)

Mathematics 7% (6/88) 37% (42/114) 27% (45/158)

Table 9: Percentages of secondary school pupils passing GCE
‘0’ level and passing well West Indian Indian Majority

English Language

grades A, B, C, 8% 32% 35%

and CSE grade 1 (7/88) (36/114) (56/158)

Mathematics 16% 49% 37%

grades A, B, C,

and CSE grade 1 (14/88) (56/114) (59/158)

English Language 1% 6% 19%

grades A and B (1/88) (7/114) (30/158)

Mathematics 2% 25% 20%

grade A and B (2/88) (28/114) (32/158)

BWI pupils. The BI students, perhaps with less developed
reading

skills, gained slightly more top stream places relative to
the majority

students. They were nonetheless over-represented in the two remedial
streams. Nearly all secondary pupils sat GCE or CSE examinations.

Tables 8 and 9 indicate the differing percentages sitting and passing the more esteemed GCE in the two most highly regarded and occupationally valued subjects of English Language and mathematics. The BWI pupils as a group did poorly, whilst the BI pupils (who left their middle schools with reading achievements parallel to the BWI pupils) competed strongly with their majority peers, indeed surpassing them in mathematics.

Post-School Outcomes

Two hundred and fifty-one young men and women were traced who had left school over the previous two years. Table 10 shows some differences between the ethnic groups. BI students used the college of further education to a considerable extent. Their BWI fellow students proved to be predominantly 105

Table 10: Disposition of young adults who had left secondary school over the previous two years in percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>West Indian</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Further Education</td>
<td>41 % (29/70) (21 women)</td>
<td>61 % (57/93)</td>
<td>14% (12/84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>4% (3/70) (All women)</td>
<td>14% (13/93)</td>
<td>8% (7/84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>20% (14/70) (13 men)</td>
<td>5% (5/93)</td>
<td>29% (24/84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled employment</td>
<td>20% (14/70) (12 men)</td>
<td>2% (2/93)</td>
<td>26% (22/84)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
female, comprising 75 per cent of the BWI women leavers traced.

Majority leavers were very unrepresented at the college. Echoing the same trend, more BI and BWI women (11 per cent of the women traced) proceeded to higher education. Majority leavers went more frequently into unemployment or unskilled employment, as did the BWI men (19 per cent and 17 per cent respectively).

Summary of the Research Results

These findings from birth to young adulthood illustrate how children from minority ethnic backgrounds lagged behind their majority peers, the discrepancy being more pronounced for the BWI pupils. BWI children showed pre-school language delays, and subsequently at the primary school level lacked reading skills, and verbal and non-verbal reasoning skills. They were placed less advantageously in their secondary schools and succeeded less well with examinations.

On leaving school, the BWI men showed little interest in continuing their education, took poor jobs or were unemployed. The BWI women by contrast seemed eager to grasp new educational opportunities. The Scarr study did not address possible causes of ethnic group differences in school achievements. It charted a cumulative deficit in the achievements of BWI pupils. BI children exhibited the same lack of literacy and reasoning.
skills in the primary school, but were rather less disadvantageously placed in secondary schools, where they redressed their educational shortcomings and acquired examination results equal to and better than their majority peers. The BI pupils consolidated these gains by seizing further educational opportunities – very few became unemployed or took poor jobs. The above findings describe the situation in the particular area.

The results present a challenge to all members of all groups in the community. Developments following from the Concern Highlighted by the Research

New initiatives positively needed to be developed locally. Much consultation and thought went into the evolution of fresh policies and provisions. A number of initiatives instigated to address the problems identified are described and commented on below.

1 Language and early stimulation seem fundamentally relevant to the educational process. Ways of increasing parenting/caring skills here had to be pursued. Three specific developments have crystallized; (i) Firstly, a Parents' Centre, known as the Northlands Project, was opened in September 1982 in premises on a First school site. It is run by a full-time teacher to provide guidance to parents, using discussion, demonstration and training, with individuals and groups at the Centre, in the homes of parents and elsewhere. Provision includes a toy library. Full liaison with other schools, nurseries, playgroups and all the relevant services, including adult education, has
been essential. Similar projects have been run in other
A second teacher was appointed in 1983 and this post is
filled on an annual basis by teachers seconded from their
schools, an arrangement which ensures the dissemination of
the work of this highly successful Centre. A Manpower
Services Commission helper works at the Centre and
voluntary help is always sought. The Centre is open to
parents of all children, since many majority families
clearly need to profit from the same style of help. (ii)
Secondly, the Social Services Department advertised the job
of Pre-school Playgroup Adviser for a social worker with
special interests in ethnic minority groups. The
appointment was made in June 1981: the quality and
quantity of specialist advice to playgroups with minority
children has thus increased. A second appointment was
made shortly after this of a Gujerati-speaking Social
Worker who is undertaking research with the Asian
community into the needs of younger children

and the mental health of women.

(iii) Thirdly, a successful bid was made for a Government
Education Support Grant for a Portage Project. The Home
Education Team was established in September 1986 to provide
home-based teaching programmes for pre-school children who
show a delay in their development due to disadvantage

or disability.

2 First schools seem to be teaching their children the
basic reading

skills successfully. This success needs to extend into
middle schools

so that development is heightened for all pupils in reading

for

comprehension, information and pleasure, and in the active

skills of communication and writing. Debate continues about

maintaining a formal, structured teaching of reading up to

the age

of 12, since it is recognized that this extension would
necessarily

displace other activities from the curriculum. There is no
consen
sus as yet about its desirability.

3 Much consideration has been given to the possibility of teaching thinking/reasoning skills to make certain that equal opportunities exist for all ethnic groups to acquire such skills. The LEA retains a 12+ selection procedure and anything which resembles ‘coaching’ for this would be highly undesirable. The LEA suggested that initiatives in this area should come from independent organizations in the community. Discussions about teaching thinking skills have been held, but have not presently led to any illuminating sources nor identified any good practices. This is not to say that such cannot be found (for example, Feuerstein et al., 1980). Knowledge about study skills is more advanced (Wolfenden and Pumfrey, 1985 and 1986) and is disseminating widely in secondary schools, but to a much lesser extent in middle schools. In-service training may be the way forward.

4 A programme to inform and counsel parents about ways of educationally motivating and assisting their children, encouraging them
to value educational goals and to work for examinations, appears essential for Secondary pupils. No efficient strategies, however, have materialized, whilst the need has become greater. The worsened employment prospects for school leavers is increasingly reported as debilitating pupil motivation to strive for examination success, particularly amongst the lower achievers. This must affect minority pupils disproportionately, since they are over-represented in the lower achievers and surveys confirm their job prospects to be worse because of racial prejudice. The provision of a quiet, purposeful, out-of-school working situation was regarded as one desirable and achievable resource for those pupils whose homes were physically difficult or too distracting for study. In September 1984 the LEA established a Homework Centre at the College of Further Education, where direct, individual assistance and guidance could be offered to self-selecting students by an appointed and by additional volunteer teachers in an appropriate educational environment. At this same Centre advice would readily be available to parents. Local headteachers totally supported this scheme, as did the leaders of the ethnic minority communities. The number of pupils attending, however, proved disappointing (averaging five with peaks of ten-twelve and troughs of one-two). Nor were the attenders ethnic minority pupils. A further considerable promotion of the Centre to headteachers, minority leaders and other significant community figures was conducted, along with newspaper advertisements. The venue was changed for three of the five evenings a week to a school sited centrally amidst the homes of the main population of minority families. There was no improvement in usage and the project was reluctantly terminated after three terms. The organizer felt that pupils needed much more direct and sustained encouragement to attend than had been achieved. Perhaps the negative socioeconomic climate also had its influence. The Community Relations Council planned an Educational Shop which was run by volunteer teachers and others at a large store in the town centre on a Saturday. Professional advice and direction was given to enquiring parents. It is intended to repeat this event from time to time.

Unemployed school leavers may need help to develop certain skills, so as to maximize job prospects, and to re-establish feelings of personal adequacy and worth. A
full-time teacher was appointed and a special programme of classes arranged by the College of Further Education in association with the Community Relations Council. The classes were aimed at ethnic minority young people of 17+ years who need tuition in literacy and numeracy to help them benefit from subsequent courses. Counselling, advice and pastoral care were also included in the programme to offset negative self-attitudes. After one year’s experience the remit of these successful classes was broadened and they are currently operating as an Education Workshop.

6 Low expectation, intentional and unintentional racism, and stereotyping by teachers are all known to contribute to poor achievement and unhappiness, which consequently diminish life opportunities for pupils from ethnic minorities. Professor Scarr was not asked to research teacher attitudes in her project, so local knowledge about this highly significant area remains uncertain. Extensive discussion about the Scarr findings were held amongst teachers, officers and advisory staff. These meetings provided a first stage in combatting any unhelpful attitudes which may exist in the education service. Following these preliminaries, a variety of courses, talks,
events and exhibitions around multi-ethnic themes have been
and
are continuing to be produced by the LEA. The following list
illustrates the range:

(a) Courses 'Beyond Rampton — whither education in a
multicultural society' [10 sessions] January-March 1982
‘Attitudes and prejudices’ [6 sessions] November-December
1983 ‘Education in and for a multicultural society’ [1
session] May 1984 ‘Community relations and patterns of
post war immigration locally’ [2 sessions] October 1984
‘Language in the multicultural classroom’ [6 sessions]
October-December 1984 Course for Section 11 teachers [4
sessions] June 1986

(b) Events Visit to Sikh Temple — March 1983 Visit to
Mosque — September 1983 Caribbean week for Middle school
children — October 1983 Caribbean week for First school
children — June 1984

(c) Exhibitions African and Asian Resource Centre
Exhibition — October 1985 Exhibition of multicultural
materials — March 1986

The above activities can all be criticized on various
grounds.

Accepting this, they represent a growing awareness of the
need to

value the cultural diversity in the area.

7 The last and really major initiative taken by the LEA was
in appointing an Adviser for Multicultural Education in
April 1985. The energetic person appointed has developed
an Intercultural Curriculum Support Service. From January
1987, this service will comprise some twenty full-time
people: 5 advisory teachers for multicultural/non-racist
education 7 team members work with them 3 home/school
liaison teachers 2 coordinators for multicultural
education (1 for primary schools and 1 for secondary
schools) 3 bilingual peripatetic teachers Half these
posts are redesignations of existing ones and half are new,
their funding coming under Section 11 of the Education
Support Grant. It can be optimistically anticipated that
this well-resourced County service can spearhead,
accelerate and consolidate developments to combat the
circumstances which generate educational disadvantage for
ethnic minority children. One complex issue that will have to be addressed is the effects of the innovations initiated (Pumfrey, 1984). Such evaluation is controversial but essential. Conclusion

Local anxieties about ethnic minority children have been factually confirmed by an authoritative study. The thoughtful analysis of the Scarr report has jolted any complacency, provoked new thinking and provided fresh impetus and resolve to tackle an important problem with priority. The findings and the responses of the LEA should stimulate some reappraisal in other authorities. As with many LEAs, concern was recognized and action implemented long before the Swann Report was published. The evaluation of the initiatives advocated to address the problem of minority ethnic group underachievement in educational is essential if effective practices are to be


In this chapter we focus on one particular minority group — black children of West Indian origin — and one particular aspect of their attainments: their progress, relative to whites, over the secondary school years. Questions of progress have been central, implicitly if not explicitly, to much of the debate in this field, and yet data that bear directly on them are still relatively limited. The great majority of studies to date have been cross-sectional in design, each individually
exploring results for different samples at different age-groups. Piecing together this cross-sectional evidence from what might be described as the first generation of British research in the field, we know that black children of West Indian origin scored less well than whites on a range of tests of attainment early in the primary school years, and continued to do so right up to the end of secondary schooling (see Tomlinson, 1983). It is widely accepted that a complex interplay of factors is likely to underlie these differences. What is less clear, however, from this patchwork of studies, is whether the gap between the groups had narrowed appreciably between 7 and 16, or widened, or remained essentially the same. To answer this question, which is of major educational and developmental significance, we need directly longitudinal evidence, tracing the same groups of pupils as they progress through the school system. Such direct evidence as is available at present is not only limited, but also somewhat inconsistent. Results from the National Child Development Study (Mackintosh and Mascie-Taylor, 1985) showed essentially similar rates of progress in black and white
children’s reading between the ages of 11 and 16. Other studies have reached less optimistic conclusions. Perhaps the most widely known are results from the Inner London Education Authority’s Literacy Survey, which charted the reading attainments of one whole age-group of London 113 children from eight to 15 (Mabey, 1981). Despite considerable losses from the original sample over the course of the study, the numbers of black children represented were still substantial ($n = 1465$). Over the seven-year period of the research, black pupils’ scores declined by comparison with whites’ by some four standardized points. There are indications in the report that much of this decline may have occurred among black children born and fully educated in the UK. The main concern, then, that forms the background to our study, is the possibility that black pupils fall further behind during their schooling, perhaps in response to low teacher expectations or other negative school experiences. Our own study provides further data on these questions, from a smaller but similarly London-based sample from the 1970s. Despite
the fact that longitudinal data give us the best basis for assessing relative progress over time, there are nevertheless a number of difficulties inherent in analyzing data of this kind. After presenting a brief overview of some of our findings (reported more fully in Maughan et al., 1985; and Maughan and Rutter, 1986), we conclude with some more general comments on the problems to be faced in any progress studies of this kind. Methods The data are drawn from a longitudinal study of one age-group of London children. The first phase took place in 1970, when the children were 10, and included all children then attending local authority primary schools in one inner London borough (n = 2281). A survey of this complete sample was complemented by a more intensive study of randomly selected sub-groups of both black and white children. The first follow-up reported here took place four years later, when the children were 14, and in their third year of secondary school. Attempts were made to trace all members of the original sample at this stage, including those who had moved out of London in the interim. A second stage of the study then
followed an overlapping sample, all still in London secondary schools, up to the time they left school. The children’s ethnic background was determined on the basis of teacher reports of the place of birth of each child and both of his/her parents. The white group were children with both parents born in the UK or Eire, or one parent in the UK or Eire and the other in the USA, Australia, New Zealand or on the European mainland. In both parts of the study, approximately three-quarters of the total samples were white (in the 10-year-old sample, \( n = 1689, 74.1 \) per cent). The largest ethnic minority group consisted of children both of whose parents had been born in the West Indies (\( n = 354, 15.5 \) per cent of the 10-year-old sample). Within this black group, almost 60 per cent of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>UK Born</th>
<th>Born abroad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>1367</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of original 10-year-old sample 80.9 88.9 77.4
the pupils \((n = 207)\) were reported as born in England, while the remainder had come to this country at some point in their childhood.

We have no more precise details of the ages at which the children arrived in the UK. The first two phases of the study involved the administration of group reading tests, of the sentence completion variety, which tapped comprehension and vocabulary skills. At age 10, the test was the NFER SRA and at 14 the NFER NS6. Both tests have standard scores ranging from 70 to 140. Table 1 shows the Ns in each sub-group of pupils with test data from both occasions, and the proportions of the original sample with full longitudinal data in each ethnic group. The losses reflect a combination of failure to trace some members of the sample at 14, and absences from the testing. The slightly higher rate of losses amongst black pupils born abroad was largely accounted for by a small number of children who had left the UK since the first stage of the study. In general, however, the follow-up rate was relatively high in all groups. Results

As a background to the analyses of progress over the early secondary
School years, Table 2 shows results from the initial testing when the children were in their fourth year at primary school. In this inner city sample, average scores for the white children were rather below national norms, and results for the black pupils followed the trends found in other research: black children born abroad had the most depressed scores, but UK born black pupils were also reading well below the levels of whites. In general, at this age, girls’ reading attainments were rather better than boys’. Progress between 10 and 14.

To explore progress over the early secondary school years, scores from both testings were transformed into standard deviation units.

Table 2: Reading scores at age 10 White Black UK born

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born abroad</td>
<td>96.72</td>
<td>94.70</td>
<td>95.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X̄</td>
<td>(13.90)</td>
<td>(15.50)</td>
<td>(14.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>(11.93)</td>
<td>(12.67)</td>
<td>(12.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>91.13</td>
<td>86.93</td>
<td>88.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X̄</td>
<td>(11.93)</td>
<td>(12.46)</td>
<td>(12.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>(9.40)</td>
<td>(11.42)</td>
<td>(10.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>83.39</td>
<td>83.00</td>
<td>83.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X̄</td>
<td>(9.40)</td>
<td>(11.42)</td>
<td>(10.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>(11.42)</td>
<td>(11.42)</td>
<td>(10.33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Transformed reading scores at 10 and 14 Reading scores Age 10 Age 14 Difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X̄</td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
<td>(0.074)</td>
<td>(0.075)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>(0.096)</td>
<td>(0.441)</td>
<td>(0.447)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-0.201</td>
<td>-0.487</td>
<td>-0.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK born</td>
<td>-0.201</td>
<td>-0.487</td>
<td>-0.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X̄</td>
<td>-0.201</td>
<td>-0.487</td>
<td>-0.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>-0.096</td>
<td>-0.441</td>
<td>-0.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born abroad</td>
<td>-0.727</td>
<td>-0.754</td>
<td>-0.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X̄</td>
<td>-0.727</td>
<td>-0.754</td>
<td>-0.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>-0.096</td>
<td>-0.441</td>
<td>-0.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>-0.077</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>-0.077</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X̄</td>
<td>-0.077</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X̄</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To explore progress over the early secondary school years, scores from both testings were transformed into standard deviation units.
from the sample mean. Table 3 shows these transformed scores at each testing, together with a simple difference measure for each sub-group of pupils. Figure 1 displays the results graphically. Focussing first on the results for the white children, it is clear that over this particular age span, the slight advantage in reading in favour of girls noted at 10 was reversed by the age of 14. This is a frequently reported trend in studies of reading attainment in early adolescence, and seemed a potentially important background consideration to bear in mind in comparing the progress of black and white pupils. Black pupils born abroad appeared to have improved their position to some extent over the period, while U.K born black girls had clearly maintained similar rates of progress to whites. The only suggestion of any relative decline in performance within the black samples appeared to be for U.K born black boys, whose progress was slightly less marked than that of white boys. Analysis of covariance is probably the most widely used technique for analyzing progress data of this kind. Taking
scores as the dependent variable, and 10-year-old scores as the covariate, we can assess how far any of the sub-groups differed in their rates of progress over the period. Initial analyses confirmed the sex effects suggested above, so the remainder of the analyses were conducted separately for boys and girls. For girls, a three group comparison contrasting white, UK born black, and black pupils born abroad showed no significant differences between subgroups in 14 year-old reading levels once 10-year-old scores had been taken into account ($F = 1.28$, df = 2,814, ns). For boys there was a trend ($F = 2.79$, df = 2,843, $P = 0.062$) for black pupils to have made slightly slower progress in reading between 10 and 14. Contrasting only UK born Black boys with whites, this trend reached statistical significance ($F = 4.03$, df = 1,792, $P < 0.05$). The adjusted mean for all Black boys was equivalent to just under two standardized points below that of whites, a small difference that would fall well within the standard error of measurement of the test. Our conclusions from these initial
analyses would thus be threefold: first, that over the particular age range studied here, it is important to take sex differences into account 117 in looking at progress in reading; second, that although black children born abroad had made some gains relative to the other two groups over the period, these promising results were not statistically sig significant; and third, that the analyses in general showed black pupils making essentially similar progress to whites. More detailed explora
tions might be needed before we could assess the importance of the trend towards slightly slower progress among U K born black boys. Social Background and School Effects With this general picture of the initial results in mind, we now go on to look at the effects of two sets of factors widely accepted as impor
tant in any discussion of minority group pupils’ school progress: so cial background variables, and possible school effects. Even within our inner city sample, we knew that the black children in our study were more likely to have faced greater social disadvantages, in areas known to be associated with attainment in white populations, than their white peers. In the total 10-year-old sample, the parents of one
fifth of the black children were in completely unskilled work, by comparison of only 13 per cent of white parents, while contrasts at the upper end of the SES spectrum were even more striking: only 4 per cent of black parents were in non-manual occupations of any kind, by comparison with 22 per cent of white (Yule et al., 1975). The intensive phase of the 10-year-old study had highlighted many other differences between the groups. To take just a few examples, the black children were more likely to come from large families, and to live in overcrowded homes with poor facilities. Their pre-school experiences also differed, many more of the black children having been minded by adults outside their own families. Set against this, however, black parents’ interest and concern for their children’s education was quite as strong as that of whites’ (Rutter et al, 1975). For the sample studied here, our social background indicators were restricted to the relatively crude measures frequently collected in large-scale surveys: parental occupation, and, as a more specific indicator of economic disadvantage, receipt of free school meals. We had intended to include these measures in the analyses, to
assess how far

our initial picture of progress in the different ethnic
groups was affec
ted by variations in these areas. It is only justifiable to
do this, h o w
ever, when the variables in question show the same
relationships with

the outcome measure in each of the sub-groups being
compared.

Inspection of our data showed this not to be the case here.
Within the

118

black groups, the associations between social indicators
and attain
ment scores were much less consistent than for the white
pupils, and

in some instances actually went in quite the opposite
direction from

expectation. Where in a white population we are normally
accus
ted to take indicators such as socioeconomic status as
reflecting a
range of educationally-related attitudes and aspirations, as
well as
material conditions, this may be a less justifiable
assumption in studies

of minority groups. The reasons do not seem hard to seek:
it is well

known that many black adults are in low paid and relatively
unskilled
jobs, often quite incommensurate with their previous work
experi
ence or qualifications. In these circumstances,
conventional indicators of social and economic status may not produce the socially meaningful groupings we have come to expect from much earlier research. This is not to argue, of course, that the social disadvantages that black children face do not contribute to their depressed performance, but instead, that somewhat more sensitive, and possibly different, indicators may be needed to reflect the processes involved. In the present study our only means of taking some account of social background differences was to repeat the analyses for children from broadly working class backgrounds in each ethnic group. When we did this, there were no significant differences in rates of progress between black and white pupils for either girls or boys. For children of broadly similar social circumstances, reading progress was quite as positive in black as in white groups. On the question of school effects two rather different questions arose. The first concerned the broad type of secondary school the pupils attended. At the time of our research, some grammar schools still remained within the ILEA, but very few of the black children in
our sample gained grammar school places (2 per cent by comparison of 13 per cent of whites). These differences in school experiences might have had some confounding effect on the initial pattern of our results. Because of the very small number of black children in grammar schools, our best means of assessing this was to repeat the analyses, excluding all grammar school pupils, and focussing on the great majority of the sample, pupils in non-selective schools. The results of these ANCOVAs were as for the initial analyses: once 10-year-old reading scores had been taken into account, there were no significant differences between the 14-year-old reading levels of black and white girls (F = 0.11, df = 1,685, ns) but the trend for slower progress amongst black boys remained (F = 3.37, df = 1,707, P = 0.07). When, however, we repeated the contrasts for working class pupils only, these group differences were eliminated.

Figure 2: Reading scores at 10 and 14 at non-selective schools: girls Our second concern under the broad heading of school effects was how far results at individual secondary schools reflected the pattern of the findings overall. It was possible, by pooling the data
across schools, that we were in fact combining together results from individual schools that each showed very different patterns, and that our overall 'average' picture of progress was not typical of results at the school level. The pupils had of course dispersed to a large number of different secondary schools over the course of the study, and there were only a few secondary schools with large enough numbers of black pupils from the original sample for us to assess this. We were, however, able to look separately at results for each of five secondary schools that had admitted at least twenty black pupils from the original sample. These were all non-selective schools: three were single sex girls schools, one a single sex boys schools, and the last a mixed school. None of these analyses, whether for boys or girls, showed any significant differences in the rates of progress of black and white children within these schools. The numbers in some analyses were of course small, but these more detailed explorations failed to reveal any differences between the groups. Figure 2 illustrates the results for girls, showing the 10 and 14-year-old transformed
scores for the three sub-groups of pupils at each school, set alongside the pattern for the total sample of girls at non-selective schools.

Although reading levels differed sharply between schools, the picture in each case was one of scores for UK born black pupils closely paralleling those of whites, and for some suggestions of more marked gains amongst the black pupils born abroad. Later Secondary School Progress

Over the early secondary school years, then, our analyses showed black and white children making essentially similar progress in reading. A second phase of the study enabled us to explore whether this picture changed in any important ways when we came on to look at public exam results. Our sample here was a linked but slightly different one, which included all pupils in the age-group who attended twelve of the non-selective schools in the immediate area of the original study (see Rutter et al., 1979). For all these pupils (n = 1768 white and 250 black), we had assessments of verbal reasoning at 11, reading test scores and attendance figures at 14, and results in all
public exams up to the time the pupils left school. We can only summarize the results briefly here. Several different features emerged. When we compared 16 year-old (fifth year) exam results for black and white pupils, the picture closely resembled that from other similar studies of this period. Black pupils were underrepresented in the highest achievement grades, and instead their results tended to group in the middle of the range (see figure 3). A second important difference between the groups, however, was that black pupils were much less likely than whites to reach compulsory school leaving age without achieving at least some graded examination results. This seemed largely to reflect their much greater participation in the exam system, at both this fifth year stage and later. Table 4 shows school-leaving dates for pupils in both groups. It is clear that black pupils were less likely to leave school early, before sitting exams, and also that girls in particular were more likely to stay on into the sixth form to continue their studies. This greater investment in schooling had been evident much earlier in their secondary school careers: black pupils’ attendance had been significantly
better than whites’ at 14 (96.3 per cent by comparison with 89.9 per cent), and
continued to be significantly higher through to the fifth year. Two questions then remained. First, if we returned to our earlier concern with progress, did the fifth year results suggest similar rates of progress for black and white groups given their earlier attainment levels? And second, how did the black pupils’ greater exam participation
Figure 3: 5th year examination results
0 No graded pass 1 CSE 4 and 5 only
2 CSE 2 and 3, O level D and E
3 1-4 O level equivalents
4 5+O level equivalents
122
Barbara Maughan and Graham Dunn
Table 4: School leaving dates Girls Boys White Black
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easter fifth year</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer fifth year</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First year sixth</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year sixth</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1004</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: Fifth year exam attainments: candidates only Mean examination score Girls Boys White Black White Black
| VR band 1     | 23.33 | 24.03 | 21.54 | 22.00 |
VR band 2 15.46 15.33 13.45 10.58
VR band 3 6.73 11.16 6.73 5.29
All pupils: 15.04 13.47 13.21 8.41

Our first question was whether the VR scores affect the picture overall? On the first question, we assessed fifth year exam results (using a weighted scoring system to produce a continuous measure) against the background of 11-year-old VR scores and 14-year-old reading test results. Table 5 shows average exam scores for black and white exam candidates, broken down according to three broad VR bands at age 11. It is clear that there were only minor and inconsistent differences between groups. More detailed analyses against the background of 14-year-old scores showed significant sex differences, ($F = 41.59, df = 1,1465, P < .001$), but no differences between ethnic groups ($F = 1.21, df = 1,1465, n.s.$). For any given level of earlier attainment, black and white exam candidates achieved essentially similar results. This picture was the same at the sixth form level: black and white pupils entering the sixth form with comparable results made similar rates of further progress. But we have already seen that black pupils, and especially black girls, were much more likely to stay on at school to take
further exams
and improve their earlier grades. If we focus on the total
sample,
rather than just those pupils who were exam candidates at
any particular stage, we find that this greater persistence of the
black groups
resulted in some convergence in results for the two groups
by the time of school-leaving, with the black pupils attaining
rather better
final exam scores than would have been predicted on the
basis of their
earlier attainments. This is most clearly illustrated by
comparing the
final school-leaving results of pupils in each ethnic group
(figure 4).
Assessing these final leaving results against the
background of the
pupils’ earlier attainments, black pupils had achieved
rather higher
exam scores than whites, while the earlier pattern of sex
differences
remained. We should reiterate here that this sample was all
drawn
from non-selective schools. This had the advantage that we
were
comparing pupils with generally similar school and
curriculum opportunities,
rather than, as often happens, contrasting ethnic group results
for pupils whose school experiences have varied widely. By
omitting
grammar school pupils, most of whom were white, we have of course focused on a restricted sample; comparisons with a more fully representative white group would almost certainly have shown the black pupils at a greater disadvantage. It is equally important to recall, however, that these black pupils were assessed as attaining much less well on average when they entered secondary school than white children in the same schools. Their relative 'success' by the time of leaving school owed much to their greater involvement and persistence in secondary education throughout. Some Statistical Problems

We conclude with some more general comments on the statistical problems encountered in a study of this kind. Anyone who has ever seriously attempted to analyze the results of a longitudinal survey such as this will be aware of the many pitfalls to be faced in interpreting the data. As we noted earlier, longitudinal data provide ably the best basis for contrasting the progress of 'intact' groups of pupils, but they nevertheless raise a series of issues that require careful attention before conclusions can be drawn. However thoroughly one
looks at the data, however careful one is to avoid making unjustified claims, there is always the possibility that the conclusions reached after the analysis reflect statistical artefacts created by inadvertant bias.

Such biases can arise in the initial selection of subjects, and in a longitudinal or follow-up study by differential drop-out rates. In a study such as our own, for example, the different populations may have differed in their rates of emigration from the study area in the follow-up period, making it more difficult for us to trace members of some groups rather than others. There will also be different rates of non-attendance from school among older pupils, again introducing possibilities of bias into the outcome results. The various sub-groups being studied will inevitably differ on a range of characteristics, likely to be

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Figure 4: Fifth year and final examination attainments

(a) White girls Fifth year results Final results (b) Black girls Fifth year results Final results
(c) White boys Fifth year results Final results (d) Black boys Fifth year results Final results

Key: 0 = No graded pass 1=CSE4 or 5 2 =CSE 2 or 3’0’ level D or E 3 = 1 + ‘O’ level equivalents 4 = 5+ ‘O’ level equivalents 5 = 1 + ‘A’ levels. 125
related to outcome, that we are unable to represent fully in the analyses. Aspects of social disadvantage were the most obvious examples in the present study. How can one cope with these threats to the validity of the statistical conclusions? All we can do is try to identify all possible sources of bias, and then see if the results are stable when allowance is made for them in the statistical analyses. In the present study, our initial sample — of all children in the age group in local authority schools — should be as fully representative of black and white inner London pupils at this period as possible, and the follow-up rates in all groups were high. It is difficult to know how far the results would be generalizable to other areas or more recent periods (and indeed there is encouraging evidence that West Indian pupils’ exam results have improved somewhat in recent years). Within the confines of our sample, however, we feel confident that none of these initial types of problems should pose major threats to the validity of the conclusions. A second source of artefact, particularly in the study of a developmental process such as reading ability during schooling, is the lack
of independence of the observations. Pupils in 'good' 
schools will be 
taught well, usually in groups, and they will make good 
progress.

Pupils in poor schools will make slower progress. If we 
fail to take 
this into account, we may attribute aspects of the findings 
to group 
differences when they more properly reflect school effects. One way 
round this problem is to introduce a blocking or 
stratifying factor in 
an analysis of variance/covariance, to allow for school 
membership.

Ideally, the analysis might be carried out using some sort 
of random 
effects model (as opposed to fixed-effects). Alternatively, one can look 
at the performance of children within individual schools. The latter 
approach was adopted here. Finally, in any study of 
behaviour such as reading performance,

there is the problem of measurement error. Tests of reading 
ability 
are nowhere near perfect. In an attempt to control for 
selection biases, 
we looked at differences in reading ability at 14 after 
allowing for 
measured ability at 10 in the analyses of covariance. That 
is, our 
analyses were conditional on observed differences at the 
first assess 
ment. Although this approach is more satisfactory than the
analysis of simple improvement scores, it suffers from the disadvantage that it involves the assumption that the covariate (that is, performance at age 10) is measured without error. Clearly this is not true. A second difficulty is the existence of a floor score of 70 and a ceiling of 140 on the tests. We have attempted to get round some of these problems through the use of linear-logistic models (see Maughan, Dunn and Rutter, 1985). This more conservative approach to the analyses, which allows us to look at progress at particular points in the range, showed no differences between black and white groups in improvements from poor to average reading levels, or from average to good, for either girls or boys. We could also have introduced a correction for test reliability in the interpretation of the analyses of covariance (see, for example, Cochran, 1983; or Plewis, 1986). For the present data sets, the use of more realistic statistical models diminished, or even eliminated, any observed group differences in rates of improvement. So, what can we conclude from our analyses?
First, there are several sources of artefact in the data, as there will be in any data of this type. Second, if we attempt to allow for sources of trouble then such group differences as we identified initially get smaller, or even disappear altogether. Outcome differences are considerably diminished if one does an analysis conditional on scores at the first assessment of reading ability. Much of the difference between UK born blacks and whites at both first and follow-up assessments is reduced if one allows for school membership rather than looking at pooled data. Group differences are further diminished if we acknowledge the poor reliability of the measures. The message is simple. The more one thinks about the data, the more realistic the statistical analyses become. If one merely carries out a crude analysis of pooled data using unrealistic assumptions about their quality, then one is asking for trouble. In the present case, having thought carefully about the quality of our own data, we feel justified in concluding that, conditional on performance at the end of primary school, reading ability at
14 has nothing to do with ethnicity in the groups studied here. We found no evidence that black children were progressively falling behind their white peers during the early years of secondary school; and from evidence provided by their subsequent examination results, there are clear indications that they are able, by persistence in education, to make up to some extent for their earlier educational COCHRAN, W.E. (1983) Planning and Analysis of Observational Studies, New York, John Wiley.


RUTTER, M., YULE, B., MORTON, J. and BAGLEY, C. (1975) ‘Children of
This chapter relates to a project undertaken with a group of over 5000 secondary school pupils in the north west of England. The project involved measures of attainment, attitude and aspiration of which only the results relating to attainment are given here. The group of pupils involved ranged in age from 12 to 16 at the time of the field work, being then in the first, third or fourth year of their secondary education. The attainment measures, however, relate in every case to their results on standardized tests taken during the second term of their first year at secondary school. The young people attended ten different comprehensive schools in a northern city and each year group represented just over 20 per cent of the whole year cohort attending maintained secondary schools within the city. The ten schools were purposely chosen to
include both single sex and co-educational establishments and also to include as high a proportion as possible of the ethnic minority pupils at secondary school in the area. For this latter reason no voluntary aided schools nor schools sited in the more affluent suburbs of the city were included in the project. The current research was instigated as a result of earlier work with pupils of West Indian origin which had concluded that, although such pupils were more committed to school than their white colleagues, they tended to be over-represented in the lower bands or streams of their secondary schools (Dawson, 1978a and 1978b). This conclusion raised the question of educational attainment by pupils of West Indian origin and, when it was found that no local data existed concerning such attainment, at any level of schooling, the local education authority agreed to support an investigatory survey. The authority agreed to make available the results of standardized tests of reading, mathematics and non-verbal reasoning undertaken by all pupils in the city during their second term at secondary school. It was hoped that it would then be possible to devise a suitable method.
of classifying the pupils on the basis of their ethnicity and that this would then allow analysis of the 12+ attainment data in order to check the levels of attainment of not only pupils of West Indian origin but also those from Asian backgrounds relative to their white English peers. A growing concern over the past decade about the level of educational attainment of school pupils from minority groups has led to research work, much of which was reported by Taylor (1981). This had indicated that differences in attainment seem to be related to differences in ethnicity and home background. A review of this research gave rise to the basic structure of the project, which was seen as an exploratory one designed to acquire further knowledge in a field which appeared at the time to be somewhat lacking in factual evidence. The Research Model

The model used for the project, which involved measures of attitude and aspiration as well as attainment, is shown in figure 1. The central area covered by the research model is that of attainment. Attainment was chosen specifically, rather than the more inclusive ‘achievement’, as it was considered practicable, with a large sample, to
use

standardized attainment measures rather than to develop measures for

a much wider range of factors, some more easily assessable than

others, such as those recently suggested by Gardner (1984). There has been extensive debate about the relative importance of

internal and external factors on attainment, not least in

so-called ‘intelligence’ testing and it has proved, to date, impossible to
disentangle the inter-relationship of what have been termed ‘heredity’

and ‘environment’. Within the research model it is seen as inevitable

that a whole range of factors, including internal genetically controlled

individual characteristics, external influences from school and society,

and individual environmental factors resulting from ascribed characteristics, will effect the level of attainment of school children at

the age of 12. In order to search for any statistically and educationally significa
tant differences in test scores between groups divided on the basis of

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Figure 1: Research model

background and ethnicity, it was first necessary to produce suitable
definitions and measures of these groupings. Ethnicity
Within the society which is the multicultural Britain of the 1980s there are substantial numbers of ethnic minority group children in the educational system at both primary and secondary level. Some of these children, those whose skin colour is other than white, have what could be termed a ‘high visibility index’ and there has, consequently, been a danger that they might be grouped together as ‘coloured’ or ‘immigrant’ as different from the ‘white indigenous’ majority of the population. Davey (1983) notes in his recent research study that racial and ethnic distinctions are widely used by primary school children in the process of adapting to a multi-ethnic society and that, by the age of 7 or 8, children have not only learned the standard classification system but also what attitudes should be adopted towards people classified in a particular way. Children use classifications to simplify and make sense of the world in which they are growing up and they find their classificatory norms in the external, collective beliefs, stereotypes and prejudices of the world in which they grow up. Differences in ethnicity are a basic fact of human existence, resulting from, at the least, 50,000 years of evolutionary
change where

groups living in relative isolation in geographically and climatically different areas have evolved adaptive physical characteristics to best suit their particular circumstances. This adaptive variation has given rise to human beings with demonstrably different colours of skin,

texture of hair and facial structure, which in turn have led to various definitions of race. Geographical isolation has also given rise to groups who developed their own distinctive cultural norms, customs and religious beliefs. Physical and cultural differences combine to give overall differences in ethnicity so that, for example, on the Indian subcontinent there are major ethnic differences between various subgroups. Such differences, however, are largely religious and cultural and so, to people with a different physical appearance, such as those from a northern European Celtic or Nordic group, the similarities in physical appearance of the two 'Asian' groups generally outweigh any differences in culture. There is considerable semantic confusion between the terms 'race' and 'ethnicity', not least because physical appearance is a more
obvious visible difference than is cultural background. Over a decade ago Allen (1971) wrote that the gap between scientific attempts at precise classification and everyday usage is wide when race is used in reference not only to biologically transmissable qualities but also to differences that are social in character. The confusion of religious, national and linguistic groups is scientifically incorrect.

This gap is still present and has become in some senses wider as the term ‘race’ has, in certain circumstances, begun to be seen as value judgmental, as indeed actually perjorative, and as, consequently, the term ‘ethnicity’ has begun to replace it in popular usage. Within the project described here it was originally intended to use ethnicity, in its narrower sense, to describe a discreet group of people differentiated from other human groups by both physical and cultural factors. Awareness of the reality of the contemporary situation in Britain, however, led to a definition which, whilst using cultural background, language and religious belief as criteria, also acknowledged the overriding importance of physical appearance in the categorization of individuals by others. Baughman (1971) noted that, for black Americans, it was social experience rather than biological difference which determined whether a person was considered to be ‘black’ or ‘white’ and that social
definitions depended almost completely upon skin colour. The importance of skin colour and its link with social acceptance is also brought out by Davey’s research (1983). In Britain children with a black skin, tightly curled hair and ‘negroid’ facial features are generally categorized by white skinned Britons as either ‘Black’ or ‘West Indian’. Similarly those with brown skins, straight black hair and ‘aryan’ facial construction are generally termed ‘Asian’, ‘Pakistani’ or, more perjoratively, ‘immigrant’. As a corollary to such gross classification, individuals with a white skin are generally labelled and treated as ‘British’ unless on closer acquaintance accent indicates that they are, for example, of Irish or Polish origin. In Britain as a whole the current estimate of the ‘black’ population, mainly people of Asian or Afro-Caribbean ethnic origin, is around 3.5 per cent of the total population. About half of the present adult population of Asians and West Indians had settled in Britain before 1962 when, for the first time, entry was restricted by the Commonwealth Immigrants Act. It is estimated that by 1976 approximately 40 per cent of the total black population had been born.
in Britain (Davey, 1983). Since most of the immigrants to
Britain from
the so-called 'New Commonwealth' were young people, it
is to be
expected that the proportion of children born in Britain to
members of
these ethnic minority groups will have increased since that
time. The
'black' children involved in the present work, being 12, 14
and 15 years
old in 1981 will be expected, at the least, to have spent
their school
years in Britain and are likely to include a majority of
British born
adolescents. It was considered inappropriate to describe
the white majority

group of pupils involved in the research as 'British' and so, to
differentiate them from the British pupils of Asian or
Afro-Caribbean
origin, they are classified as of 'European' origin. This
classification
allowed the inclusion of white children from other areas of
Europe,
albeit few in number, who it was felt would, on physical
criteria, be
generally seen as 'white' and hence, in general parlance
'British'. The
three classificatory groups used in the work were
reflective of the way
in which pupils would be viewed and, hence, treated by the
general
population rather than of the specific cultural, linguistic
and religious
background of each child. When the project was initiated the prevailing ‘climate’, both
politically and educationally, was such that it was seen as unwise to involve school staff in classifying pupils in any way relating to ethnic origin. It was also seen as inadvisable to include within the project questionnaire any direct question on ethnic group membership, or place of birth. This meant that a method had to be devised to ascertain ethnic group membership which was acceptable to pupils, teachers, LEA staff and ethnic minority group leaders, and which would also differentiate accurately between groups. Considerable discussion followed with ethnic minority leaders, staff involved in ‘multicultural education’, and minority group adolescents. As a result of this discussion it was decided to structure a group of questions which, when taken together, would give an accurate indication of the ethnic group membership, as perceived by the pupils themselves, of each adolescent involved in the project. Each pupil was required to indicate whether s/he felt that they belonged to a country other than England, belonged to a special
group, used a home language other than English and/or had a particular religious affiliation. The answers given to these questions were checked with each pupil’s report of physical appearance, particularly skin, hair and eye colouring, and then with the individual’s name before each pupil was grouped as African, Asian, Caribbean, Chinese, European or Black British. When the project questionnaires were coded and analyzed it was found impossible to classify ninety-three pupils (1.8 per cent of the group) on these criteria, largely because their answers to the various questions proved incompatible with each other. The European background pupils formed 72.6 per cent of the whole sample whilst African and Far Eastern groups accounted for only 0.5 per cent and 0.8 per cent respectively. Of the pupils from Asian and Caribbean backgrounds it is of interest to note that a higher proportion of the Caribbean background pupils saw themselves as ‘Black British’ than did those of an Asian background. The pupils with a Far Eastern background and those whose ethnic background could not be assessed accurately were not included in the main analysis. With these two groups excluded, it was found that the groups
describing themselves as ‘Black British’ rather than ‘Asian’ or ‘Caribbean’ responded no differently to the attitudinal and aspirational sections of the project than their peers who saw themselves, for example, as ‘Pakistani’ or ‘Jamaican’. Hence five of the remaining groups were combined to give ‘Asian’ and ‘Afro-Caribbean’ classifications which, with the ‘European’ group provided the major ethnic subdivisions for the research. Thus much of the data analysis was concerned with a group of 5082 pupils, from three school year groups, with 72.6 per cent having a European cultural background, 12.5 per cent an Afro-Caribbean one and 12.2 per cent an Asian one. Within the year groups the proportion of pupils from non-European backgrounds rose slightly from fourth year to first and the proportions of the two minority ethnic groups also changed, with a growing number of pupils from Asian backgrounds and a decreasing number from Afro-Caribbean ones. Within this latter pattern, however, the third year group included the highest number of Afro-Caribbean pupils (14.4 per cent).
It was also felt that the characteristic of ‘family background’ should be obtained by combining the answers to a number of specific questions rather than simply relating this to the socioeconomic class of the father. A number of authors had already indicated that a much wider range of influences could affect pupils’ attitudes and achievements (Wiseman, 1964; Sumner and Warburton, 1972; Batten 1974). Additionally, it seemed likely that a considerable number of pupils in the sample would come from homes where the mother was the main wage earner, where both parents were unemployed, or indeed from ‘one-parent’ families where to base a background measure solely on father’s occupation could be both hurtful and misleading. A composite ‘background’ variable was, therefore, designed using the reports given by each pupil of family size, number of siblings still at home and/or school, educational background of both parents and siblings and occupation (where applicable) of both father and mother. The composite measure was then sub-divided into three levels which were named ‘advantaged’, ‘average’ and ‘disadvantaged’. In the context of the sample, a pupil of average background might be
described as from an urban working class family, with one or both parents in semi- or unskilled jobs, and having one or two siblings,

who might possibly be involved in further education at a local college. An ‘advantaged’ pupil, by the same measure, would have at least one parent in a higher clerical or professional occupation, one or two siblings, and either or both parents and siblings with experience of higher education, possibly at university level. A pupil with a relatively disadvantaged background would have either one parent working in an unskilled job or both parents unemployed and would be likely to belong to a larger than average family and to have no one in the family either studying or having studied in further or higher education. The responses to questions relating to family background are given, in simple percentage terms, in table 1. As the figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number the total for each group is not always exactly 100 per cent. In this context table 1 indicates that the pupils of Asian background are relatively more disadvantaged than their peers from either Afro-Caribbean or European backgrounds. Whilst just over half of
each ethnic group might be described as of average working class
background, over a third of the Asian pupils are relatively
disadvantaged, compared with less than a quarter of those from
the other
two groups. The Afro-Caribbean pupils, in turn, appear to be very
slightly disadvantaged relative to the European ones. It may seem unusual that the Afro-Caribbean pupils are no more
disadvantaged than their European peers but this could well be
explained by the research concentrating on an inner urban area where
the relative level of deprivation of all inhabitants is quite high. Here
ethnic minority pupils are being compared not with the whole of the
white population of Britain but only with those remaining in the less
‘attractive’ inner city area. The fact that the Asian pupils are relatively much more
disadvantaged could be due to a number of factors, including the
tendency for families to be larger and for a higher proportion of
parents to be unemployed and this despite the fact that a higher
proportion have been involved in study at a university or polytechnic
than is the case for Afro-Caribbean or European parents. There is an overall trend for the proportion of relatively
advantaged pupils to increase slightly from first to fourth year at
the expense of both of the other background groups. In that the
composite variable uses as one of its factors a measure of family
dependency this might, to an extent, be expected since, as the pupils
themselves become older they are more likely to have older brothers
or sisters in employment, or at college, and both parents are also more
likely to be working outside the home. The only exception to this
trend appears with the Afro-Caribbean pupils where the third year
group includes slightly higher proportions of average and disadvantaged groups than might be expected.

Table 1: HOME BACKGROUND: an overall profile of the sample by ethnic group.

Measure Whole sample n = 4,959 (%) Asian n = 633 (%) Afro-Caribbean n = 654 (%) European n = 3,785 (%)

FAMILY SIZE
One child 5 1 3 6
Two or three children 47 23 24 54
Four or more children 48 76 73 40

FAMILY DEPENDENCY
All children in education 56 63 39 59
At least one child working 31 16 30 32
At least one child unemployed 14 21 31 10
### Educational Background

At least one family member attended university/polytechnic 10 14 8 10

At least one family member attended college of FE 36 37 57 33

Involved in FE or HE

Parents 14 14 14 14

Siblings 32 37 51 29

### Father’s Occupation

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional/technical</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical/service</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled manual</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi- &amp; unskilled manual</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Mother’s Occupation

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional/technical</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical/service</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled manual</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi- &amp; unskilled manual</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in paid employment</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Overall Measure of Home Background

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advantaged</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The differences in overall home
background can, to an extent, be explained by the differences found in the various components of the variable. Whilst ordinal position (not shown in table) is not in itself used to help determine overall background, it indicates certain differences between the ethnic groups. A considerably lower proportion of the Afro-Caribbean pupils, for example, are the eldest children in their family than is the case for either Asian or European groups and, as a corollary, a larger proportion have two or more older siblings.

There is thus a tendency in the sample for the Afro-Caribbean pupils to come from families of relatively older children and this is likely to affect their overall background. Family size adds to the information that pupils of both Asian and Afro-Caribbean background are much more likely to belong to families with four or more children than are those of European background. This also confirms, however, the difference between the European families involved in this project and those of the population as a whole as almost 40 per cent of the sample families have four or more children. Differences
between the sexes and the year groups are very slight on this measure. Family dependency is essentially a measure of the economic involvement of siblings within the families to which the pupils belong. Overall about half of the pupils are from families where all children are under 16 years of age, almost one-third have an older sibling in employment whilst almost 14 per cent have an older sibling who has left school but who is out of work. There are some differences between year groups, with the proportion of families with children all of school age or younger decreasing from first to fourth year, as might be expected, whilst the proportion with at least one child working increases at a similar rate. At the same time the proportions with experience of an older sibling being out of work increase noticeably, more than doubling from first year to fourth and providing some indication of the growing problem of youth unemployment. There seems to be no obvious explanation for the finding that first year pupils are three times as likely to have an older sibling at college than are pupils from either the third or fourth year. As with the measures already discussed, there are considerable differences between the ethnic groups. The Afro-Caribbean families
show by far the highest proportion (31 per cent) of youth
unemployment. The Asian families also suffer this to a
greater extent
(21 per cent) than the European ones (10 per cent). The
Asian pupils
have fewer older siblings in employment than do the other
two
groups and this, in part, confirms the impression that the
Asian
children come, on the whole, from younger families,
although the
proportion with all children of school age is very similar
to that of the
European group. The Afro-Caribbean pupils, conversely, have
the
lowest proportion of wholly school-age families and this
again
confirms the picture given by earlier measures of their
being generally
the younger children of the family. Perhaps the most
disturbing information in this table is that
confirming the high incidence of youth unemployment
reported in
ethnic minority families.
138 Both Asian and Afro-Caribbean families are more likely
to have
unemployed siblings than is the case with European families
and,
additionally, in Afro-Caribbean households the mother is
much more
likely to be the only person in employment than is the case
with the
other two groups. As might be expected from religious and cultural differences between the groups, it is unusual for Asian mothers to be in paid employment and hence also relatively unusual for both parents to be employed. Consequently Asian fathers are three times as likely to be the only family member in paid employment than is the case with either European or Afro-Caribbean groups. There are only minor differences between the year groups or the sexes in terms of family economic involvement, with fourth years generally being the most likely to have siblings already at work and consequently the least likely to have only one or both parents working. Two sections of the table give further details of family socioeconomic background through the actual occupations of both father and mother. The problem of unemployment is again highlighted, both overall in the area and, particularly, for the ethnic minority groups. Almost one quarter of the families in the sample have father out of work, rising to almost 36 per cent for the Afro-Caribbean families and 31 per cent for the Asian families. These figures will almost certainly be slightly higher than those prevailing in reality.
because of including more than one child from some families in the research but they are unlikely to be so distorted as to give a false picture of the relative levels of unemployment. The Afro-Caribbean fathers are noticeably underrepresented in the professional and technical occupational classes; Asian fathers, conversely, are well represented in this area and this may well reflect the number of Asian families involved in running their own small businesses. Asian men are relatively under-represented in all other occupational categories, having the lowest proportions of the three groups in either clerical or manual occupations. In these latter occupational classes the proportions of Afro-Caribbean men come between those of Asian and European backgrounds in each case. There are few noticeable differences between the year groups in terms of father’s occupation other than that first year pupils are more likely to have fathers in manual occupations or out of work than are older pupils. Overall some 3 per cent of the pupils reported that they did not know their father’s occupation, a figure which rose to 5 per cent for 139 the Afro-Caribbean pupils. Pupils were less likely (1 per cent) to have
doubts about their mother’s occupation. Overall almost 40 per cent
of the mothers were full time housewives and, of the rest, the
majority were either in semi or unskilled jobs or involved in clerical
or service work. Only 9 per cent were in skilled manual occupations,
contrasted with 26 per cent for men in the sample, and 9 per cent in
professional or technical ones, 12 per cent for the men. These figures
would appear to reflect the general differences between male and
female occupations fairly accurately. There are few differences between the year groups. The
percentage of full time housewives falls from first to third year but
rises again in the fourth year group; the percentage of semi or
unskilled workers is lowest in the fourth year group whilst those in
the professional, technical and skilled manual categories rise with this
group. The most marked differences occur between the three ethnic
groups. The Afro-Caribbean group has by far the largest percentage
in professional and technical occupations, reflecting the number of
Afro-Caribbean women employed in the nursing and paramedical
fields; this group also includes the highest percentage of mothers with
skilled manual jobs. The European group has the highest percentage of mothers employed in clerical, service and semi or unskilled manual jobs. Finally, as might be expected, the Asian group has by far the highest percentage of the three groups with mothers in the role of full time housewife and the lowest percentage in each of the other occupational divisions. The final factor used to define the composite home background variable is that of the educational background of the pupil’s family, and is based upon the attendance of any member of the immediate family at either college of further education, polytechnic or university.

More than a third of the whole sample reported that at least one member of the family had studied at a further education college, undertaking a vocationally based course in preparation for work. The percentage reporting this rose steadily from first to fourth year, as might be expected with membership of an increasingly mature family group; there was very little difference between the responses of the sexes whilst the Afro-Caribbean group reported the highest percentage attendance at college amongst the ethnic groups. Attendance by a family member at polytechnic or university
was reported by almost 10 per cent of the sample, a proportion which varied very little between the year groups or the sexes but which showed notable variation between ethnic groups, with the Asian pupils reporting the highest and the Afro-Caribbean group the lowest percentage attendance. A small proportion (6 per cent) of each group, divided by year, sex or ethnicity, reported that both parents had studied at college, polytechnic or university but, otherwise, fathers were more likely to have been involved than mothers. In every case more than 45 per cent of the pupils who reported any family involvement in post-school education stated that siblings had been the ones to attend. Between the various groupings there was, again, an increasing percentage involvement from first to fourth year, a virtually equal percentage of boys and girls, and noticeably high proportions of Asian and Afro Caribbean pupils reporting sibling involvement in further or higher education. At the same time the Afro-Caribbean group reported the lowest percentage of parental involvement in higher
education of any kind. The responses relating to these different areas of home background were then weighted and combined to give the overall measure shown at the bottom of Table 1. Although this table does not divide the pupils by year group or by sex it was, in fact, found that there was a slight, but noticeable, change in the proportions of relatively advantaged, average and disadvantaged family backgrounds for pupils from first to fourth year, as the pupils and their siblings become older, as mothers return to work, as siblings become involved in higher education or employment the proportion of relatively advantaged pupils increases and that of those who are relatively disadvantaged decreases. There were very slight differences on the measure for boys and girls, with girls somewhat more disadvantaged than boys. When the ethnic groups are compared, the Asian group is shown to be relatively much more disadvantaged than the other two groups. It would seem likely that this fact might be due in part to the occurrence of predominantly larger and younger families, in part to
the cultural norms which discourage most Asian women from taking work outside the home and in part to the relatively high rate of unemployment amongst Asian fathers. Some of these factors would, however, be counter-balanced by the relatively high level of involvement of Asian parents in higher education. Without this latter factor it is likely that the Asian group would have appeared even more disadvantaged relative to the other ethnic groups. By contrast the Afro-Caribbean group, although slightly more disadvantaged than their European peers, are much less so than the Asian pupils. This may be explained, in part, by the greater proportion of pupils who were the youngest children in a family, thus being likely to have older siblings in further education or employment, and in part by the high percentage of Afro-Caribbean mothers in nursing or skilled manual occupations. These relative advantages would, however, be counterbalanced by the high level of unemployment amongst Afro-Caribbean fathers and young people as well as by the relatively low status of most fathers’ occupations or educational backgrounds. The members of the majority, European, group may also be seen
to be relatively disadvantaged when compared with a whole city sample as most had larger than average families and suffered from higher than average levels of unemployment. It has to be borne in mind, when considering any effects resulting from differences in home background, that an ‘average’ classification within this project is used to describe what might be termed an urban working class family of two or three children with the pupil’s parents and/or siblings in clerical or manual occupations and, perhaps, some family involvement in vocational training at a college of further education.

Measures of Ability and Attainment

The policy of the local education authority has been to organize the standardized administration of tests of reading, mathematics and non-verbal reasoning to all pupils in maintained schools at the ages of 7+, 10+ and 12+. Tests of reading and mathematics are generally accepted as valid indicators of in-school attainments, as measures of the concepts and skills which depend upon direct instruction and on the child’s interest and industriousness in the particular subject tested. The tests used by the LEA are provided by NFER and were administered to all
pupils in the survey during the second term of their secondary education. Tests of verbal or non-verbal reasoning, sometimes known as ‘intelligence’ or ‘IQ’ tests, are essentially designed as measures of ability, as a basis from which to assess a child’s potential for school based learning. There has been considerable debate in recent years over the value of such tests, particularly in relation to children from minority ethnic groups. The question has been raised as to whether these tests actually measure potential or performance, whether they reflect innate ability or rather a combination of this with experience, thus being dependent on prior learning and hence on the opportunity for such learning.

142 Studies of verbal reasoning tests in particular have produced the possible conclusion that ‘verbal IQ’ as such may not be a very useful measure, particularly for children of West Indian origin. The scaling of verbal IQ tests is seen as maximizing the difference between individuals rather than concentrating on the cognitive skills shared by all individuals. Most workers find fewer problems with measures of
non-verbal reasoning although it seems probable that the generally
lower scores obtained by children of West Indian origin on these tests
are far more likely to arise from cultural differences, language
handicap or even emotional difficulties than to be indicators of an
innately low potential ability. In discussing measures of ability and attainment Taylor (1981)
emphasizes the difficulties of finding appropriate and meaningful
methods of assessment in a multicultural context. She also discusses
the view initiated by Jensen that black children are genetically of lower
intelligence than white and states that he appears to have reached ‘premature conclusions on inadequate evidence’ (p. 49). She notes
that, whilst there may be a genetic component to IQ differences, it is
certain that environmental factors account for some of the differences
found between groups. Taylor’s argument here points up the dangers inherent in any
comparison of group means with present tests of ability. It is perhaps
appropriate to note that, although relatively small scale work is being
undertaken to develop culture fair testing methods, following the
work of Haynes (1971) and Hegarty and Lucas (1978), older ability
tests designed for middle class white children continue to
be used in

schools. Whilst such tests are still in use it would seem better to view

them as indicators of ‘readiness for education’ than as measures of

innate ability or ‘intelligence’. Such readiness for education would not

depend upon the concepts and skills specifically taught in schools but

upon those internalized by children as they develop through infancy

and childhood and would thus, of necessity, be dependent upon

cultural and socioeconomic background. Thus, for example, the studies noted by Taylor relating to non-verbal reasoning tests, which are often referred to, somewhat loosely, as ‘intelligence tests’, and which all indicate a significantly lower mean score for children from ethnic minority groups than that obtained by indigenous white children might be seen as indicating simply a lack of

preparedness for English education on the part of the non-white children. When considering measures of attainment, that is those relating to the concepts and skills which depend upon teaching and upon the child’s own interest and industriousness, Taylor notes that the common tools here are standardized tests of known reliability and
validity. Again, most of the tests in use at present, including those concerned with reading skills and mathematics utilized in the present work, were designed and standardized for a population of indigenous white pupils and, moreover, for pupils from middle class rather than working class backgrounds. Taylor notes that it is only recently that attention has been paid to the role of language for West Indian background pupils. Whilst most LEAs have rapidly implemented programmes in English as a Second Language (ESL) for pupils from Asian backgrounds there has been some reluctance to acknowledge the differences in syntax, pronunciation and general grammatical structure between West Indian Creole and ‘standard’ English and hence to extend some variant of the ESL programme to include pupils of West Indian origin. It must, however, also be noted at this point that such reluctance is not wholly on the side of the educationalists for, since the speaking of standard English has been taken as an indicator of high social status in the Caribbean, many older West Indians find it difficult to accept that their children have difficulties with standard English. The projects reported by Taylor which have used group
administered reading tests similar to those in the present work all show pupils of West Indian origin performing less well than their white peers and, where these were included in the research, less well than their Asian background peers too. Even when allowances are made for home circumstances, the West Indian background pupil scores are still lower than the others. Taylor reports that there is little information concerning mathematics attainment but that the larger scale studies (Little, 1968–75; BPPA 1978; Essen and Ghodsian, 1979) indicate that pupils of West Indian origin perform poorly when compared with their Asian background and white peers. The work of Essen and Ghodsian in particular is similar to that of the present study. They report that, on NFER maths tests, the West Indian background pupils had lower scores than their white counterparts even when background was controlled. The reasons for the low scores of ethnic minority pupils seem to be so complexly interwoven that they prove difficult to classify although it seems possible that differences in cultural background and language, together with the socioeconomic deprivation common to...
most ethnic minority groups contribute to a large extent to the basic ‘underpreparedness’ of minority children for English education.

Furthermore the few research findings already published would seem to indicate that the special programmes developed for children from Asian backgrounds, which acknowledge their possession of a home language other than English and which endeavour to compensate for this fact, appear to be helping them to develop their potential within the educational system to a much greater extent than is at present possible for their peers from a West Indian background. At the present stage of this debate about tests of ability it seemed sensible to accept the standardized NFER tests used by the LEA. The results of all three NFER tests, standardized to a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15, were made available by the LEA and incorporated into the research in the case of all those pupils who were still attending their original secondary school. Results A complete set of attainment scores was available for only 4594 of the pupils in the sample, partly because some pupils had been absent for one or more of the tests and partly because some pupils had changed
schools between the time of taking the tests and that of completing the questionnaire. In the case of fourth year pupils, for example, there was a time gap of over three years between these two events. Nevertheless the sample represented 21 per cent of the secondary population in the city within the three years groups considered. The scores of the sample population vary very little from those attained by all secondary pupils in the city, being slightly higher in mathematics and slightly lower in reading and non-verbal reasoning.

The differences between the scores of boys and girls found within the sample also reflect those found over the whole city, with boys having higher mean scores in both mathematics and reading than girls. It would appear that the sample is reasonably representative of the secondary pupils within the city as a whole in terms of 12+ attainment test scores. There was very little difference between year groups for the three measures. This is to be expected since all pupils completed the attainment tests at the same stage in their secondary school careers, during the second term of their first year. In this sense the analysis of attainment measures should be seen as cross-sectional rather than
longitudinal, as representing a direct comparison between three age
cohorts at a specific stage in their educational experience. When the three major ethnic groups are considered differences in 145
attainment scores are noticeable and statistically significant (table 2).

Over the whole sample the Afro-Caribbean group has the lowest
mean score on all three of the measures used. The actual differences in
mean score between the Afro-Caribbean and European groups are
about half of a standard deviation for each measure and so indicate a
significant educational difference between group extremes moderated
by a fairly high degree of overlap between the groups. The Asian
pupils mean scores fall between those of the Afro-Caribbean and
European groups in each measure. This general picture also applies to
each of the year groups taken separately with only one exception;
amongst first year pupils the Asian group has the lowest mean score
on reading. These results would seem to suggest that the Afro-Caribbean
group in particular are relatively underprepared for secondary school
education in Britain and have noticeable difficulties in both literacy
and numeracy when compared with their white peers. The
Asian group, who might be expected to have the lowest mean scores in reading as most have a home language other than English, do not generally fare as badly as the Afro-Caribbean pupils although they do have lower scores than the European pupils. It seems likely that this is partially due to the ESL (English as a Second Language) programme organized by the local education authority for Asian pupils at both primary and secondary schools, a programme not generally available for Afro-Caribbean pupils who are assumed to have English as their home language. The differences in non-verbal reasoning scores indicated in table 2 would appear to vindicate the decision to view these as measures of readiness for English education rather than as measures of innate ability or ‘intelligence’. There is little to indicate that children of Asian or Afro-Caribbean descent are intrinsically less able than those of European descent and no less to support the idea that their cultural background is sufficiently different from that of the English pupils to disadvantage them to a greater or lesser extent in standardized tests. An analysis of covariance was undertaken for the three ethnic groups within the whole sample. Whilst a caveat concerning back
ground changes between year groups was acknowledged, it was felt that as the relative background changes were of the same order for all three groups the overall effect was unlikely to alter significantly any differences between the ethnic groups. Additionally, as all pupils had undertaken the attainment tests at the same stage in their school careers, it was felt to be more useful to treat this as a cross-sectional study and so maximize ethnic minority group representation.

Table 2: Analysis of variance over the attainment measures for the three major ethnic groups in the whole sample and within each year group GROUP UP MEASURE ASIANAFROCARIBBEANEUR OPEANFSIGNIFICANCE Mean S.D. Mean S.D. WHOLE SAMPLE n = 526 n = 566 n = 449 MEAN MATHEMATICS 100.8 12.7 96.0 11.7 102.5 12.4oggles < .001 READING 96.0 11.0 95.5 11.7 100.5 13.0 < .001 NONVERBAL REASONING 99.9 12.4 96.9 12.2 102.4 13.1 < .001 FIRST YEAR n = 234 n = 174 n = 118 d.f. = 1586 n = 1589 MEAN MATHEMATICS 101.1 12.2 98.8 11.7 102.7 12.5 < .001 READING 95.8 10.9 94.1 1.9 99.9 13.4 < .001 NONVERBAL REASONING 101.9 12.5 97.0 12.5 102.8 13.3 < .001 FOURTH YEAR n = 124 n = 178 n = 110 d.f. = 1404 n = 1407 MEAN
differences between the three ethnic groups on the measure of non
verbal reasoning remained much the same for Afro-Caribbean
and
European pupils when adjusted for differences in home
background
(table 3). This was to be expected as these two groups had
similar
home background distribution patterns. The mean score of
the Asian
group was affected to a greater extent because of the
relatively dis
advantaged home background of the Asian pupils (See table
1). The
mean score of the Asian group, after controlling for home
background, thus rose from 99.2 to 100.2. Nevertheless, even
after such
adjustment the Afro-Caribbean group mean score was half a
standard
deviation less than the European group mean score. On the
mathematics measure, unadjusted scoring showed the
Afro-Caribbean group to have the lowest mean score and this
relative
position persisted when scores were adjusted for
differences in home
background and non-verbal reasoning score. With the latter
factor as
covariant the score differences were considerably reduced
whilst the
adjustment resulting from background differences was relatively slight. When background and non-verbal reasoning scores were taken simultaneously as covariants then the difference between the scores of the extreme groups fell to less than 15 per cent of a standard deviation. Whilst this difference remained statistically significant it could not be viewed as educationally significant. Thus when individual differences, resulting from home background and other personal factors, were taken into account the score differences between the three ethnic groups on the mathematics test became educationally insignificant. A slightly different pattern was shown by the unadjusted and adjusted reading scores. On the unadjusted scores the Afro-Caribbean group showed the lowest mean, almost half a standard deviation below that of the European group, with the Asian group score falling between these two extremes. When adjustment was made for home background differences the relative order of the mean scores remained unchanged but that of the Asian group was raised from 95.4 to 96.4.

When non-verbal reasoning score was taken as covariant, however, the mean score of the Afro-Caribbean group was raised.
sufficiently to take it beyond that of the Asian group and to within 10 per cent of a standard deviation of the European group mean score, which had been decreased by the covariance adjustment. When both background and non-verbal reasoning scores were used simultaneously as covariants the differences between the three ethnic groups became statistically non-significant. Overall the analyses of covariance showed that when adjustments

Table 3: Analysis of covariance of the attainment measures for the three major ethnic groups controlling for home background and non-verbal reasoning score differences. Who les a sample n = 4, 435 MEASURE MEAN VALUE ENS ASIAN AFRO CARIBBEAN EUROPEAN FS IGNIFICANCE MATHEMATICS Unadjusted 100.896.0102.523.4 < .001 Adjusted for background differences 101.095.9102.49.4 < .001 Adjusted for differences in non-verbal reasoning score 102.199.2101.77.6 < .001 Adjusted for background and non-verbal reasoning score differences simultaneously 102.1199.9101.84.3 < .05 READING Unadjusted 96.095.5100.522.2 < .001 Adjusted for background differences 96.495.4100.516.0 < .001 Adjusted for differences in non-verbal reasoning score 97.098.699.95.2 < .01 Adjusted for background and non-verbal reasoning score differences simultaneously 97.698.799.82.8 N.S. NONVERBAL Unadjusted 99.996.9102.419.6 < .001 REASONING Adjusted for background differences 100.296.6102.415.5 < .001 Note: The author and the editors recognize the restrictions involved in u
singing analysis of covariance to deal with the data obtained. We are aware of the assumptions concerning the nature of the data that must be met if the technique is to be used. The data used here contains significant differences between ethnic groups on certain independent variables. Scores have been adjusted on the basis of non-chance variables. The argument for carrying out such exploratory analysis is that the analysis of covariance model is a robust one. In certain circumstances, some authorities consider that its use allows a rough ordering of the relative contributions of the variables to the overall discrimination on the dependent variable.

were made for differences in home background the Afro-Caribbean group continued to have the lowest mean scores in all three measures and the European group the highest mean scores. When adjustments were also made for differences in non-verbal reasoning score, however, the differences between groups were diminished to become barely or non-significant in statistical terms. The basic analyses thus confirmed results found in other parts of Britain which showed ethnic minority pupils to be under-attaining relative to their white peers. The analyses of covariance, however, would seem to hint that the reasons for such under-attainment relate to a considerable extent to the individual backgrounds of the minority
group children. Both home background scores, which might be seen as measures of relative deprivation, and non-verbal reasoning scores, which here are viewed as measures of relative preparedness for secondary education, have the effect of depressing scores on reading and mathematics for ethnic minority pupils. When these two measures are taken together the adjusted scores on reading and mathematics indicate that minority group pupils are in fact reaching a very similar level of attainment to that of their white peers in the particular inner urban environment studied here. All the pupils in this survey could be seen as relatively deprived when compared with a countrywide sample and the ones from ethnic minority groups would appear to have an even greater hurdle to overcome before they have the opportunity to realize their full educational potential. It would seem that, unless positive steps are taken to look in detail at such deprivation and then to try to remedy it, a notable proportion of our secondary school pupils will continue to have what might be termed unequal opportunities. Discussion It has been suggested that minority group under-attainment could
result from differences in home background, language, pre-school experiences, a clash between the values of home and school, inappropriate teacher training and school curriculum, negative teacher attitudes and expectations, and racism within British society, the research findings indicate that much of the variation in attainment, at least at 12+, is the result of individual rather than external factors. Amongst the many possible causes of under-attainment, the research emphasizes the importance of the home and of early childhood development as determinants of school attainment. From these results it would appear that minority group children are disadvantaged relative to their white peers by virtue of the cultural and socio-economic background of their homes, by the methods of communication used at home and by the forms of play and other pre-school experiences they had. These factors appear to be of much more importance than school curriculum, teacher training, attitude or expectation, clashes between home and school, alienation from parents or depressed levels of self-conceptualization (most of which
were studied in the overall project). The research also indicates the need to develop programmes of
both pre-school experience and in-school support in order to allow
children from the ethnic minority groups to attain their educational
potential. It emphasizes the need to accept the inherent cultural
differences between both Asian and Afro-Caribbean homes and those
of the white majority of the population and to acknowledge these
cultural differences in the preparation for and producing of tests of


DAWSON, A.L. (1978b) ‘The attitudes of black and white adolescents in an urban area’ in MURRAY, C. (Ed) Youth in Contemporary Society, Slough NFER.


11 Self-Esteem and Educational Achievement in British Young South Asians Gajendra Verma and Kanka Mallick

This chapter is part of a larger study concerned with educational, social, cultural and psychological processes which bear on educational performance for various ethnic groups in Britain. The main study was conducted in three phases during the period October 1977 to July 1983. The first stage of research was designed to explore
the determinants of the vocational aspirations, choices and achievements of South Asian adolescents in two major industrial cities in the North of England (see Verma, 1982 and 1983). The second stage examined the occupational experience of a cohort of adolescents containing a large proportion from the various ethnic minority groups, and attempted to set this experience in the context of achievement and expectations of working life. The final stage of research was concerned with the academic achievement of ethnic minority adolescents, and sought to establish profiles of high and low achievers among adolescents from differing ethnic groups. There is a dearth of research, particularly the longitudinal type, which describes and interprets the various sociopsychological and cultural processes bearing on educational achievement for various ethnic groups. These processes represent complex interactions of many factors. It was necessary to develop an analytical model that would attempt to clarify how each factor operated within the whole process of adolescents’ educational achievement. The findings of this
The variables — self-esteem and educational achievement selected for examination in this chapter were chosen for two main reasons.

Firstly, many researchers have shown that self-esteem is associated with academic performance. Secondly, self-esteem was included in the main study both as a hypothetical precursor to examination success and occupation entry, and as one of the measures of educational achievement. It would seem necessary at this point to examine briefly the two concepts — self-esteem and educational achievement — as utilized in this chapter. Self-Esteem and Achievement

Self-esteem has become an important vehicle in social science research for studying and understanding human behaviour. Although self esteem is basically a social psychological concept it is also an important link between psychology and sociology (Weidman, 1969).

It concerns the way an individual evaluates his/her personal characteristics. In theory, self-esteem differs from self-concept. Other terms such as ‘identity’, ‘self-image’, ‘self-evaluation’ and ‘self-worth’ are also used in the literature, sometimes interchangeably, but some
times to imply different aspects of personality and personal func
tioning in social situations. For example, the terms self-esteem and
self-concept refer to markedly different phenomena. Self-concept is
the image or symbol which the individual has formed as a result of his
or her personal experiences; self-esteem is the individual’s evaluation
of that image (Coopersmith, 1975). Thus self-esteem is an affective
variable, involving an emotional appraisal of the ‘self’ whilst self
concept involved the recognition of one’s characteristics, for example,
one is married, white, tall and male. In many social situations self
concept plays an important part, for example in the recognition and
denial of one’s ethnicity. However, in most recent writings self
concept has been subsumed within the concept of self-esteem. The literature on self-esteem has produced controversial findings.

Earlier American studies tended to show that many black children
had to a large degree internalized the negative stereotypes which the
majority community held concerning them; in consequence they had
poorer self-esteem than whites. More recent research with children
and adolescents in America, however, has challenged this
showing that Blacks do not have significantly poorer self-esteem than whites (see Coopersmith, 1975; Bagley et al., 1979). It would seem fair to say that the climate of ethnic minority self-esteem has clearly changed in the last ten years, and the possibility exists that the self-esteem of blacks in America may now be more positive than it was some years ago. Studies in Britain of self-concept and self-esteem amongst ethnic minority pupils have also produced both diverse and contradictory findings. Our recent research (Verma with Ashworth, 1986) showed that the self-esteem of south Asian youngsters in Britain is in a state of transition. Their self-esteem norms fell somewhere between those found among English speaking, middle-class youngsters in India, and those among average British youngsters. Elements of both south Asian and British identity can be noticed in the self-esteem and identity of south Asian youth in Britain. Our findings of an earlier study (Bagley, Verma and Mallick, 1982) showed that South Asian young people in India are much more likely to evaluate
themselves in a positive way than South Asian youngsters in Britain. However, this should not be taken to imply that south Asian youths in Britain have poorer self-esteem than their white peers. Other evidence indicated that levels of self-esteem are similar: that South Asian youngsters are acquiring bases of self-evaluation which are similar to those of white youths (Bagley, 1982). It must be stressed that self-esteem is culturally grounded, and it is often meaningless as well as invidious to suggest that one ethnic group has ‘better’ self-esteem than any other. Self-esteem, as part of a more complex identity structure, has different groundings and different meanings in different ethnic groups. In a pluralistic framework of society, different ethnic groups have different psychological orientations; these have to be mutually understood and tolerated for successful, plural multiculturalism (Triandis, 1976). The term ‘achievement’ has been interpreted in a variety of ways.

In Britain the debate about the educational achievement of Asian and black pupils in schools, particularly those of Afro-Caribbean origin, has been the most controversial issue in the ‘race and education’ debate.
over the last decade or so. Much of the debate about why certain individuals or groups of individuals perform poorly centres on what the school is doing or not doing. Educational achievement is not simply the fulfilment of intellectual potential as measured by performance in public examinations. Such a criterion overlooks two important considerations. Firstly, educational achievement is the outcome of a complex process involving factors within an individual’s environment. Secondly, public examinations are designed to cater for approximately 60 per cent of 16-year-olds, although perhaps as many as 80-85 per cent of them attempt examination entry in one or two subjects. Thus, examination performance itself is too simplistic a measure of educational achievement. For these reasons, four criteria of educational achievement were utilized in this research: public examination results, occupational entry, self-esteem and the youngster’s satisfaction with his/her own education. This chapter is concerned with only one indicator i.e. self-esteem. Self-esteem was included because there is considerable evidence that achievement and self-esteem are positively related (Simon and
Simon, 1975; Prendergast and Binder, 1975) That is to say, those who
perform less well, relative to their fellows, tend to have poor self
esteem. The relationship between below average achievement and
poor self-esteem appears to hold in a comparative study of adolescents
in America and Denmark (Weinland et al., 1976). In a multi-ethnic society, life affects not only the attitudes and
behaviour of ethnic minority groups towards the standards set by the
dominant group, but also the responses to themselves and their
groups. The way the individual perceived himself is largely a product
of his or her social experience with others (Verma and Bagley, 1979). Some writers suggest that the relationship between pupil and
teacher in the multi-ethnic classroom is a major factor which strongly
influences the pupil’s awareness of himself/herself (see Verma and
Bagley, 1982). This awareness, once assimilated into the pupil’s concept of himself/herself, becomes an influential element in learning
(Purkey, 1978), and thus may operate as a significant factor in the low
level of educational achievement. The findings of various studies
summarized by Labenne and Greene (1969) indicate that poorly de
fined self-concepts or those which do not consider the fact that the pupil can gain increased competencies from his school experiences tend to result in under-achievement or poor performance. Studies have also shown that self-esteem is significantly related to educational achievement for disadvantaged as well as other pupils (Coard, 1971; Milner, 1975). In our own study (Bagley, Mallick and Verma, 1979) we found that the most important structural correlations of the ‘general self’ component of the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967) were to be in a low stream at school, being of lower social class and being a sociometric isolate. The study concluded that in general, such a pupil has low academic achievement, is in a low stream and manifests various kinds of psychological maladjustment. Supportive peer groups can however counter adverse self-images which schools sometimes transmit — for example to ethnic minority adolescents (Bagley, Mallick and Verma, 1979). Self-esteem may be defined as the assessment of the self-concept in positive or negative terms (Coopersmith, 1975). It is the picture an individual forms of himself or herself as a result of
interacting with

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others within society. Self-esteem as a measure of academic achievement derives from an implicit aim of education, particularly for those who are seen as having low examination potential, that it must help the child to feel confident. Despite Stone’s (1981) extensive critique of self-concept and self-esteem, it is true to say that the school whose pupils see themselves as potential successes rather than as academic failures could be said to be succeeding to some extent. Equally, the benefit to the individual of an education which helps pupils to understand themselves and the society in which they live cannot be altogether denied. Research evidence clearly shows that self-esteem is a crucial element in understanding an individual’s personal, social and educational adaptation. Judging by the results of dozens of studies, mostly American, there seem ample support for the position that pupils who have more positive and definite appraisals of their ability to perform in school, and have more positive views of themselves do better in their academic work than those with more
uncertain or negative views of themselves. Patterns of South Asian Achievement and Self-Esteem

In the literature reference is frequently made to ‘Asian’ and ‘West’ danger of over-simplification since they tend to gloss over the complexities of ‘Asian’ and ‘West Indian’ society. Moreover, there is the danger with a particular geographical location — the area of origin of the group. The fact that two people come from the same subcontinent does not necessarily mean that they will behave in a more similar manner than two people who do not. Thus, classification of individuals by the sub-continent is most likely to hide ethnic, religious and cultural differences. No studies to date have attempted to treat those from the Indian sub-continent as a non-uniform group; that is to say, existing studies have treated them as South Asian and have tended to ignore the important cultural and ethnic differences to be found amongst those whose origin lies in that broad geographical location. However, most of the available research suggests that, as a group, they perform at much the same level as the white population (Driver, 1977; Brooks and Singh, 1978; Verma, 1981). Such studies have compared
South Asian youngsters with relatively disadvantaged white pupils. One explanation of the general parity between the educational achievement of South Asian youngsters and their white peers is that higher self-esteem amongst the South Asian group would seem to offset a position of 'multiple disadvantage'. Other researchers (Louden, 1980; Verma, 1981) also found that those of South Asian origin had a higher mean self-esteem than either West Indian or white adolescents.

According to Coopersmith (1975) self-esteem represents an individual's appraisal of himself in positive or negative terms. It would seem almost inevitable that the social, familial, educational and personal experiences of an individual in respect of his or her cultural origins or skin colour have an effect upon his or her self-esteem, either positively or negatively. Thus, although the self-concept is a cognitive variable, self-esteem – the evaluation of that concept – is, in part, an emotional or affective dimension representing the cumulative effects of the environment as internalized by the individual. Hence self-esteem is a psychological variable through which socioeconomic
and other external factors may be mediated. Verma (1981) explained his results of high self-esteem amongst South Asian youngsters by asserting that ‘the adaptation processes of South Asians are mediated through the networks of family and friends, and to some extent through community based self-help systems’. Both Verma and Louden attributed the unexpectedly high self-esteem of South Asian adolescents to the immediate environment of the individuals themselves. Nevertheless, there is as yet, insufficient evidence to suggest with confidence that the level of self-esteem is the most important criterion in assessing educational potential, and consequently of accounting for the relative achievement of different ethnic groups in British society. What seems certain, however, is that positive self-image is essential to achieving success in both educational and occupational life in this modern complex society. Research Methodology

This chapter draws upon material collected for a large-scale study conducted in British schools. The aim of the study, derived from three linked projects, was to gain an insight into
educational, social,
cultural and psychological processes which contribute to educational
achievement for various ethnic groups in Britain. The subjects were
adolescents in the Leeds/Bradford areas of West Yorkshire. The sample
of over 1500 consisted of youngsters who were or had completed their
last year of compulsory schooling. The research design employed an
admixture of quantitative and qualitative techniques; these were used to
give the study breadth and depth. The methodological considerations
pertaining to research techniques and tools are discussed elsewhere
(Verma with Ashworth, 1986). The youngsters were or had been pupils at nine different schools
drawn from two adjacent local authorities. Since the conviction from
the outset was that the responses to the last year of compulsory
schooling and the various options beyond that stage were likely to
be mediated by the differing cultural backgrounds of the youngsters
being studied, they were categorized by the ethnic/cultural group, for
example, White, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi etc. Such a design
facilitated the examination of educational achievement of
ethnic minority adolescents, since the data collected offered information on many factors relating to achievement. One of the tools used in the main study, the concern of this paper, was the fifty-eight item Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967). This scale covers three areas: self-esteem in the context of the home and the family; self-esteem in school and peer group; and general evaluation of the self. The inventory has been used cross-culturally in American and British studies (Coopersmith, 1967; Bagley, Verma, Mallick and Young, 1979). The inventory has been factor-analyzed in an Australian study (Edgar et al., 1974), and the results supported the notion of global self-esteem, since all of the sub-scales strongly inter-correlated with one another. The research findings were built on a model that sought to analyze the impact of a wide range of factors — from school, home, peer group and cultural background. The model had a number of underlying assumptions which, it was considered, would offer a more comprehensive picture of the patterns of achievement than hitherto obtained by other studies in the field. The first of these was that
educational achievement — whether expressed in terms of public examination success, type of employment obtained or even in terms of personal satisfaction — was the product of a complex interaction of educational, cultural, and familial factors. An index of academic achievement was obtained for each subject by summation over all examination successes using the weightings of 3 (Ordinary level pass at A grade, Ordinary level pass at B and C grades or Certificate of Secondary Education at grade 1) and 1 (other grades of the Certificate of Secondary Education). In the research no attempt was made to compare achievement between ethnic groups; instead each ethnic group within the analysis was sub-divided into ‘high’ and ‘low’ achievers by comparison with the median achievement level for that ethnic group. Analysis was then carried out (for each ethnic group 159 separately) to determine those factors which were associated with the distinction between high and low achievement. This analysis is reported fully elsewhere (Verma with Ashworth, 1986). The Findings as They Relate to Self-Esteem and Achievement

In this research use of the term ‘underachievement’ was deliberately
avoided. Comparisons across ethnic groups were kept to a minimum in respect of achievement scores by utilizing intra-ethnic rather than inter-ethnic analysis. Our concern in this chapter, however, is to examine the self-esteem patterns of South Asian youngsters and the relationship, if any, between self-esteem and educational achievement in them. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) which was employed throughout the research, yielded measures of self-esteem derived from interactions at home, at school and with peer group, in addition to the general-self component. It was possible therefore to assess the proportion of self-esteem derived from each of the possible sources. The results in terms of the mean percentage are given in table 1. Analysis of the data revealed that on the whole, South Asian youngsters (particularly Bangladeshi and Indian) derived a greater proportion of the self-esteem from interactions at school as compared with the white group. Interactions within the home were of particular importance for Bangladeshi adolescents. It is interesting to note that irrespective of the self-esteem scores, the proportion of self-esteem
derived from each source differed between ethnic groups. However,

no statistically significant differences emerged concerning the ethnic
groups studied, which implies that the level of self-esteem is not
affected by the ethnicity of the individual. A significant sex difference
did emerge, however, on the 'general-self' component where females
manifested significantly higher self-esteem.

Table 1: Mean Percentage of Total Self-esteem from Sub-scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SEI Pakistani</th>
<th>Bangladeshi</th>
<th>Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General-self</td>
<td>53.809</td>
<td>53.401</td>
<td>52.998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-self-peers</td>
<td>17.377</td>
<td>15.647</td>
<td>17.695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-parents</td>
<td>16.072</td>
<td>16.400</td>
<td>16.171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-academic</td>
<td>12.750</td>
<td>14.552</td>
<td>14.135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the self-esteem data showed that South Asian youngsters had higher total self-esteem than their white counterparts. However, in a follow-up study of these youngsters after leaving school (stage 2 of the research) the situation reversed. Self-esteem levels seemed to have been affected by their employment status and whether they had achieved their job aspirations. Analysis also showed that unemployment was highest amongst South Asian
youngsters on leaving school than for the white youngsters. The reduction in self-esteem of the South Asians may be attributable, in part, to the effects of unemployment and failure to achieve their vocational aspirations. Analysis of part of the third stage of the research indicated that although the direct effects of sex, status and ethnicity did not reach any acceptable level of statistical significance, the interactions between the three factors appeared to be interesting. The ‘sex x status’ interaction occurred because being unemployed had a greater effect on the self-esteem of males than on females. The ‘sex x ethnic group’ interaction arose because the general self-esteem of South Asians (Pakistanis in particular) was lower than the general self-esteem of white girls, but the reverse was true for boys. The ‘status x ethnic group’ interaction might have arisen because being unemployed had than on white youngsters. The three-way interaction was a complex combination in which the self-esteem of the various sub-groups was differently affected. The school-academic component of self-esteem operated somewhat differently. Here the direct effects of status and ethnicity were significant. The former arose because the school-academic self
esteem of sixth formers was significantly higher than those who had left school. The effect of ethnic group arose because of the self-esteem of Indian and Pakistanis was higher than those of the other ethnic groups. The variables of sex, status or ethnic group had no significant effect on self-esteem derived from the home situation. This may be due to the fact that almost all the youngsters were still living in the parental home. Thus it is less likely that the status of the individual would affect self-esteem from this source. Clearly, status appeared to have no strong effect on the total self-esteem of the adolescents.

Although levels of self-esteem were at approximately the same level for those who were employed and those in the sixth form; those who had left school and were unemployed had significantly lower self esteem. Measures of self-esteem were found to be significantly related to 161 Table 2: Correlation Coefficients: Elements of Self-esteem and Examination Results SEI Pakistani N = 75 Bangladeshi N = 45 Indian N = 77

General-self .225 .091 .318
Social-self-peers .279 .065 .228
School-academic .035 .416 .389
Home-parents .216 .202 .023
vocational aspirations for Pakistani and Indian youngsters, and not for Bangladeshi. The highest correlations were obtained for the 'school academic' element of self-esteem. On the whole the findings of the study suggest that the South Asian groups are able to maintain, or develop, positive self-regard despite their relatively disadvantaged position in British society. They seem to have positive feelings about themselves as individuals and as members of society. Before examining the relationship between self-esteem and educational achievement it should be recalled that the intra-ethnic analysis was conducted to elicit the factors which were related to achievement. The results of the main study showed that the independent factors account for different amounts of variance for different ethnic groups. Thus in the achievement process certain factors appeared to be important for some ethnic groups but not for others. This suggests that the processes which underlie educational achievement may be culture-dependent. However, our concern in this chapter is to ascertain the relationships between self-esteem components and educational achievement. The patterns of correlation
coefficients are presented in table 2. The results showed that on the whole self-esteem variables were not important factors in educational achievement for pupils of South Asian origin (Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian). However, paternal interest in school performance was an important factor for them. This tends to support Gupta's (1977) findings that parents are the major source of motivation to do well in school for those of South Asian backgrounds. Analysis of the data showed that South Asian youngsters had a significantly more positive attitude towards school education than their white peers. Their motivational position seemed to be centred around a commitment to school and examination success, possibly in the hope of social mobility or more likely to avoid the damaging effect of failure. One possible interpretation of this result is that South Asian teenagers perceive formal education as a means of social and occupational mobility which has been denied their parents. A particularly interesting pattern emerged from the data, which was the imbalance in intercultural understanding. Although all those youngsters who participated in the study had spent
considerable time

in multiethnic schools, the South Asian youngsters had adopted a

number of English cultural values, but the white population had failed

to understand the characteristics of the other ethnic groups. It was also

evident that many of the South Asian youngsters had been affected by

growing up in Britain. Although many of them found it difficult to

express the feelings arising from being ‘caught between two cultures’ it was clear that some South Asian youngsters felt somewhat confused

about their cultural identity. Conclusions

The results of the main study clearly indicated that the process of

educational achievement may be culture-dependent; factors affecting

the achievement of one ethnic group may not necessarily affect the

achievement of another group. It may be fallacious, therefore, to

attempt to explain the achievement process of a particular ethnic

minority group from an understanding of the achievement process of

the majority. Analysis of the data for this chapter showed that self-esteem may

be derived from interactions and relationships with the home, the

school and peer-groups. It may be argued that self-esteem is a media
tory factor between the immediate environment of the individual and educational achievement. No significant inter-ethnic differences were found in the levels of self-esteem. However, factors contributing to self-esteem varied in their importance for different ethnic groups. South Asian youngsters, for example, derived most of their self-esteem from family and school sources, although girls tended to have lower self-esteem than boys. The impact of cultural and immediate family background on the ethnic minority child’s (particularly South Asian) values and attitudes to education in general and to school in particular were more marked than those of the white child. The categorization of ethnic minority youngsters into ethnic-cultural groups showed a number of variations from group to group; each group seemed to contain other significant variations because of differing cultural traditions and cultural adaptation to life in Britain. The need for the appreciation and understanding of those potential variations cannot be overstressed. If a climate of increasing inter-ethnic tolerance and understanding is allowed to grow, there would be more chance of ethnic minority adaptation to a new ‘cultural’ climate which will
facilitate freer movement for the youngster between the cultural elements of school, peers and home.

Acknowledgement

The authors are indebted to colleagues Brandon Ashworth and Tony Neasham for their assistance at all stages of the research project on


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Prior to consideration of the findings and implications of the Brent Inquiry, it is necessary to mention the problems encountered over the availability of the Report. The inquiry had been at the mercy of the differing stances of the local political parties towards it. Successive changes in the character of the political administration in Brent have now brought positive attitudes replacing earlier negative ones to the inquiry and the Report. The present Labour administration in Brent had decided to print the Inquiry Report. This it is hoped will be
available shortly. The Brent Report is not as long as the Swann Report (Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Group 1985) which had covered England and Wales.

However, the size of the Brent Report was not inconsiderable, given that it dealt with only one local education authority. Brent’s system of education is in a profound crisis. In November 1983, an inquiry was set up to look into the concerns of parents and the standards achieved by pupils attending the Authority’s secondary schools. This was because a large number of parents, both black and white, were concerned and vociferous about extremely poor examination results in schools in the Authority. If one is interested in examination results one will find that, over the last four or five years, examination results in the schools in Brent have fallen below the national average. There appeared to be a considerable disparity in examination results between schools in the north and those in the south. The schools in the north enjoyed, it was said, far better facilities and resources than those in the south. Even though examination results in the Borough as a whole were below the
national average, those from schools in the northern part were above
that average, whereas those from schools in the southern part fell
some way below the average.

166 In November 1983 the Council decided to set up an inquiry to
investigate matters. I was asked to lead it and the letter inviting me to
conduct it set out the terms of reference. These I will
describe in the
following pages, since the Report is not yet generally available. I will
also bring out some of the background to the inquiry, since I think
this is important in understanding the context in which the team set
out to do the work. The terms of reference were: first, to assess the standards
achieved in the Authority’s fifteen secondary schools; secondly,
without moving away from the generality of this objective, to lay
emphasis on assessment of the concerns of parents, and in particular
black parents, about the levels of provision and achievement and to
advise the Council on the justification for such concerns; and thirdly,
to report the proceedings and recommendations to the Council and, in
particular, to advise on any remedial action needed to improve
standards of education. We were given a year in which to do this work. That was the agreement. It was going to be carried out by a small team. In the end the team consisted of seven members. Immediately prior to the setting up of the Inquiry, during 1980 and 1981, a system of school appraisals had been instituted after a very long and very difficult period of consultation with the teachers in the area and with the teachers’ unions. Under this system, each school in the appraisal system would establish its own goals and objectives and would periodically assess those goals and objectives and, apply a process of self-monitoring. Subsequently, every three years the inspectorate would come in as a team, (actually in Brent they are called advisers). The advisers would go in and, working as a team, would look at the school from their own perspective, that is from the advisers’ perspectives. The school would then consider what each group had found out and they would produce an agreed document that was to go to the governors. In other words, each school was asked to monitor itself, having set its own goals. The advisers would visit and see how far those goals had been achieved
and an agreed document would be put to the governors of the school. In spite of such appraisals, parents were still extremely unhappy.

and therefore the inquiry was set up. There are only fifteen county secondary schools in Brent. It is a very tight and compact area to investigate. We intended to look at each school, not from the self- appraisal point of view, not as a set of advisers, but to establish the perceptions and expectations of the teachers, the parents and the pupils. To do this we intended to set up a series of questionnaires which we would administer in the schools ourselves. We had hoped to work on a school-by-school basis, administering questionnaires to teachers, pupils and their parents. We would then analyze the material we obtained and put it back to the teachers in the hope that this would lead to a meaningful dialogue concerning what was happening in each school. From what emerged in the investigations in each school, we planned to build up a picture of what was happening in the Borough as a whole. However, as things turned out, it was difficult for us to do this. After some initial consultation even before the team had
started to work, with the headteachers’ representatives, with the Chief
Education Officer and her Deputy and getting their agreement to the
way in which we intended to work, the teachers’ unions, that is the
teachers’ panels of the Brent Teachers’ Association, refused to co-
operate. This meant we had to rethink the way in which we were
going to work. We had intended to carry out a school-based inquiry but were
unable to gain direct access to the schools. Every member of the
research team was a teacher and still active in teaching at a variety of
levels. We spent a lot of time trying to get the members of the
teachers’ unions and the heads to see our point of view. This they
found extremely difficult. In the end we realized that, if the work was
to go ahead, we would have to think of other ways of working. We then decided that we would collect all the information on
each school centrally, that is, from the local education authority itself.
We would get pupils and the parents to complete the questionnaires in
their homes. We set up an elaborate system for interviewing parents
and pupils and those teachers who were willing to come and talk to
us. I want to stress that, in spite of the fact that we did
not officially have the cooperation of the teachers’ unions, we actually had a very high proportion of teachers, including heads, who cooperated with us and came and met us both as individuals and as groups. In the case of one particular school we had the cooperation of 90 per cent of the school staff. They hired a community hall, because we were not allowed access into the school, to come and meet us and give evidence and answer our questionnaire. There was a great deal of cooperation at an individual and group level. Because we had to get our information in this particular way it meant that it took us a much longer time to do it. It also affected, to some extent, the nature of the information obtained and its generalizability. One of the things that we discovered was that the local education authority did not have available centrally all the necessary information on each school. This meant we had to establish a procedure by which the local education authority obtained the information we wanted from each school for us. There was not, as in many other local education authorities where I have done research, a central point for
obtaining all the information required on schools: infant schools, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges of further education.

There was no such centralized bank of information. Therefore we had to set out all the categories of information we wanted and get the local authority to send for it. This presented great difficulties. We then took evidence from the public in addition to that from the sources already mentioned. We invited written evidence as well as oral evidence and we had a very good response to that. We were able to get what members of the public, other than the actual parents of Brent’s secondary school pupils, were saying in addition to the evidence from the advisers, the Chief Education Officer and the deputies, all the top administrative hierarchy of the local education authority and all the chairmen of the local education authority over the last twenty-five years. We considered that we had a good cross-section of information on which to build the report. Our concern is education for all. We found that a lot of what was said in the Swann Report we would have common ground with. We went much further than Swann in particular respects and in one
We discovered that racism was at the heart of a lot of parental complaints, and not just black parents and parents of pupils from other minority ethnic groups, but white parents as well. The very first piece of written evidence that we received was from a white parent who had been increasingly upset over a very long period because his son had been at school with a young Afro-Caribbean child who was his best friend. From the time they went to school the Afro-Caribbean child had been doing better than his own son. They went through the infant and primary school together, with his son competing quite actively with his best friend but his best friend keeping the lead. As soon as they got into secondary school the divisions began, and the divisions were based on teacher allocations of where the Afro-Caribbean pupil was placed. The point that really upset the parent was the fact that his son was put in for ‘O’ level and the Afro-Caribbean boy for CSE. That was the first piece of written evidence we received. We would not wish to generalize to the secondary school system as a whole on the basis of one such piece of evidence. The example is used to illustrate the nature of
parental concerns. More substantial evidence showed that there was concern about the way in which the schools were being administered and that this was not just from the minority point of view. A significant portion of the inquiry team’s time and of the Report was occupied by a consideration of the ideas and opinions parents hold about their children’s education. We were interested in collecting and analyzing their views and finding out why they were held so that we could make a series of recommendations, ensuring that parents’ voices could more effectively determine how educational policy could be changed to meet their children’s needs. To give the reader an idea of the undertaking we analyzed 1176 questionnaires and conducted about 680 in-depth interviews. Parents’ answers to the questionnaires and opinions expressed at the interviews gave us a clear indication that parents from all ethnic groups were highly dissatisfied with the quality of many aspects of schooling and the implementation of policy by the local authority.

Our analysis led us to conclude that a biased school curriculum, poor discipline, poor teacher-pupil relationship, unsatisfactory school and
home contacts contributed to a large extent to the failure among

Afro-Caribbean and Asian youths to succeed within the educational system. We found that racism was at the heart of the complaints the parents were making. Additionally, by the very way in which schools were structured, teachers’ expectation and teachers’ lack of motivation adversely affected the motivation of the minority ethnic group children. That is why racism is one of the largest chapters in the Report.

It impinges on a great deal of other things that the Report says, but it is at the heart of the findings. We were able to link the Brent report with the Swann Report.

There were two paragraphs in Swann Report which we thought had particular relevance for the Brent Inquiry and we quoted them in the Report. I will mention both of them. The first one states: ‘It will be evident that society is faced with a dual problem: eradicating the discriminatory attitudes of the white majority on the one hand and, on the other, involving an educational system which ensures that all pupils achieve their full potential’. This form of words clothes the problem of racism in the type of language that allowed it
to become acceptable and therefore the media did not pick it up. The second statement identifies a problem that is specifically one for the educational system: ‘A start has been made in recent years but there is still a long way to go before schools bring out the full potential of all their pupils, and in this context particularly their ethnic minority pupils.’

What both of those statements say, is what we have said in the Brent Report in probably a much stronger, more forceful and more direct way about racism.

In looking at Brent, we have called the Report Two Kingdoms. It is important to stress that because of reorganization in 1964 of boroughs, Brent was made up of a very affluent north which runs from Sudbury right through to the North Circular Road, and a very poor south which runs from the North Circular back to Kilburn. In taking evidence from one very senior education administrator, he said his perception was that it was almost like two kingdoms: a white, comfortable, affluent (and he did not add Conservative, but in the
reality of the politics it is Conservative) north, and a poor, deprived,
mainly black, neighbour to the south. If one compares the results between the schools in the north and
the schools in the south of Brent one will see that the south comes out
fairly badly. On the whole the borough does badly. If one uses, and
we did, the DES Statistical Bulletin of 1982 to compare authorities,
Brent, along with three other inner city LEAs, comes into cluster F
and thus had – and I quote – ‘a substantially above-average score
measured in each of the indicators that determine the difficulties and
disadvantages in a borough’. We are talking of a borough which,
although there is an affluent north and a very poor south, gives the
overall impression of an area with all the disadvantages of an inner
city, with all the complexities and difficulties which that carries in
education. There is the marked disparity between the quality of the pro
vision in the schools in the north of the Borough and those in the
south, and in the resultant performance of their pupils in public
examinations. In very many ways Brent is a microcosm of the entire education
system. Much of what the Report says has implications not
just for
Brent but for very many other local education authorities
in the
country. It has, as we discovered, special features in
addition to those
I have just mentioned. We found a situation in which there
was a
marked isolation between the various areas of education.
Professionals
in the schools, people in further education, adult and
community
work, careers service and the youth service were not
communicating
with one another. It was only when the inquiry was started,
and we
were taking evidence and talking to a variety of people,
did the staff in
schools know what the people in adult and community
education or
even in youth or careers services were doing. There was an
isolation
between services characterized by very poor communication.
Groups
were all working within their own prescribed spheres and
setting their
own goals with no overall policy for the borough as a
whole. Another
feature characterized the present situation in Brent: there
were strong 171
vertical channels of communication but weak lateral
channels, and
the channels were stronger in passing messages down than
passing
messages up. When the inquiry team started work, this was also the mode in which the advisers worked. When we started the study, a chief adviser had just been appointed. As a result of our contact with him which extended over a period of some six to eight days, collecting evidence from him and then seeking his corroboration of the verbatim transcript of his evidence, he was able to appreciate what we meant when we talked about the isolation we had discovered between the various parts of the service. As a result of the interim work report, the LEA began to put that right even before the final report came out. The other issue that we found from the complaints from parents, was a great lack of confidence in the entire system. There were teachers and pockets of work happening in schools which were very good but overall the total community of Brent had lost confidence in the educational system. This was very unfortunate and was very clearly illustrated by the fact that Brent as a local education authority has one of the highest percentages of children leaving primary school and seeking to continue their education outside the Borough. This appeared common knowledge: teachers knew it, parents knew
community workers knew it, politicians knew it. One eminent politician stated that he had been recently to a primary school, and that it was a very good primary school. It was in the south of the Borough. To illustrate how good the school was, there were a large number of councillors’ children attending this school although the school was not in their catchment area. The headteacher had said to him ‘I will show you something’. He took him into the top class and asked the pupils how many of them were going to secondary schools in the Borough. Nobody put their hand up. How many were going outside? To quote his words ‘A forest of hands went up’. When the question was repeated: ‘Is anybody going to a school in this Borough?’ one child put his hand up very tentatively because he was embarrassed that he could not persuade his parents to let him go to school outside the Borough. That was in one of the better primary schools attended by children of councillors. The fact that the system was malfunctioning and the fact that although this was a very good primary school, people were choosing to send their children to secondary schools.
outside the Borough was a clear indication of things having gone seriously wrong. Although racism was the most intractable of the problems, the problems of communication were extremely important; no communication of a satisfactory nature existed. This weakness we found at all levels. The advisers complained about the communication with the schools. The schools complained. The teachers who spoke to us complained about communication from the 'office', as they called it. The parents complained about the communication with the school. I have already mentioned that each area worked in its own way. Poor communication was a crucial problem. The question of accountability was yet another concern in which we found weaknesses. In spite of the fact that informally everybody knew all the things that we have been able to put together in the Report — there was evidence of it throughout the system — the views were not coordinated. Had the LEA had its own research department, which every good local education authority should have, if they had had their own information held centrally, they would have been able to find out all the things said in the Report. As this was
not the case,

the question of accountability became a major issue. One of the

recommendations that the Report makes is that the local education

authority should fulfil the responsibility that it has both legally, and

in other ways, to ensure that the type of education that it is providing

is meeting the needs of the pupils in its schools. As an authority Brent devotes a substantial proportion of its

resources on employing teachers. It has one of the best pupil:teacher

ratios in the country in the secondary schools. Despite this, the

examination results were so poor. We have already outlined some of

the things that schools needed to do. One is the employment of black

teachers. Other contributors to this book have given reasons for

employing black teachers with which I would agree. A policy for

recruitment and promotion is needed, not just to teach in black

schools, but to teach throughout the borough. Part of what the

Report says is that, even in Brent, there are schools that are still

all-white. More black teachers are needed because they represent part

of our multicultural society. Since we are living in a changing society,
all people, of every ethnic group, ought to be represented in the
school staff and in the hierarchy at central office. When we talked to pupils about this, they were terribly con
cerned about the ethnic group from which a teacher came. We met
one very vociferous group of young people who had left school and
gone to a college of further education. They said what they needed
were teachers with the right attitudes. If a black teacher had the
wrong attitude, he or she was just as bad as a white teacher. What
they wanted were teachers with the right attitudes, but they agreed 173
that, since it was a multiethnic society, they should have black and
white teachers. Thus teacher attitude was something on which pupils
themselves laid a great deal of emphasis. Additionally, the group
voiced concern with the way in which schools were organized. They
pinpointed the lack of care, the lack of concern and an irrelevant
curriculum. These were young people who had not achieved anything
up to the age of 16 but were now in further education and achieving.
They believed that they had not achieved earlier because people had
not cared. They were quite explicit on this point. Unfortunately we
have not been able to use all the evidence we have taken. I am hoping that we can later put it together, to reflect more clearly than this summary does, some of the views of the pupils. The Report is extremely critical of the entire educational system having found that Black children are heavily discriminated against by the way the system works and to a certain extent the unconscious ways in which the educational authorities act. However, we also found a will on the part of most officials and those teachers with whom we could make contact to find ways to improve the situation. They seemed to be aware of the shortcomings of the system and more than willing to institute the necessary measures. If there is a problem in Brent, it is not one of individuals, but of the very inadequate structures which do not allow communication and do not permit flexibility and change. We then went on to look at the government of schools. We felt that there should be more parent governors, that governors need training, that this should be provided, and that it should be a question of cooperation, not of confrontation. We looked at the reorganization of schools because part of the problem in Brent is that there is a rapid decline in
certain areas of

school populations. We thought that it would be useful to
have two

or three sixth form colleges and to use the manpower that
was

available much more satisfactorily. What one has in Brent
is a large

number of schools with too many teachers and not enough
pupils and

in other schools in the same area there are many pupils and
not

enough teachers. Paradoxically, although the pupil:teacher
ratio is

good overall, there are pockets where it is very bad.
Finally, we felt that there ought to be a holistic approach
to the
curriculum. It should be for the school to set out what its
curriculum

was and then to present that to the governors and to
justify the
curriculum to the governors. N o w that is already a part
of the process

which should be there. However, that is not the way it is
approached.
The governors get the final Report; they do not have any
say in

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setting the objectives or being critical of or questioning
the objectives

before they are set. The local education authority, since
it has become Labour again,

has asked us to produce a summary of the Report for
parents. They
are going to give each parent a copy of the summary because the LEA has adopted the Report. They are going to use it as a blueprint for their way forward. The way we present the summary is by taking the recommendations that we have made and explaining to parents why each recommendation or each group of recommendations was made.

The content is presented in a more readable language for parents. The summary was completed by the end of November 1987. The full printed report should be ready soon. People will be able to have an opportunity of reading and discussing it. As was said earlier, it has implications not just for Brent but for very many other local education

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