THE TEACHING OF SHAKESPEARE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON YEAR 9 IN KEY STAGE 3

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

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ABSTRACT

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The start of the research for this thesis coincided with the introduction, for the first time in state schooling, of the compulsory study and examination of Shakespeare plays at Key Stage 3. The initial stage of the research involved a survey, conducted by postal questionnaire, of the teaching of Shakespeare in fifty secondary schools in West Sussex and Hampshire. The second stage was the classroom observation in five of the surveyed schools of Year 9 lessons where Shakespeare was being taught. The third stage involved the interviewing of the five class teachers and 25% of the pupils in the observed lessons.

The thesis describes and analyses, from the literature available, the development of Shakespeare teaching in secondary schools in the twentieth century. From the critical assessment of this history, together with the analysis of the data, a number of findings and key issues emerge. Year 9 is identified as the year in secondary schooling where the most teaching of Shakespeare takes place and also where the greatest variety of teaching methods are employed. In particular, this research concludes that the compulsory examination at the end of Key Stage 3 is inappropriate and has an inhibiting and limiting effect both on pupil learning and understanding of Shakespeare and on teachers' classroom practice. Shakespeare's language is identified by teachers and pupils as the biggest barrier to understanding; but the most successful teaching methods, often active methods, not only assist with pupils' understanding of Shakespeare but also contribute to the development of their overall literacy.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This research has its origins in my own love-hate relationship with Shakespeare. It is the one area of the English curriculum that I continue to feel most ambivalent about, and that I feel needs to be declared early on so that the reader can more clearly understand my standpoint and be able to evaluate what follows.

My first encounter with Shakespeare was at the age of fourteen at grammar school during the 1960's, studying the *Merchant of Venice*. The approach of the teacher was to give out the parts at the start of the lesson, reserving the 'best' part for himself, and then for the play to be read around the class line-by-line with frequent pauses when he would ask the class or an individual to explain what the lines meant. At the end of each scene, the class would be asked to paraphrase the scene in writing in their exercise books. This process was to be repeated every year with Shakespeare and by every teacher with only minor changes (a trip to the theatre) during the A level years. What I recall most is the feeling of bewilderment and frustration with the language. I felt stupid and inadequate, especially as one or two of my peers seemed to understand the play far more easily than I. Unlike the other texts I studied in English at that time, Shakespeare held no interest for me; the plot did not excite me nor the characters and ideas entrance me. Studying Shakespeare was more like studying and translating a foreign language rather than a text in my own language. And whilst I could see purpose in studying a foreign language I could perceive no advantage in studying Shakespeare. Only at A level when studying *King Lear* and seeing it performed on stage did the intellectual and aesthetic appeal of Shakespeare begin for me.

After grammar school I went to teacher training college to study to become an English teacher, and this included more study of Shakespeare. Again, this was only a marginally different experience from that which I had experienced at school; a few more theatre visits combined with the opportunity to enact one or two scenes, but all in all it was a desk and book bound activity.

It was shortly after I started teaching full-time in secondary schools that I found myself having to teach Shakespeare to pupils studying O level English Literature, and I dreaded it. Dreaded it because the feelings of inadequacy came flooding back together with the realisation that if I wasn't careful I would soon be putting the pupils in my classes through the same unpleasant and demotivating experience that I

underwent, and it was that that drove me to search for ways to teach Shakespeare which would maintain pupils' interest in English and in Shakespeare whilst helping them to understand the plays and pass their exam and to see some relevance to their own lives. The exam questions at O level, which were traditional and formulaic, treating the play as a text closer to poetry or the novel and concerned with plot, character and theme and demanding the rote learning of speeches and quotes were not conducive to more active and innovative ways to teach Shakespeare, but my few experiments in getting the pupils to enact and direct a scene and of viewing versions of a Shakespeare play on film together with the odd trip to the theatre (where some productions were counter-productive) were successful enough (judging from the pupils' responses and pleasure) for me to persist with my efforts. The turning point came when the English Department decided to adopt the Cambridge Plain Text syllabus for O level, which obviated the pupils' need to rote learn speeches and instead to concentrate on their understanding of the play. This syllabus also allowed and encouraged pupils' personal response to literature, including empathetic writing. The introduction of this syllabus had a wonderfully enlightening and liberating effect on my and other teachers' teaching styles and methods, particularly in using more active ways to explore texts through drama. The subsequent increase in pupils' interest in and enjoyment of literature (including Shakespeare) was very evident in my own classes. For the first time in my life I realised that the teaching of Shakespeare could be interesting and enjoyable to teachers and pupils alike, and that there was now no excuse for teachers putting pupils through the experience I went through as a pupil.

An active involvement in the text of a Shakespeare play which involved pupils in embodying and acting out the language was a vital aspect of my own preferred approach to teaching Shakespeare at whatever age and level (5 to 45 and GCSE and A to degree level). The text was made for the stage and for acting and to treat it as a script, which Rex Gibson (1986) advocates, seemed to be the key to success. Not only did it engender pleasure and interest but it also helped pupils to achieve other aims of English. It enabled them to study closely varieties of literary language and conventions in a way that few other texts could do. The challenge of the language of each play pushed and motivated pupils to engage in high level thinking and problem solving in a way that many staple and set texts of the English curriculum of that time (*Of Mice and Men, Kes, To Kill A Mockingbird* etc.) could not. Shakespeare also proved to be a useful vehicle for the discussion of power, morality and values then and now, and the increasing availability of video and film versions of the plays meant that comparisons of the different interpretations of plays by different

directors could be made and lead to the understanding that there is no one single interpretation of a Shakespeare play or in fact of any work of literature.

My own ideological position regarding Shakespeare and the teaching of it in schools has changed over the years I have been teaching. To begin with I would describe my position as liberal humanist following a fairly traditional Leavisite line but that now my position is more reconstructionist but still with liberal humanist leanings. For example, whilst I favour and practise an approach to the teaching of Shakespeare whereby students can gain some critical understanding of the social, political and economic contexts in which Shakespeare's plays were produced and received then and now, together with a variety of readings and interpretations, I also consider it important that some emphasis remains on personal response and the opportunity for students to experience and appreciate the play's plot, structure and characters as well as having the chance to explore and discuss the play's language, themes and ideas.

In 1993 for the first time in the history of British education, the study of one writer, William Shakespeare, was made compulsory for all pupils in secondary schools in England and Wales. Following the amalgamation in 1986 of CSE and GCE exam boards, Shakespeare had been studied by the majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4), but it was not until 1993 when the Secretary of State for Education amended the English Orders of the National Curriculum that it became compulsory for all pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 to not only study one of three prescribed Shakespeare plays, but also for them to sit a pen and paper test to assess their knowledge as part of the end of stage testing arrangements. That such importance and value has been placed on one writer is of interest in itself but it raises a number of significant questions which it is my intention in this research to address and consider.

First, is the question of Shakespeare's high status and unique place in British literary culture and education. Why is he so highly esteemed in our society? What is so special about his output? Is it as Aers and Wheale suggest that Shakespeare is 'not just an icon of Englishness but a world text' (Aers and Wheale 1991: 26)? Is it that his plays have relevance to students from all cultures and backgrounds, so that, as Prince Charles states, 'Shakespeare's message is the universal, the timeless one' (Charles, 1991, p3)? Or is it, as Jane Coles asserts, that Shakespeare is 'the central platform of traditional values' (Coles, 1992, p22), a hegemonic means for the establishment to further its own and what it sees as desirable values for the rest of society? Or maybe as Terence Hawkes suggests, extending the previous idea to all

those who 'use' Shakespeare, 'All we can ever do is use Shakespeare as a powerful element in specific ideological strategies' (Hawkes, 1992, p3).

Second, given that Shakespeare is now a compulsory part of the curriculum and that it has a special status in the English curriculum of secondary schools, is the question concerning the singular value and purpose of studying it. For, in the obligation for all pupils to study Shakespeare, there is an implicit logical inference that the pupils are likely to learn something that they would not otherwise have learnt; can that 'something' be identified? And if, as some of the above commentators contend that there is a universality about Shakespeare then, given that the texts were written for adult audiences of some 400 years ago, of what relevance are those texts to children today between the ages of eleven and fourteen?

Third, the fact that the study and testing of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3 is now compulsory must to some extent influence the teaching of Shakespeare; so will this compulsion produce, encourage and reaffirm a more desk-bound approach and an emphasis on the measuring of knowledge rather than, as Light puts it, writing about the purpose of education, a 'critical, dynamic creation of knowledge' (Light, 1989, p94)? Similarly, in terms of pedagogy, does the teaching of Shakespeare demand or promote certain teaching styles, skills and knowledge in the teacher? And if it does, how do pupils respond to the different methods; are there some that are more favoured by or more appropriate to particular learning styles than others?

Fourth and finally, following the points above, the need arises to discover both the teachers' and the pupils' perceptions of, and responses and attitudes to Shakespeare and the teaching of it. Are these shared and reciprocated?

To summarise, the main questions and issues that this research will attempt to address are:

       1 The developing status and position of Shakespeare in secondary education

       2 Current and past practices and approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare

       3 The educational and epistemological values inherent in Shakespeare being a compulsory part of the curriculum

       4 The effect of that compulsion to teach and test Shakespeare at Key Stage 3 on pedagogy and pupil learning

       5 The values perceptions and attitudes of teachers and pupils to the teaching of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3.

In what follows in this thesis, the reader will find a chapter on a critical analysis of the historical development of the status and teaching of Shakespeare during the 20th century; a further chapter on the methodology of this research which will cover the research design together with an account and critical appraisal of research approaches and methods that have been adopted to date. The chapters which follow discuss and analyse the various parts of the research including a survey of schools carried out in the Spring of 1993 via a postal questionnaire and classroom observations and interviews with teachers and pupils in those classrooms during the Spring and Summer of 1994.

Finally, there is a concluding chapter which identifies and discusses the key issues of the research and which indicates implications for classroom practice and for future research.

Note The data upon which this thesis is developed, such as the tape transcripts of the interviews, the completed questionnaires and the teacher logs, is available, but its immense quantity and bulkiness made it unsuitable for inclusion in an additional volume to this thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to attempt to trace and account for the varied status of Shakespeare and the teaching of his plays, in secondary schools in the 20th century. At no other time than the present has the pre-eminent position of Shakespeare in the curriculum been more pronounced. There have been times (as recently as the 1980's) when Shakespeare was less pronounced than now, when, if a teacher or English department so chose, pupils could pass through their secondary schooling without having once read a single word of Shakespeare. The reasons for the changes to Shakespeare's prominence are complex but I believe they all reflect the dominant ideologies of those who have had influence and power over the curriculum in our schools. There are those bodies who have exerted direct and overt influence, such as the Government, universities and exam boards, but there are also those bodies (HMI, NATE) and, sometimes, individuals concerned with literary criticism and theory and/or pedagogy (e.g. F.R. Leavis, David Holbrook and Rex Gibson,) who exerted influence which is less direct. But before considering those influences in detail, it is important to consider the broad ideologies which underpin the views of those bodies and individuals for, apart from the Shakespeare director Michael Bogdanov who called for a moratorium on the teaching of Shakespeare in schools (TES/ESC 1992, p10), all commentators, from whichever end of the ideological spectrum, have advocated the continued presence of Shakespeare in the curriculum. Although the concept of ideology and its history can be confusing and shifting, I agree with Jonathan Dollimore who says that to investigate ideology is to discover its indispensability (Dollimore, 1986, p9). For the purpose of this thesis I am defining ideology as a sometimes conscious, sometimes implicit set of underlying beliefs and values which influence, in this case, an institution's, social group's or person's reasons for choosing to include one element of culture in the curriculum. For I agree with Denis Lawson who writes that "...how anyone sees an educational issue or problem is not random or haphazard but is powerfully connected with other, frequently deep-rooted, sub-cultural or political beliefs, attitudes and values" (Lawson, 1992, p 9). One of my main purposes for considering the ideological perspective is to try to ascertain what were or are the powerful influences on deciding Shakespeare's presence and status in the curriculum, for I believe that there is a crucial relationship between ideology and power and that certain ideologies will dominate our society and our educational system at given times. As Anthony Giddens asserts, "The chief usefulness of the concept of ideology concerns the critique of domination" (Giddens p187 in Dollimore 1986, p10). In addition, Terry Eagleton, when stating that Literature is constituted by value judgements which are historically variable, argues

that these value judgements are closely connected to ideologies and that they "...refer not simply to private taste, but to assumptions by which certain social groups exercise and maintain power over others" (Eagleton, 1983, p16).

There is no accepted categorisation of ideologies and for the purpose of this section I will distinguish and then utilise three broadly accepted educational ideologies, postulated initially by Malcolm Skilbeck (1976), which I think adequately encapsulate and help to locate the beliefs and ideas of those bodies and individuals who have been influential on the changing position of Shakespeare in the curriculum. The three ideologies are *classical humanism, progressivism* and *reconstructionism.*

Classical humanism, which is traditionally connected with the political Right, emphasises elitism, cultural heritage and tradition, special knowledge and skills, high attainment in exams and sees the task of the ruling or guardian class (including teachers) to initiate young people into the mysteries of knowledge and the ways in which knowledge confers various kinds of social power on those who possess it. Classical humanism seeks truths and values, and its aim is ever towards achieving or recapturing a standard which was built and existed sometime in the past. In the education system of England and Wales in the first part of this century, it was the dominant ideology and, as Alan Sinfield points out, it was exemplified by Sir Arthur Quiller Couch, Cambridge Professor of English Literature who stated that reading aloud by pupils and teachers was the best education as "it just lets the author - Chaucer or Shakespeare or Milton or Coleridge - have his own way with the young plant - just lets them drop 'like gentle rain from heaven', and soak in" (Quiller Couch 1947, p143). Classical humanism, I will argue, whilst prevalent in the early part of this century, made a significant comeback in the late 1980's and the 1990's and remains a powerful influence on the English curriculum and the position of Shakespeare within it.

Progressivism, sometimes termed *liberal humanism,* associated with the political Left and which had its roots in the 18th century, Rousseau and Romanticism, sees culture and society as diverse and sees human beings as primarily social beings capable of and striving for intellectual growth and self-development and fulfilment. It challenges rationality, objectivity and universality and instead promotes human individuality, inwardness, feelings and private subjective meanings, with knowledge gained by direct experience and intuition. If the latter is taken together with creativity and freedom which it also values highly, it can be seen why progressivism has been closely connected with *child centred education* which developed apace in the 1960's

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and 1970's, and its adherents have, despite concerted attacks from the educational Right and Government, managed to maintain some grip and influence over the English curriculum and how Shakespeare is taught in schools.

Reconstructionism, connected also with the political Left but the far Left traditionally, sees education as one of the forces for societal change and in opposition to capitalism. It views learning as the acquisition of knowledge as an active and social process, guided but not dominated by teachers. It is an open thought system, in that it claims to be able to absorb a wide range of influences and new possibilities for action. It sees the role of the teacher as creative and to critically appraise attributes of modern culture. It is in direct opposition to classical humanism, and has rarely had a significant and direct influence on the English curriculum but, as I hope to show later, some of its ideas, which are identifiable in practices in Higher Education English and other subject areas, are also detectable in some classroom approaches and teaching methods in secondary schools.

1900 - 1921

English Literature did not become compulsory in elementary and secondary schools until 1910 and the *Board of Education Regulations; Circular 753*. Up until that time, English Literature was regarded as a subject inferior to the classics, and treated mainly as an historical and factual subject with "moral homily" (Jeffcoate, 1992, p.33) whereby pupils could memorise some passages and gain an impression of literary landmarks. *Circular 753* changed that perception, "the history of literature should only be used to give stimulus and suggestion; and it is valuable only if it constantly sends a pupil back, with fresh interest and understanding, to literature itself" (Board of Education 1910, para 36), and instead emphasised the importance of the civilising effect of English Literature and its powers to enlarge a pupil's vocabulary, "which is the mechanism of enlarged thought, and for want of which people fall helplessly back on slang..." and improve character, "Pure English is not merely an accomplishment but an index to a formative influence over character (Board of Education, 1910, para.2). As Jon Davison comments (1998, p22), the approach here is "a high cultural, pure-English-as-civilising-agent approach advocated in the previous century by Matthew Arnold." Arnold, a poet, critic and school inspector, is seen by a number of commentators (Davison & Dowson [1998], Jeffcoate [1992], Mathieson [1975], Maybin & Mercer [1996] Palmer [1965] etc.) as a primary influence on the developing English curriculum of the early twentieth century. Jeffcoate (1992, p.33) says, "If one person could claim credit for the transformation in the status of English at the end of

the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, it was the Victorian poet and critic, Matthew Arnold." Arnold, who shared "the Romantic poets' belief in the moral superiority of the artist" (Mathieson, 1975, p.38) was concerned about what he saw as a cultural crisis in England (the decline of religion and worship, increased materialism, and the increasing power of science in education as well as in the rest of society) in the late nineteenth century, and which he felt could be solved through mass public education, the reform of classics' teaching and the increase and improved status of the teaching of 'great' literature. Arnold believed that literature was morally uplifting and could take over the diminishing role of religion. In particular he saw poetry as a major factor, and one which could be seen as taking on a religious role when he says,

> We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive of it...More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy, will be replaced by poetry. (Arnold quoted in Mathieson 1975, p40)

By great literature, Arnold was referring to such classical authors as Homer, Dante, Milton and Shakespeare. It should be remembered that Shakespeare's plays were often considered as examples of great poetry at this time and in the 1906 *Regulations for Secondary Schools* (Board of Education 1906, pp28-29) there is a scheme which suggests the texts which should be studied at certain ages and the following appears,

> YEAR 3 (*Age 14-15*)
> Texts: Poets. Simpler poems from one or more of the following: Milton, Gray, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Arnold *or* from selections such as *The Golden Treasury*.
> Shakespeare (*Julius Caesar, The Merchant, As You Like It*)

At this time, prior to the First World War, there seemed to be little debate as to what constituted "great literature" and that Shakespeare should be at the top of any list. *Circular 753* which states that it "deliberately avoids suggesting specific books as suitable" (Board of Education 1910, para 15) for reading in secondary schools, nevertheless suggests two principles to assist teachers in their choice, firstly that "the books should be of real merit as literature" (Board of Education, 1910, para 16), and throughout the circular only two authors, Milton and Shakespeare, are mentioned by name, and secondly that the books "should be difficult enough to demand genuine effort from the class, but not so difficult as to be beyond their grasp" (Board of Education, 1910, para 16), an argument that has appeared more recently when considering appropriate texts to be used when developing pupils' literacy. Although

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Circular 753 says that "It does not profess...to prescribe in detail the methods by which teachers should proceed" (Board of Education, 1910, para 3), it does suggest certain approaches to the teaching of literature and the teaching of Shakespeare in particular. In order to gain an appreciation of literature it emphasises the importance of "close acquaintance with the actual text of the book studied" (Board of Education, 1910, para 21) but advocates minimal teacher involvement for "its ripening must come from other influences – from unconscious associations, from remembrance, and, above all, from widening experience of life" (Board of Education 1910, para 21). In general, the circular promotes learning by heart, paraphrasing and treating literature as a foreign language, "all literature, prose as well as poetry, is a foreign language and requires it to be learnt as such" (Board of Education 1910, para 25). This approach to the teaching of literature was to become familiar practice in many English classrooms for the remainder of the century, but the suggestion

> Any large work which forms a single structure, such as a play of Shakespeare, should be read rapidly through, practically without comment, before its detailed study is begun, so that the class may have a general acquaintance with it as a whole, and be able to apply this knowledge to the parts (Board of Education 1910, para 28).

is less familiar but connects with more recent approaches which emphasise the importance of pupils first having an overview of a Shakespeare play and some understanding of the plot before studying the play in any detail.

However, despite the Regulations of 1904 and 1905 and *Circular 753* in 1910, the curriculum in secondary schools still tended to be dominated by the classics.

The First World War and the Russian revolution caused many to worry about the future health of English society and culture, with a particular anxiety that the working classes were no longer as subservient. Again, the ruling classes looked to education as the solution to these ills. Terry Eagleton saw the First World War as a major factor in changing attitudes to education, culture and the study of English.

> English Literature rode to power on the back of wartime nationalism; but it also represented a search for spiritual solutions on the part of an English ruling class whose sense of identity had been profoundly shaken, whose psyche was ineradicably scarred by the horrors it had endured. Literature would be at once solace and reaffirmation... (Eagleton, 1983, p.26)

The highly influential Board of Education Report *The Teaching of English in England* (Board of Education, 1921), commonly known as the Newbolt Report, which contains the famous dictum, "...every teacher is a teacher of English, because every teacher is

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a teacher in English" (Board of Education, 1921, para.64), was a response to those worries following the First World War and itself was seen to have been heavily influenced by Arnold. As Roger Knight says (1996, p.33), "Behind the Newbolt Report we feel the pressure of a common sensibility, a sensibility with strong nineteenth century roots." And Margaret Mathieson, commenting on both the Newbolt Report and *English for the English* by George Sampson (a member of the Newbolt Report Committee, whose book was published in the same year and contains some identical passages) writes, "They reflect the characteristic mood of the period following the First World War, the sharp despair and faith in education to improve the future" (Mathieson,1975, p.69).

Stephen Ball points out that five of the committee members (including Sampson) were also members of The English Association which was set up in 1906 "with the explicit aims of promoting English as a subject in its own right and its own place in the curriculum and to counter the stultifying and conservative influences of the Classical tradition" (Ball, 1985, p55). The committee expressed a number of concerns which if English was at the centre of the curriculum it felt it could allay. One of their concerns was with the dominance of classics in the then current curriculum, where, "English was often regarded as being inferior in importance, hardly worthy of any substantial place in the curriculum" (Board of Education, 1921, para.6). Mathieson adds (1975, p.73) that although the committee conceded that the classics could offer the very best education they could not span the huge gap between the classes, and that it held back liberal education in schools. The Newbolt Report states, "We believe that in English Literature we have a means of Education no less valuable than classics and decidedly more suited to the necessities of a general and national examination" (Board of Education, 1921, para.12). George Sampson in his book wrote,

> The classics in education must be described as a powerful vested interest, liable to show resentment if a rival claimant to share in the humanities is brought forward...(but)...the great and immediate means of a humane education is to be found in English and in no alien tongue whatsoever, either ancient or modern. (Sampson, 1921, p.54)

This perceived quality of literature to reach all classes complemented the role of English to promote social unity, for as the report mentions;

> We believe that such an education based upon the English language and literature would have important social, as well as personal, results; it would have a unifying tendency. (Board of Education, 1921, para.15)

One means for achieving this social unity was envisaged through treating English literature,

> ...not as language merely, but as the self expression of great natures, the record and rekindling of spiritual experiences, and in daily life for every one of us as the means by which we may, if we will, realise our own impressions and communicate them to our fellows. (Board of Education, 1921, para.14)

Elsewhere in the report there are references to "great minds" rather than "great natures", but in both phrases is the essence of a select literature, a canon. The last quotation is significant in its promotion of sensibility and morality through literature teaching, a theme which runs throughout the report, but also for the implication of a religious role for literature teaching. Margaret Mathieson mentions about the report that the teaching of literature is often referred to as "missionary work". Similarly, George Sampson in his book, following a section about training in the use of books, at the start of the aptly named section, *The induction to literature,* says, "We reach for English that is not routine, but a religion...The reading of literature is a kind of creative reception. It is also sacramental" (Sampson 1921, para.105).

The Newbolt Report and Sampson's book specifically refer to Shakespeare on a number of occasions. Shakespeare is seen as part of the "Great Literature" which is "timeless" (Board of Education, 1921, para.195). Also that "Shakespeare is an inevitable and necessary part of school activity because he is not only our greatest English writer but because his work is almost entirely in dramatic form" (para. 286). And again Shakespeare's poetic qualities are highlighted; "...it is Shakespeare the poet as much as Shakespeare the dramatist to whom we must introduce our pupils" (para.286).

As to methods and approaches to teaching Shakespeare in the classroom, both the report and Sampson's book have much to say in common; in fact there are times when the wording of the report and Sampson's book are identical on this subject. For example, both point to the difficulties for children reading Shakespeare and "the impediments" therein. Both comment that Shakespeare is "archaic", and both assert that, "The teacher's business is to give Shakespeare's scenes and characters the best chance of impressing themselves on a class; and his task therefore, is to remove the impediments" (Board of Education, 1921, para.286, and Sampson, 1921, p111). Both also suggest that the way to remove impediments is for the teacher to give a dramatic reading (but, warns Sampson, "...Heaven defend any class from the histrionic teacher" [Sampson 1921, p107]) and to explain difficult vocabulary but with the teacher being aware that, "Many passages of Shakespeare cannot be understood by children" (Board of Education, 1921, para. 286). From that point both the report

and Sampson's book suggest three further stages or forms for the teacher to adhere to;

> a. the performance of scenes or pieces in class
> b. the public performance of plays by pupils
> c. visits by pupils to professional performances of suitable plays.
> (Board of Education, 1921, para. 289)

This encouragement for pupils to perform Shakespeare is argued partly because the activities are "joyous and instructive adventures" (Sampson 1921, p114) and partly because they are character building even for the least able pupil;

> ...it has been found that boys and girls usually regarded as stupid and incapable of learning, have exhibited unsuspected ability in acting and have gained a new interest in themselves and their possibilities. Ability to do something is the first ingredient in self-respect. (Sampson1921, p.114)

These approaches could be interpreted today as *active approaches* to the teaching of Shakespeare, a term that echoes through the century, advocated by some, criticised by others. The exhortation for pupils to see "professional performances of *suitable* plays" has a fitting elitist and judgmental tone which is furthered in,

> The sooner a child becomes familiar with the best forms of theatrical amusement the less likely is he to be permanently attracted by the worst   (Board of Education, 1921, para.289).

There are other fears about the dangers of pupils seeing inappropriate performances of Shakespeare and other plays, but by contrast much support for the

> revival of the popular stage which bids fair to restore town and countryside in the twentieth century something of the spontaneous theatrical energies of the medieval craft-guilds and the Tudor village players (Board of Education, 1921, para.296).

which Terry Eagleton interprets as a "...nostalgic back-reference to the 'organic' community of Elizabethan England" (Eagleton, 1983, p.25).

The major impact of the Newbolt Report and of George Sampson's book was in the movement of English, and English Literature in particular, to centre stage of the school curriculum; impressing on teachers its value as a humanising, socially unifying, moral and spiritual force in society, with Shakespeare as the single most important figure on that stage. Both can be seen, in their rationale and their advocacy for classroom practice to be ideologically moving away from a classical humanist ideology to a more progressivist and liberal humanist ideology which although more inclusive still maintains some elements of the early ideology with its

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traditional cultural selection and elitism and its harking back to "medieval craft-guild and the Tudor village players" (Board of Education, 1921, para.296).

1922 - 1945

One member of the Newbolt Committee and the English Association was Arthur Quiller-Couch who became the first professor of English at Cambridge University in 1912. Stephen Ball contends that these connections brought about both a focal point and a network of influential figures for the teaching of English and a fertile intellectual foundation for the "founding of the 'Cambridge School' and the intellectual leadership of Leavis" (Ball, 1985, p65).

Leavis can not only be seen to have continued the Arnold tradition of moral criticism assigned to English (Abbs, 1982, p13), but also Arnold's faith in the transformative power of education (Eagleton, 1983, p29). Leavis launched the journal *Scrutiny* in 1932, and this became a powerful mouthpiece for Leavis and for such Leavisite voices as I.A. Richards and Denys Thompson. The journal is described, in the bibliography to *Culture and the Environment* (Leavis and Thompson, 1933, p150), as "a quarterly review, intended to keep those concerned about the drift of civilization [and especially those in schools] in touch with literature and the movement of ideas". Leavis's belief in the power of literature closely mirrored those espoused in the Newbolt Report and in Sampson's book. First, there was the emphasis placed on literature replacing the Classics; " Leavis felt with immense conviction that English literature should now replace the classics as the centre of academic study" (Mathieson,1975, p133). Second, was the belief that literature was a major humanising force. Abbs interpreted Leavis's view as, "the power of the creative word to promote consciousness and conscience" (Abbs, 1982, p13), and the "existential relationship between literature and human life" (Abbs, 1982, p15). Whilst Eagleton described Leavis's views of English as "*the* supremely civilizing pursuit" (Eagleton, 1983, p27). Third, that the study and teaching of literature could in some way counter what were seen as destructive cultural elements and forces of the burgeoning popular culture in society. Davison points out (1998, p30), "It is clear that the belief in the humanising effects of great literature, produced in some past golden age, is central to the Leavisite view as is a hostility to popular culture."

This humanising quality of literature, together with opposition to popular culture, was instrumental in Leavis and *Scrutiny's* establishment of a canon; founded on literature of the past which were to be examples of high standards of language and also to be

moral touchstones in some way too. As Rex Gibson interprets it, "Leavis redrew the map of English literature" and in so doing "equated *literary* with *moral* judgements. Literature became a criticism of life" (Gibson, 1986, p107). It is also part of what Abbs (1982, p13) termed "an organic tradition, out of which humus the great literary works have grown." As Maybin (1996, p245) explains,

> In order to be admitted into the Leavisite canon, texts had to display particular kinds of moral, aesthetic and 'English' qualities which would arm readers against the moral, social and commercial degeneration of the age.

Terry Eagleton is in no doubt as to the impact of the canon proposed,

> *Scrutiny* redrew the map of English literature in ways from which criticism has never quite recovered. The main thoroughfares on this map ran through Chaucer, Shakespeare, Jonson, the Jacobeans and Metaphysicals, Bunyan, Pope, Samuel Johnson, Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Austen, George Eliot, Hopkins, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot and D.H. Lawrence. This *was* English literature.

The major new development to come out of the Cambridge School and *Scrutiny*, from Leavis and I.A. Richards in particular, was that of literary criticism as a powerful discipline which was to heavily influence the teaching of English literature in Universities and schools for the rest of the century. Leavis, proposing this approach, argued that,

> It trains, in a way no other discipline can, intelligence and sensitivity together, cultivating a sensitiveness and precision of response and a delicate integrity of intelligence that integrates as well as analyses and must have pertinacity as well as delicacy. (Leavis, 1943, p34)

Leavis's concern was for the establishment of an English School at Cambridge, but he made it apparent that this approach could be relevant to work in schools;

> ...what has been said has obvious applications at the school level....Practical criticism of literature must be associated with training in awareness of the environment - advertising, the cinema, the press, architecture, and so on, for, clearly, to the pervasive counter-influence of this environment the literary training of sensibility in school is an inadequate reply. (Leavis 1943, p137)

Why so much space in the Literature review has been devoted to the influence of Leavis and the Cambridge School follows my own belief and that of others (Mathieson, Eagleton, Gibson, Davison etc.) that that influence was the major influence on the teaching of literature in universities and schools for the remainder of this century. Not only that, but when Leavis is exemplifying the beginning of the use

of practical criticism in universities and schools it is to Shakespeare that he turns; "At an early stage, the attempt should be made to apply seriously the axiom that poetry is made of words to the reading of Shakespeare" (Leavis, 1943, p121). It needs also to be remembered that Leavis also emphasised the importance of contextualising the text being studied; "Literary history and knowledge of the background, social and intellectual, remain, of course, indispensable" (Leavis 1943, p127). Leavis held Shakespeare in the highest esteem; "Shakespeare had an immeasurably great influence upon English" (Leavis, 1969, p41), and "Shakespeare was *the* dramatist" (Leavis, 1969, p89). Most commentators on the Leavis, Cambridge School, *Scrutiny* period have little doubt as to its considerable impact on the English curriculum in schools. Mathieson (1975, p122) points out that,

> it was Leavis who tightened the link between English studies at university level and the school teacher's responsibility in the outside world. Believing in the central value of great literature, and in the need for critical discrimination in our debased cultural environment, Leavis gave English teachers the responsibility for training pupils, and hence citizens, 'to resist'.

She adds that during this period the Cambridge School produced many English teachers in schools who faithfully followed the Leavis approach to literary criticism, a point echoed by Ball (1985, p65) and Davison (1998, p29); and Brian Cox openly acknowledges his and his committee's debt to Leavis when he writes, "In the Cox Report we repeated the belief of many teachers of English that the study of literature does foster intelligence and sensibility, as Leavis so passionately argued" (Cox, 1991,p75). Even Rex Gibson who, whilst acknowledging the influence of Leavis on himself, regards Leavis as "anti-democratic and elitist" (Gibson 1986, p108) still comments that "Leavis is the key figure in the teaching of English" (Gibson, 1986, p106).

Before leaving this period of between the two world wars, it is worth pointing out that another Board of Education report, the *Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education*, more commonly referred to as the *Spens Report*, was published in 1938. Its significance to the preceding discussion is that it reflects and highlights a number of the ideas and principles concerning English in the school curriculum apparent in Arnold, the *Newbolt Report*, Sampson and Leavis; namely that English should be of central importance; "the school itself should adopt a unifying principle in its curriculum, and we recommend that it be found in the teaching of English" (Board of Education, 1938, para 31), that literature cultivates "aesthetic sensibility" (Board of Education, 1938, para 32) and gives pupils "some idea of the meaning of civilisation and of their country's contribution to it; some recognition of the

heritage into which they enter and the responsibilities awaiting them" (Board of Education, 1938, para 33). The *Norwood Report* (Board of Education, 1943) echoes much of the *Spens Report* and asserts that English literature is concerned with that "which is past analysis or explanation, and values which must be caught rather than taught" implying yet again the importance of literature as cultural and moral heritage in imbuing moral and cultural values in pupils with little direct teaching.

To sum up, this period of roughly the first half of the twentieth century, saw the advocacy and emergence of English, and particularly English literature, as claiming a central place in the curriculum of secondary schools replacing the classics. Literature was seen as of vital importance in pupils gaining a sense of their cultural heritage and national identity, of bringing about a much needed unified society, and in aiding them, through the discipline of practical criticism, to become civilised and to be able to counter the espoused damaging influences of popular culture. A canon was established with Shakespeare firmly at the top of the list. It was also at this time that clear suggestions were formulated as to how Shakespeare might be taught in the classroom, with a general sense that there should be well-planned but minimal teacher intervention in the process and that the eventual dramatisation of a Shakespeare text by pupils should be a major aim. Ideologically, this period, dominated by the Leavisite ideas of the Cambridge School, can be defined as largely classical humanist, but with an emphasis on the reader's feelings and thoughts there is a discernible progressivist influence. And whilst the introduction of the transformative discipline of practical criticism together with the avowal to attack and oppose the growth in popular culture in order to bring a more unified society could possibly be interpreted as reconstructionist, it is, in my view, a reactionary attitude as its primary emphasis is on individual inward reflection and change and shows no concern to oppose the structural constraints upon the freedom of the individual nor to challenge the inequalities in society. Rather it deflects attention away from community and societal issues and is seen therefore as more progressivist. These ideologies, ideas and principles were to remain as the basis of English literature teaching in schools for much of the post-war period. To some extent until the 1980's, literature and Shakespeare's importance in the English curriculum was to diminish as more emphasis was to be given to English language with the emergence of the ideas from writers such as Dixon (1967), Barnes (1969), Rosen (1969), Britton (1970), Halliday (1964) and the Bullock Report (1975). Stephen Ball (Goodson 1985, p61) and others have also argued that one reason why literature did not have a stronghold in the curriculum in this period and earlier was because of the lack of sufficient specialist English teachers in our state schools, partly due to economic factors, partly

because that generation of Leavisite English teachers had gone mainly to public and grammar schools and also because it was a time when there was still a feeling that anyone could teach English.

1945 - 1966

The next period under consideration is the post-war period until 1966, the year of the Anglo-American Dartmouth Seminar out of which came John Dixon's book *Growth through English* (Dixon, 1967), both of which were instrumental in shifting the focus and priorities of English teaching.

The post-war period was a relatively stable period for the first ten years or more with a strong Leavisite tradition apparent. In 1954, A.K. Hudson's *Shakespeare and the Classroom* was published. In it he refers to a "small-scale investigation among teachers" (Hudson, 1954, p2) concerning the importance of Shakespeare in the curriculum, and he summarises the outcome as follows;

1 Shakespeare's plays are a vital part of our national cultural heritage.
2 Pure, inexplicable tradition within the school.
3 With the steady disappearance of Greek and Latin from the curriculum, Shakespeare can be very usefully made to serve as the foundation of a liberal education.
4 Examination demands.
5 The plays contain unrivalled opportunities for developing a love and understanding of poetry.
6 Shakespeare can be used as a rather lively means of teaching social history.
7 The plays provide an unusually wide range of examples of human motivation.
8 Shakespeare's plays act well.
9 I, the teacher, enjoy the plays. (Hudson, 1954, p2)

Hudson clarifies his own view of Shakespeare when he writes that Shakespeare is "the centre of drama, the centre of poetry" and "his plays are a practical, as well as a liberal education because they touch life at so many points" (Hudson, 1954, p16). It can be seen from the summarised list and Hudson's views that they are a reflection of the beliefs of Arnold, Sampson and Leavis discussed earlier, with their emphasis on cultural heritage, tradition, Shakespeare replacing the Classics, Shakespeare as a way into poetry and as an insight into human motivation. Hudson also emphasises

the importance of pupils performing Shakespeare and descries the traditional classroom method of reading the play line-by-line around the class and then the pupils paraphrasing each section. He regarded this as an "antiquated" method which results in those pupils as adults regarding Shakespeare "as a source of handy quotations and as a curious joke..." (Hudson, 1954, pp8 -9) and having "a profound contempt for Shakespeare" (Hudson, 1954, p10). However, he suggests that the method is "fortunately fading into disrepute" (Hudson, 1954, p10) because exam questions are more reasonable which treat the play as a whole play and that school drama has improved. Hudson promotes what he terms "the acting method" (Hudson, 1954, p14) as an alternative to the traditional. This is a method which involves the pupils performing scenes from the play in the classroom or on stage for the purpose of "making knowledge real" (Hudson, 1954, p15). In addition, he advocates the benefits of pupils having a basic understanding of the plot before any detailed study is begun and suggests that this is achieved "by a fast first reading, with a minimum of interruptions and explanations" (Hudson, 1954, p23). He also encourages teachers to take their pupils to see a performance of the play. How similar these three activities (fast, uninterrupted reading; pupil performance and pupils seeing a staged performance) are to those suggestions for practice made by George Sampson (1921) and discussed earlier in this chapter.

It needs to be questioned as to which English teachers Hudson had in mind when writing the book as, has been mentioned earlier, this was a period where there was a great shortage of specialist English teachers in secondary schools, a point that is highlighted in *Half Our Future. A Report of the Central Advisory Council* (DES, 1963), often known as the Newsom Report, and the statement, "the truism that 'every teacher is a teacher of English' is in practice so perverted that it might often as well read 'anybody can teach English'" (DES, 1963, para 542). This view is echoed in Paffard's article (1962, p23) published the previous year, where he states that "the truism...may have done more harm than good. Many specialist teachers of other subjects still find odd corners of their timetable filled up with a few periods of English."

At the end of this period (1965), J.H. Walsh, joint editor with Denys Thompson of the journal *The Use of English* and a 'senior English master' at a grammar school in Kent, published a book *Teaching English* with one chapter entitled *The Shakespeare Play* (pp151-164) in which specific "stages of study" (Walsh, 1965, p153) are advocated and which are similar to those structured approaches suggested both by Sampson and Hudson, emphasising theatre visits and a preliminary first reading or "hearing" (on disc) of the play. The difference is in Walsh giving greater attention to "longer

speeches and linguistic detail" (Walsh, 1965, p153) at the expense of performance of scenes by pupils, which could well reflect the growing importance in grammar schools of the GCE English Literature examination.

Commentators on this period, such as Shayer (1972), Mathieson (1975) and Saunders (1976), regard Marjorie Hourd's book *The Education of the Poetic Spirit* (1949) as, in the words of Shayer (1972, p136), a "seminal work in the post-1945 Creative Movement in English teaching", and which may partly explain the stasis or decline of the position of English literature teaching in secondary schools in this period, and the growth of creative work in English which is given prominence in the Newsom Report (DES, 1963) and in the writings of another important figure in English teaching in schools in this period, David Holbrook.

Shayer (1972), Jeffcoate (1992) and Knight (1996) all regard Holbrook as a disciple of Leavis who promoted an important creative dimension to English work in classrooms. As Shayer says of Holbrook, "Like Marjorie Hourd, he is convinced that the most important moment in the writing programme is when the child's pen is on the paper in a situation of free but intense expression" (Shayer, 1975, p151). However, Holbrook's carrying of the flag of the Leavis tradition should not be underestimated. His ties with the Sampson, Leavis tradition and the Cambridge School can be seen in his most influential book *English for Maturity* (1961), where the foreword is by Denys Thompson, a quotation from Arnold precedes the Introduction and his second chapter begins with a quote from Sampson. Shayer points out that Holbrook's introductory remarks "are almost identical to George Sampson's remarks in 'English for the English'" (Shayer, 1972, p148). In the same book, Holbrook underlines the importance of studying Shakespeare, "the touchstone when we discuss literature" (Holbrook, 1961, p40) and "Shakespeare's constructive achievement as an artist is a great one because of his 'terrifying honesty'" (Holbrook, 1961, p 41). But Holbrook also realised that the writers in the Leavis canon could be too demanding for secondary modern pupils and suggested more accessible alternatives.

Chris Davies interprets Holbrook's influence as partly a "genuine democratic idealism" (Davies, 1996, p19) in its drive to bring English literature, creative writing and oral work to the working class pupils in the secondary modern schools, but he also suggests that the motives behind the drive are from "a less appealing tradition in which the middle classes have tried to deploy the resources within their control - such as the experience of high culture - in order to keep the working class quiet" (Davies, 1996, pp19-20). Ball (1985) supports this view and claims that behind Holbrook and

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other Leavisites is "not only an explicit literary elitism but also an explicit social elitism" (Ball, 1985, p79).

The strand of creative work issuing from Hourd and Holbrook is clearly visible in the Newsom Report. This report also highlights the importance of 'spoken English' (an aspect of English work which Holbrook also supported). It identifies three main roles of English in the school's curriculum; "as a medium of communication, a means of creative expression and a literature embodying the vision of greatness" (DES, 1963, para 462). The last aspect, English literature, is given some importance; "All pupils need the civilising experience of contact with great literature, and can respond to its universality". Although no specific mention is made of Shakespeare, the Leavis tradition and the centrality of great literature is kept alive but English literature now has to share the platform with two other relative newcomers. The report is also significant to this discussion in that it promulgated the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) which was first introduced in 1965, intended for "candidates extending from those who just overlap the group taking the Ordinary level of GCE examination to those who are just below the average in ability" (DES, 1961, para 242), and decreed in English Literature, for the first time in public examinations, that the study of Shakespeare need not be compulsory.

The development of English teaching in this period can be seen to be a movement away from the hitherto dominant Leavisite tradition where English literature was prominent, to a position where creativity and spoken language are equally important. Furthermore, another feature of the Newsom Report which was to be picked up to become highly significant in the following decade with the publication of *A Language for Life* (DES, 1975) was the notion of English being taught across the curriculum and the report's recommendation that "Basic skills in reading, writing...should be reinforced through every medium of the curriculum" (DES, 1963, p31) and also that, "The use of language in thought and communication must enter into every part of the curriculum" (DES, 1963, para 461).

To sum up this post-war period, it could be said that with the diminishing of the Leavisite position, the importance of Shakespeare had equally diminished, and that the new movement, which still retained elements of classical humanism, in its child centred and creative approach and the emphasis on oracy, was becoming more democratic and progressivist.

1966 - 1980

The next period in English teaching spans a time of some conflict where there was a gradual movement away from the Leavisite, literature-based curriculum towards one where language development, a focus on the processes involved in reading and writing, and a need to make direct connections with the lives and cultures of pupils was to have prominence. Shakespeare, which was until then central to the canon and a keystone of the English curriculum in secondary schools, was relegated to be replaced with more modern and more 'accessible' texts. Alan Sinfield contextualises this movement and its effects on literature teaching by summarising the societal demands of the time;

> government pressures for more and better scientists, the anticipated raising of the school leaving age to 16, the amalgamation of grammar and secondary modern schools into comprehensives and the demand for student participation. They all served to problematise literature. (Dollimore and Sinfield 1985, p144)

In what follows, I will argue that there were two significant publications in this period, John Dixon's *Growth through English* (1967) and *A Language for Life, A Report of the Committee of Inquiry* (DES, 1975) more commonly known as the Bullock Report, as well as the growth in numbers of pupils taking GCE and CSE examinations in English Literature which was to have equal influence.

Arising from the 1966 Anglo-American Dartmouth seminar was Dixon's *Growth through English* which was to support and extend some of the ideas and suggestions in the Newsom Report, notably in its concern for including the "less able" together with an emphasis on the creative expression of the individual pupil. Saunders regards it as "one of the most important statements of the 'progressive' movements in English teaching. The approach is uncompromisingly child-centred" (Saunders, 1976, p9). Dixon was critical of what he saw as the hitherto competing models of English, the *cultural heritage model* and the *skills model*, and introduced a third, *language and personal growth model* (Dixon, 1967, pp 4-13).

The cultural heritage model follows the Arnold, Sampson, Leavisite tradition, and Dixon criticises its practice in classrooms, "In the heritage model the stress was on culture as *given*. There was a constant temptation to ignore culture as the pupils knew it" (Dixon, 1967, p3). He adds,

> A heritage model...turns language into a one-way process: pupils are readers, receivers of the master's voice...it neglects the most fundamental aim of language - to promote interaction between people. As a result drama... has been interpreted as the study of texts, not acting them out. (Dixon, 1967, p6)

Instead, Dixon promotes classroom practice with literature which brings together the world of the pupil and "the world of the writer" (Dixon, 1967, p3). The *language and personal growth model* aimed to make English a more unified subject where there was a "swing to process" (Dixon, 1967, p12), and where,

> pupils meet to share their encounters with life, and to do this effectively they move freely between dialogue and monologue - between talk, drama and writing; and literature, by bringing new voices into the classroom, adds to the store of shared experience. (Dixon, 1967, p13)

In practice this involved teachers leaving behind some of the canonical texts, including Shakespeare, in favour of those texts which were closer to the lives of their pupils. Jeffcoate (1992, p40) notes that whilst Dixon's growth model had its origins in "Froebel's kindergarten method" and his promotion of creative activities "located him fully within the child-centred tradition", the move away from "the best which has been thought and said" to a "personal response" to literature was what marked Dixon's work as different. Interestingly, this view gained some support from Leavisites such as Frank Whitehead, who in Denys Thompson's book *Directions in the Teaching of Literature* (1969) wrote "literature is assigned a key role in our unified conception of English teaching: not as a subject for study ('Eng. Lit., 'our cultural heritage') but as a supremely potent mode of significant experience" (Whitehead in Thompson, 1969, p24) and

> Whereas at one time the teacher's starting-point would be a shopping-list of hall-marked 'good literature' which his pupils ought to become acquainted with before they left school, we are now disposed to look first and foremost for books, poems and plays which speak directly to the pupil's own condition at his present stage of development (Whitehead, 1969, p25).

Writing in 1980 and reflecting on the influence of Dixon's book, David Allen is critical particularly for the diminution of literature and reading in the English curriculum which were given "a contributory, ancillary role" (Allen, 1980, p36). He objects to the way that the personal response to literature has resulted in a lack of attention to text and the way that literature is " a centre from which pupils move" (Allen, 1980, p40), so that it serves other English needs; supporting a thematic or language based approach. In addition, continuing his Leavisite stance, he criticises Dixon's book in its

failure to "...recognise the contribution of the past" (Allen, 1980, p44) to the point where "Literature has become a social document" (Allen, 1980, p47).

The Bullock Report, in a similar vein to Allen's, was also critical of "the notion of English in the secondary school as almost exclusively a source of material for personal response to social issues" (DES, 1975, para 1.9). It was primarily this report which took up the idea in the Newsom Report and coined the phrase "language across the curriculum" and suggested that English could be a part of a school's integrated curriculum (DES, 1975, para's 15.1- 15.4), whilst also lamenting, as did Newsom, that "English is taught by so many teachers without appropriate qualifications" (DES, 1975, para 177). Again, as did the Newsom Report and Dixon's *Growth through English*, the Bullock Report advocated a unified English curriculum with emphasis on a broad literacy and the development of language skills and which did not prioritise literature. Ball (1985, p75) sees the report as steering a "middle course ... to establish a 'coherent' basis for English teaching which draws together some of the diverse and competing versions of school English that had been seen in contest during the period 1960 - 1975." Although given no special prominence in the report, literature (albeit with no mention of Shakespeare) is clearly viewed from a Leavisite perspective, "the teaching of literature teaching is one which aims at personal and moral growth" (DES, 1975, para 9.2) [Here Knight (1996, p47) is mistaken in asserting that "Rather than acknowledge the moral argument for literature, the Bullock Committee simply acted as though they had never heard of it."] and "It provides imaginative insight into what another person is feeling" (DES, 1975, para 9.2). Although the report questions the "'civilising power' of literature" it contends that "we can look to the results of various studies of children's reading as some indication of its value as a personal resource" (DES, 1975, para 9.3).

Holbrook in his book *English for Meaning* (1979), takes issue with the report in a chapter entitled *The Dead End of Bullock* in which, in true Leavisite fashion, he attacks Bullock as being "bad and boring" (Holbrook, 1979, p23), giving insufficient space to poetry and literature and in failing to emphasise that "language is bound up with thought and feeling" (Holbrook, 1979, p24).

The other major factors influencing the teaching of English literature, and Shakespeare in particular, were the GCE and CSE examinations. Alan Sinfield, whose ideology is undisguised reconstructionism, argues that the restrictive paramaters of the Shakespeare questions on the GCE papers work to

construct Shakespeare and the candidate in terms of individuated subjectivity through their stress upon Shakespeare's free-standing genius, their emphasis on characterisation, and their demand for the candidate's personal response. (Sinfield, 1985, p140)

This criticism is very similar to that made of the Key Stage 3 examinations for Shakespeare as will be discussed later in this thesis. Sinfield sees the GCE examinations as supporting a classical humanist ideology where the universal and the individual are opposed to the historical and social (Dollimore and Sinfield, 1985, p141). Whilst Shakespeare was compulsory for those taking GCE, it was not for CSE, and Sinfield notes that one CSE board warned teachers "'Candidates, particularly the less able, should be steered away from "The Works of Shakespeare"'" (Dollimore and Sinfield 1985, p136), and supports Sinfield's view that it is a distinct educational ideological manoeuvre "that the allegedly universal culture to which equal access is apparently offered is, at the same time, a marker of 'attainment' and hence of privilege" (Dollimore and Sinfield, 1985, p136).

Brian Rowe, Chief Examiner for CSE, GCE and A level, referring to practice he had witnessed in a variety of schools, constructs his aims for the teaching of Shakespeare around "reasons for teaching and examining Shakespeare at CSE and GCE" (Rowe, 1979, p44), indicating the influence that these exams had over pedagogy at that time. He describes the "traditional 'seated' approach" (Rowe, 1979, p46) to teaching Shakespeare as children read "round the class" (Rowe, 1979, p46). He points out that some teachers were aware of the limitations of this approach and describes alternatives including constructing diagrams of Shakespeare's theatre, performing excerpts, improvising scenes and watching TV or film versions, but mentions that

These tend to have been confined to the lower school, with the normal "seated" method being used in the upper school where external examinations make certain demands. (Rowe, 1979, p46)

However, he does comment on the, then, new Mode 3 CSE (which allowed English departments to construct their own syllabus within certain guidelines) and suggests that the alternative methods could have a place there.

In this period then, there are conflicting influences and interests ideologically. On the one hand there is still the classical humanist ideology present in the work of some commentators (such as Holbrook and Thompson) supported by certain aspects of the Bullock Report and the powerful GCE, CSE and A level examination boards. On the other hand there is the competing progressivist ideology with its emphases on developing child-centred, personal response, language-based and broader literature

approaches, which are visible in other facets of the Bullock Report, Dixon's personal growth model and the new forms of CSE examinations.

1980 - 1988

The period 1980 - 1988 is likely to be viewed as a brief period in English teaching in which progressivist tendencies were allowed to develop (both by government and the exam boards); a period in which there were few restrictions on the English curriculum in secondary schools together with an emphasis on personal growth, personal response and process rather than product. This relaxation and relative freedom for English teaching came about in the early 1980's, according to Chris Davies, through a "variety of factors" (Davies, 1996, p22) which combined and included;

> the explosion of a new vigorous youth-oriented popular culture of the 1960's; the growth and consolidation of TV as the central form of mass communication; the move to comprehensivisation in schools; social, political and intellectual revolutions in Europe and USA; and new waves of social and cultural theory within higher education. (Davies, 1996, p22)

This period came to an abrupt end in 1989 with the introduction and publication of *English for Ages 5 - 16* (DES, 1989), more commonly known now as the Cox Report, and which will be considered in the next section of this chapter.

As implied by Chris Davies there were, in Higher Education, great changes taking place in English at this time and this was significant because some of the students who graduated would eventually become English teachers in secondary schools in the late 1980's and 1990's, likely to find discrepancy between their paradigm of English and that in the school. This change in university English departments was generally a move away from the Leavis paradigm and towards a critical or cultural theory paradigm; i.e. away from a model which focused primarily on the text alone to a model which focused attention outside the text and to the social and political contexts which influenced the production and reception (then and now) of the text. As Chris Davies mentions, these critical theory positions included "structuralism, post-structuralism, psychoanalytic criticism and Marxist criticism" (Davies, 1996, p23). Widdowson, writing in 1982, considers the changes in English in HE to be a crisis in English studies (a view which Drakakis [1985, p1] supports] and that

> The 'crisis' in English ...is no longer a debate between criticisms as to which 'approach' is best...Rather it is a question as to what English *is*. (Widdowson, 1982, p7)

Davies suggests that one effect of this and of the increased flexibility within the English curriculum in schools was for there to be a consideration and inclusion of texts not previously associated with English. In this respect, Lesley Aers points out that

> In 1987 one of the set texts on the Cambridge Board's list was the video of a play, *Flying into the Wind* by David Leland (It was important that the film was the text not the script). (Aers and Whelan, 1991, p31)

In addition it must be noted that in this period the study of Shakespeare became no longer compulsory and pupils could "go into the sixth form without having read any Shakespeare" (Aers and Whelan ,1991, p31). The introduction of GCSE in 1986 continued this trend giving only an advisory list of books, again with no compulsion to study Shakespeare. It is somewhat ironic that, although the influences upon and tendencies in this new curriculum allow and encourage a move away from the Leavisite paradigm, they both come together again in their focus on the media, an aspect which was to become important too in the study of Shakespeare in the period that followed.

Also in this period in Higher Education, were a number of critical theorists (I use this term following Gibson's practice [1986] to describe those theorists who pertain to such theories as I mentioned earlier, and which are often in conflict, which challenge and question traditional and often dominant views of literature and particularly of Shakespeare) who were directly and critically commenting upon Shakespeare and the teaching of it in schools.

Dollimore and Sinfield's book entitled *Political Shakespeare: New essays in cultural materialism* (1985) states very clearly its objectives for education and for teaching Shakespeare in schools; "In education Shakespeare has been made to speak mainly for the right; that is a tendency which this book seeks to alter" (Dollimore and Sinfield, 1985, p135) and "The plays may be taught so as to foreground their historical construction in Renaissance England and in the institution of criticism, dismantling the metaphysical concepts in which they seem at present to be estranged...Teaching Shakespeare's plays...is unlikely to bring down capitalism, but it is a point for intervention" (Dollimore and Sinfield, 1985, p154). They argue that Shakespeare has been appropriated by the right to suit its ideological needs, particularly in its emphases on character and individualism, 'universal' and 'timeless' truths and its concentrating more on plot, personal response and words and language rather than the social, political and historical contexts which determined how Shakespeare's plays were produced; but that Shakespeare can be appropriated by the left to suit their ideological needs through reference to social, political and economic contexts

then and now and, as Gibson mentions, "to bring out the subversive meanings that question the inequalities of the status quo and the privileges of dominant groups" (Gibson 1986, p 111).

Terence Hawkes in his 1986 book *That Shakespeherian Rag; essays on a critical process*, offers the view that in the past Shakespeare's texts have been variously treated as novels (as in A.C. Bradley's realistic approach), plays (with the text secondary to the performance) and poetry; "It [the text] exhibits patterns, deploys themes, points to itself, and takes itself as its ultimate subject" (Hawkes ,1986, p77). As an alternative, Hawkes proposes that the text needs to be viewed "as a site, or an area of conflicting and often contradictory potential interpretations" (Hawkes, 1986, p117), and that pupils should be taught that "Shakespeare's plays are not transparent entities... but inherently plural structures, always open to manifold interpretations (Hawkes, 1986, p123). In Hawkes' 1992 book, *Meaning by Shakespeare*, he clarifies his position which would seem to echo Dollimore and Sinfield when he writes "All we can ever do is use Shakespeare as a powerful element in specific ideological strategies" (Hawkes, 1992, p3) and that "The point of Shakespeare and his plays lies in their capacity to serve as instruments by which we make cultural meaning for ourselves" (Hawkes, 1992, p147). These latter points will be taken up in the final section when considering views of Shakespeare's relevance and universality.

In 1988, Graham Holderness edited *The Shakespeare Myth*. In it, the hegemony of Shakespeare in the curriculum is explored by David Margolies who argues that Shakespeare is packaged in such a way in schools and by exam boards, and generally in our society, that it resists challenge and "allows only those interpretations naturalised in a ruling-class perspective and thereby helps preserve the status quo" (Margolies in Holderness, 1988, p52). This view is echoed by David Hornbrook who, in a similar way to Dollimore, claims that teachers can use Shakespeare to "wrest back control of the meanings of our cultural life on behalf of those they teach" (Hornbrook in Holderness, 1988, p157). Thus it can be seen that the strongest views emanating from Higher Education on the teaching of Shakespeare are predominantly reconstructionist, directly challenging the traditional approach to the teaching of Shakespeare.

However, within this period of the 1980's, there were two government publications which can be seen to have had some influence on attempting to maintain the existence in the English curriculum of traditional English literature and of Shakespeare, namely, *English from 5-16: Curriculum Matters 1* (DES, 1984, and its

companion *The Responses to Curriculum Matters* 1, [DES, 1986]) and the *Report of the Inquiry into the Teaching of English Language*, more popularly known as the Kingman Report (DES, 1988).

Curriculum Matters 1, in the section on Reading, included in its objectives that pupils will "have experienced some literature and drama of high quality, not limited to the twentieth century, including Shakespeare" (DES, 1984, p11) and in its principles of English teaching that "Good English teaching is far more than the inculcation of skills: it is an education of the intellect and the sensibility" (DES, 1984, p13). Those statements are in a recognisably Leavisite vein which is of no surprise, for as Susan Leach points out, "The person responsible for the publication, Jack Dalgleish, was HMI Staff Inspector for English, and had been a student of F.R. Leavis" (Leach, 1992, p20). The ensuing *Responses to Curriculum Matters 1* summarised the responses to the first document and in amending some of its objectives took out the reference to Shakespeare so that it now read, "pleasurable and sustained encounters with a wide selection of fiction, poetry and drama (not confined to the twentieth century)" (DES, 1986, p24), a notably different tone which Leach suggests reflects "with greater accuracy...the activities of the classroom" (Leach, 1992, p20). These two *Curriculum Matters* documents were to provide the model structure for the *National Curriculum for English* (DES, 1989) by dividing the objectives for pupils in English into five distinct areas; Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and About Language (DES, 1984, pp 6-8).

The Kingman Report was centrally concerned with the teaching of English language in schools, but in so doing it necessarily made references to literature, hence;

> Wide reading, and as great an experience as possible of the best imaginative literature, are essential to the full development of an ear for language, and to a full knowledge of the range of possible patterns of thought and feeling made accessible by the power and range of language (DES, 1988, para 21)

The report qualifies "best imaginative literature" to include both "good contemporary works" but also "It is equally important... to read and hear and speak the great literature of the past...The rhythms of our daily speech and writing are haunted...by the rhythms of Shakespeare, Blake..." (DES, 1988, para 21). If this is viewed in the light of the earlier discussion of trends in Higher Education English and the changes to the exam board syllabuses, the report can be read as a rearguard action opposing the drift in English literature to abandon its traditional cultural heritage roots in favour

of more popular texts. Indeed, Leach sees both the *Curriculum Matters* documents and the Kingman Report as concerned

> to outline a desirable position which in all respects is backward-looking, generated by a desire to recapture, to recuperate a threatened certainty. Concern is implicit... that not only has 'great literature' been removed from centre stage, but that it might be pushed off into the wings. (Leach, 1992, p21)

The reports can be regarded as espousing a classical humanist position in terms of their views of English literature, and it may be worth noting that one of the members of the Kingman Committee was Brian Cox, whose name is now synonymous with the first National Curriculum for English document, the Cox Report (DES, 1989). Cox chaired the Working Group for English and he consulted with and the writing of the report was strongly influenced by, (in matters pertaining to the teaching of Shakespeare) Rex Gibson and his *Shakespeare in Schools Project.* The project ran initially from 1986 - 1989 with its magazine *Shakespeare in Schools* continuing until 1993, with its aim to "improve the quality of pupils' encounters with Shakespeare in all educational settings for pupils up to 18-19 years of age" (Gibson, 1994 p211). It researched and identified and disseminated good practice through the magazine and through INSET. At its conclusion, having analysed "over two thousand lessons", the project had identified a number of principles which "characterise good school Shakespeare practice" (Gibson, 1994 p213). In summary they are as follows:

> *Learner-centred:* active methods acknowledge that the reader actively makes meaning.
> *Social:* active methods are collaborative and participatory.
> *Physical:* active methods are physically active to promote imaginative, intellectual and emotional development.
> *Choice:* active methods accord choice and responsibility to students.
> *Encouraging a wide range of response:* dramatic, theatrical, written, discussion, expressive, artistic.
> *Involving a wide range of resources.*
> *Exploratory.*
> *Setting appropriate tasks.*
> *Plurality.* There isn't one interpretation, one method. Instead there are many.
> *Enjoyment.* (Gibson in Bradley 1994, pp 213 - 215)

As Gibson himself declares, "These principles clearly indicate that there is no 'one way' of teaching Shakespeare" (Gibson, 1994, pp 215). However the emphasis is very strongly on the "active" approach as opposed to the traditional desk-bound, line-by-line study. Bob Allen, whilst applauding the project, has reservations that unless teachers in English departments give careful consideration to choice of

activities suggested, it could "lead to a free-for-all in which the potential richness of Shakespeare as Shakespeare somehow is missed" (Allen, 1991, p49). Susan Leach, who was a member of the project, says that Gibson is "utterly convinced of the importance of Shakespeare, but much less for any reasons to do with cultural worth, and much more to do with the experience of Shakespeare undertaken in an active, exploratory way" (Leach, 1992, p24). This would appear to be true in that Gibson's reasons for teaching Shakespeare are as numerous and broad as the principles (see Gibson, 1994, pp140 142); the headings are as follows;

> *Language*
> *Relevance*
> *Cultural heritage*
> *Shakespeare offers emancipatory possibilities*
> *Feeding students' imaginations*
> *Shakespeare resources students' writing*
> *Shakespeare requires demystification*
> *To empower students*

A mixture of influences is detectable here including that of Leavis which Gibson readily acknowledges (Gibson, 1986, p108), but the last two headings could be straight from the writings of such critical theorists as Dollimore, Sinfield, Hawkes or Holderness discussed earlier. Ideologically then, Gibson's approach encompasses at the one extreme classical humanism and at the other reconstructionism but also contains elements of progressivism in its learner-centredness and for evoking "open, multilayered responses" (Gibson 1994, pp141).

Leach, when considering Gibson's association with the English Working Party for the National Curriculum identifies a paradox;
Gibson is so convinced of the rightness of including Shakespeare in the National Curriculum, and so keen that pupils should experience Shakespeare, that he is prepared to contemplate the risk that most pupils' experience of Shakespeare will remain minimal, boring, text-and-desk-bound, simply because most teachers have not had access to the kind of approach which he is supporting" (Leach, 1992, p24).

1989 - 1999
The period 1989 to 1999 saw unprecedented Government intervention in and restriction through legislation, of State schools' curriculum. The introduction of the National Curriculum in 1990 was the culmination of a Governmental process started in the 1970's to gain central control of the curriculum of schools, as the curriculum had been seen as disparate and at times working counter to the interest of the

economy and the state to engender national unity. As Andrew Stables mentions, "A National Curriculum seeks to bring order to chaos" (Stables, 1992, p14). The History curriculum was a major battleground for the Government's drive to create a truly *national* curriculum as was the English curriculum. Brian Cox, chair of the English Working Group, writing about the Conservative Government responsible for the first National Curriculum, comments,

> They feel an instinctive trust in the works of English genius which for them ought to be enshrined in the English syllabus...Education is seen as a means of transmitting our cultural heritage; its ideological function is to reproduce culture and social order. A National Curriculum should impose from the top ranks of society a feeling of continuity, hierarchy and security which will help children to combat the post-modern condition of exile, alienation and disaffiliation. (Cox, 1992, p3)

A rationale not too dissimilar to that espoused by Newbolt and later by Leavis for the value of English literature. Shakespeare would be at the centre of the new English curriculum, with his plays becoming the only prescribed texts and with one part of the Key Stage 3 examination of English devoted to Shakespeare.

The document which was to herald these changes in English was *English for Ages 5 - 16: Proposals of the Secretary of State* (DES, 1989), more commonly known as the Cox Report after the chair of its working group. In that Cox Report, under the heading *The role of English in the curriculum*, were listed "five different views of the subject; personal growth, cross-curricular, adult needs, cultural heritage and cultural analysis" (DES, 1989, para's 2:20 to 2:25), one of which, personal growth, can be traced back to John Dixon (1967), cross-curricular and adult needs to the Newsom and Bullock Reports and cultural heritage back to Newbolt, Sampson and Leavis, leaving only cultural analysis as new to models of the English curriculum. Cultural analysis reflects the more recent changes and developments in English but is clearly out of step ideologically with the others; as Chris Davies explains; " a 'cultural analysis' viewpoint is so firmly opposed to beliefs about the inherent superiority of particular forms of language and literature" (Davies, 1996, p39). The English Curriculum was divided into three "Profile Components", Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. Within Reading, the cultural heritage view is a strong one, for whilst teachers are instructed to "encourage pupils to read a variety of genres" (DES, 1989, para 16:30) they are also told that

> Pupils need to be aware of the richness of contemporary writing, but they should also be introduced to pre-20th century literature. Teachers should introduce pupils to some of the works which have been most influential in shaping and refining the English language and its literature... In particular, they should give pupils the opportunity to gain some experience of the works of Shakespeare. (DES, 1989 para 16:31)

Further on in the document a whole paragraph is devoted to Shakespeare. In it is an acknowledgement of the differing views of Shakespeare but it adds that "Shakespeare's plays are so rich that in every age they can produce fresh meanings and even those who deny his universality agree on his cultural importance" (DES, 1989, para 7:16). When, after a consultation period, the proposals were transformed into the statutory Orders of Council *English in the National Curriculum* (DES, 1990), the tenor was to remain largely consistent with that of the Cox Report.

In 1991, Cox commented about the Report and the five views of English, where he talks about their "vital importance" in giving "a broad approach to the curriculum which can unite the profession" (Cox 1991, p21). In the same commentary, Cox gives prominence to two main principles in English, personal development and preparation for the adult world. In their 1991 survey to ascertain the views of teachers on the five views of English in the Cox Report, Goodwyn and Findlay found that,

> all respondents recognised the models and approved of them all being used but that Personal Growth was the overwhelmingly preferred model...second came Cultural Analysis then Adult Needs and Cultural Heritage were effectively equal third. (Goodwyn and Findlay, 1999, pp20-21)

Susan Leach is critical of what she sees as groundless assumptions the Cox Report makes concerning the assertion that great writers shape English (not acknowledging the effects of other factors on language development). She is also critical of the narrow conception of English language and literature implied in the report (DES, 1989, para 16:31), and isolates two main issues surrounding Shakespeare and his position in the curriculum. First, the question as to whether Shakespeare's works contain "universal values" (DES, 1989, para 7:16); and second, whether the statement that "Shakespeare's plays are so rich that in every age they can produce fresh meanings" (DES, 1989, para 7:16) supports the earlier idea of universality or whether it is simply a "recognition of changes of interpretation over the years" (Leach, 1992, p 32).

Concerning the first of Leach's issues, "universal values" in Shakespeare, Leach argues, as does Eagleton (1983), Sinfield (1985) and Camps (1991) that such claims are selective according to the ideological interests and needs of those making the claim at the time, and that other less palatable "values" are conveniently ignored. As Sean McEvoy says whilst discussing this point, "Texts do not contain values. Values are something we impose on, or extract from, the readings we make according to the historical and ideological circumstances of our reading" (McEvoy, 1991, p46).

As to Leach's second issue, the report's claim that Shakespeare's plays are able to produce new meanings in every age, this is an issue which a number of other writers have commented on, and whilst I agree with Leach that other literature can also be read with new meanings according to the age it is read in, it appears that Shakespeare's plays are more productive than other literature in this respect. For the capacity of the plays to not only produce fresh meanings, Michael Billington's "pluralist texts" (Billington 1993, p28), but also to allow numerous new interpretations on stage and screen across the world (see Elsom, 1989, Kustow, 1994, Gibson, 1998) would seem to be unique. And whilst it could be argued that this capacity and productivity of Shakespeare's texts arises out of Shakespeare's world-wide high status and popularity, or, as Elsom suggests, the translation of Shakespeare into another language makes each play more accessible to its audience (Elsom, 1989), it has been argued that there is something about the text of the plays which allow this possibility. In Michael Kustow's BBC Radio series *Everybody's Shakespeare*, he suggests that one reason may be Shakespeare's anonymity, his absence as an authorial voice from his own texts. In his interview with Kustow in the same programme, Alan Sinfield agrees with that interpretation and views it as a rather negative quality "because there aren't any authoritative stage directions" (Sinfield, 1994, Programme 1, p 5) possibly due to the convention of theatre at the time with the power of directors to cut and insert at will, "so the fact that Shakespeare allows that to happen to his plays may be a kind of shiftiness... in other circumstances you really want people to say what they damn well think about things and maybe he doesn't do that" (Sinfield, 1994, Programme 1, p 5). Germaine Greer also discusses the 'gaps' in Shakespeare's scripts, but is more positive than Sinfield and writes that, "... the strength of Shakespeare's position is that he refrains from coming to conclusions but leaves that to those who complete his utterance, the audience and actors in the theatre" (Greer, 1986, p40). Hawkes, identifying in Shakespeare's plays "inherently plural structures, always open to manifold interpretations" (Hawkes, 1990,p 123) adds that the point of the plays lies in "their capacity to serve as instruments by which we make cultural meaning for ourselves" (Hawkes, 1990, p

147). On a similar note but more cynically, Lisa Jardine interprets this capacity of Shakespeare as follows;

> He's a pick-'n'-mix playwright, a chameleon, a patchwork quilt, available to be redesigned from decade to decade, to match any cherished beliefs of the day. (Jardine, 1999, p3)

It appears then that this universality and the capacity of Shakespeare's plays to produce fresh meanings suits both the classical humanists in that they can impose their fixed meanings but also the progressivists and even the reconstructionists who can use the capacity of the plays to produce differing interpretations and readings to challenge the status of Shakespeare and his plays and with which to raise and question major issues in society.

When the Cox Report mentions cultural heritage in connection with Shakespeare, Janet Bottoms questions whose cultural heritage (Bottoms, 1994), pointing out that some pupils could have come from cultures and have beliefs closer to Shakespeare's than their teachers or vica versa, and goes on to encourage teachers to take an 'historical' approach to the study of Shakespeare. Alistair West, on the other hand, sees the report's emphasis on cultural heritage as one of "nation building, the literary heritage being the vehicle whereby the standard form of the language is established in its dominant role" (West, 1994, p126). In Goodwyn and Findlay's research (1999) which was referred to earlier, it may be remembered that of the five views of English, cultural heritage was one of the least popular amongst teachers, suggesting that it has not become a major reason for teachers teaching Shakespeare.

As was mentioned earlier, in terms of classroom approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare, the Cox Report endorsed the findings and the active methods proposed by the Shakespeare in Schools project, but, as in the encompassing nature of the rationale of the five views, it allowed procedure to more traditional methods;

> Pupils exposed to this type of participatory, exploratory approach to literature can acquire a firm foundation to proceed to more formal literary responses should they subsequently choose to." (DES, 1989 para 7:16)

It can be seen then that the ideological position of the first National Curriculum in English, particularly concerning literature and Shakespeare, is a compromise position. It emphasises personal growth, acknowledging progressive ideology current then in many secondary English classrooms but it also accepts, with reference to cultural analysis, the reconstructionist ideologies in Higher Education and in some English departments. At the same time it is concerned to support and to re-instate through its

promotion of cultural heritage and inclusion of Shakespeare, classical humanist ideology, the old Arnold-Newbolt-Sampson-Leavis line which had lost favour in the 70's and 80's, reflecting the Government's wish to create a more nationally unified curriculum and nation. Revisions in the following five years to the then new National Curriculum would be seen to support the cultural heritage view even more so.

The first review of the National Curriculum in English was begun in 1992 because, "the current Orders did not define with sufficient clarity the essential knowledge and skills which English teaching should provide" (DFE, 1993, p iii). The review's brief was to consider placing more emphasis on the teaching of Standard English, greater definition of the skills involved in learning to read and write and to "be more explicit about how pupils could develop the habit of reading widely, and be introduced to great literature" (DFE, 1993, p iii). It was also during this year that the Schools Examination and Assessment Council (SEAC) was asked by the Secretary of State for Education, John Patten, to make Shakespeare compulsorily examined at GCSE in Key Stage 4 and to introduce written tests in English at the end of Key Stage 3 including a test on one of three prescribed Shakespeare plays. These developments imply a desire on behalf of the then Conservative Government to impose a more traditional form of English on secondary schools and one which is clearly classical humanist in ideology. The implication became explicit when Patten said the following about 'progressive' English teachers and HE lecturers in that year; "They'd give us chips with Chaucer. Milton with mayonnaise. Mr Chairman, I want William Shakespeare in our classrooms not Ronald McDonald" (Patten, 1992, p 46). The tests were piloted and trialled in selected schools before being introduced in all state secondary schools in May 1993. The introduction was a disaster, as the tests were boycotted by English teachers in most schools. Teachers were incensed by the lack of consultation, the resource implications, the insensitivity of introducing more change and work so soon after the introduction of the National Curriculum, and at the banality of the factual, short written answer test on the Shakespeare paper itself. Jane Coles, an English teacher and formerly of the Shakespeare in Schools project, summed up the feelings of many English teachers at the time when she wrote, "Shakespeare's plays are being used as a political weapon in a particularly vicious attack on teachers' current practice in English education" (Coles, 1992, p 25). The boycott was lifted in the following year as Sir Ron Dearing took over the review and his task of 'slimming down' the National Curriculum, but, as Davison and Dowson point out, Dearing "did not change the methods of assessment, and the Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) continued to drive the curriculum" (Davison and Dowson, 1998, p 49). The slimmer and revised National Curriculum in English came into force in schools in September

1995, retaining the SATs which continued to include the Shakespeare paper. In terms of the general requirements for Reading in the new English curriculum, 'literary heritage' remained important and prominent but with an addition of "literature from other cultures and traditions" (DFE, 1995, p2). In the specific Programme of Study for Reading in Key stages 3 and 4, there is, overall, an emphasis on "a wide variety of literature", reading "for enjoyment, wider reading" and "access to significant authors and works from English literary heritage" (DFE, 1995, p 19). In addition there is, for the first time, a list of writers which "pupils' reading should include" including "two plays by Shakespeare" (DFE, 1995, p 20). 80% of those suggested authors were writers whose work was published before 1900, thus giving a strong message about the importance of literary heritage in the curriculum. Whilst this list of authors and the skills which pupils should obtain are clearly laid down, there is no indication in this version of the National Curriculum in English, as there was in its predecessor, as to which teaching methods teachers should adopt.

What then of the approaches and methods being employed during this period to teach Shakespeare in the secondary school? Were most teachers as Coles (1992) suggested, employing the active and dramatic methods propounded by Gibson and the Shakespeare in Schools project and by others such as Reynolds (1991) and Leach (1992)? It is difficult to answer this question because there are at the time of writing only two pieces of research which can help; that by Wade and Sheppard (1994) and that by Hardman and Williamson (1996).

The actual surveys by both came rather too early to reveal whether the Key Stage 3 test paper for Shakespeare had any significant impact on classroom practice, and their research did not include any classroom observation. However, both surveys, categorised the methods used by teachers in identical ways into *most popular* (more than 50% of teachers using the method regularly), *less popular* (between 50% and 25% of teachers using the method regularly) and *least popular* (less than 25% using the method regularly). In Wade and Sheppard's survey, the *most popular* methods were all traditional desk-bound methods (e.g. play reading and scene summarising [Wade and Sheppard, 1994, p24]); *less popular* were active methods (e.g. performance and hot seating [Wade and Sheppard, 1994, p25]); and the *least popular* were transformative activities (e.g. audio recording and video making [Wade and Sheppard, 1994, p26]). In Hardman and Williamson's survey, five out of the seven *most popular* methods were desk-bound (Hardman and Williamson, 1996, p 39) but two, performing and role-playing, were not; dramatic active methods were *less popular* but "Year 9 make greater use of dramatic methods" (Hardman and

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Williamson, 1996, p 39); and the *least popular* were, as in Wade and Sheppard's, transformative activities and theatre visits.

It would appear from the evidence of the research, that in the first half of this decade there has been a gradual shift, certainly at Key Stage 3, to teachers using more active methods to teach Shakespeare (as is suggested by Hardman and Williamson (1996, p 42), however, the compulsory written exam in this key stage and the restriction of coursework for GCSE in Key Stage 4 limit the amount of active methods used in classrooms in Key Stage 4?), consequently, traditional methods remain popular. This continuing popularity of traditional methods could be attributed to the dominant influence of classical humanist ideology, but what Hardman and Williamson point out is that neither survey was able to detect the extent to which pupils were allowed "to shape their own learning" (Hardman and Williamson, 1996, p 39) when using the traditional methods which could at the least have rendered the activities as more child-centred and child-guided. Nevertheless, active methods are popular, according to both surveys, and gaining in popularity according to Hardman and Williamson's. These active methods do not, as the traditional methods do, place pupils in a passive and recipient role as learners, and are more child-centred and place pupils in a role as learners whereby they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to investigate and explore and respond personally to Shakespeare's texts. As Gibson states, "Active methods are *learner-centred*, acknowledging the active part every reader plays in making meaning" and " they are social methods" (Gibson, 1994, in Brindley 1994, p 143). Haddon, whilst acknowledging the value to learning about Shakespeare and his plays of most active methods, is also critical of some which "might well be enjoyable, and they may bring some insight, but without some framework of understanding there is a strong danger of their leading pupils away from the play's particular mode..." (Haddon, 1993, p 127). There is little doubt that there is a danger here whereby such methods could be used as a series of disjointed games with the teacher's primary aim and purpose one of keeping the pupils occupied, interested and enjoying Shakespeare, but where little real learning about Shakespeare, his plays and language is taking place. Looking at active methods more positively, when they are focused on clear learning objectives and outcomes for pupils, they can be seen, with their emphasis on child-centred learning and personal relevance and response, to align with a progressivist ideology, and yet they could also be used in a manner which could be interpreted to support a reconstructionist ideology (see Gibson, 1993 and 1998, and Jeffcoate, 1992), and certainly Bottoms (1994, p366) argues that Leach's use and suggestions for active methods allows and encourages a cultural materialist approach. And, it should not

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be forgotten that certain active methods were introduced and encouraged in the early part of this century not by progressivists or reconstructionists, but by classical humanists (George Sampson and Newbolt). There is evidence of new approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare beginning to emerge, arising out of semiotics and a genre approach. The first, has been developed from Martin Esslin's work on the semiotics of Drama (Esslin, 1987) by Marian McCarthy in classrooms in Ireland. Concentrating on the teaching of Shakespeare, she includes in her scheme of work for each play the five categories of sign systems proposed by Esslin "Framing, Actor, Visual, Text and Aural" (McCarthy, 1996, p223), and the pupils choose in groups or individually to explore parts of the play through one or more of those sign systems. This approach is clearly progressivist in its valuing of pupil choice, creativity and investigation of the text and it also encourages a multi-dimensional and active approach, whilst retaining a focus on language. The genre approach has its roots in the work of Cope and Kalatzis (1993) and Gunther Kress (1995, 1997) and whilst not specifically focusing on Shakespeare, in its suggestions that pupils are guided to examining and comparing the features and structures of different types or genres of texts in order to gain an understanding of how the different genres function with the view that this can also assist their own written composition, there would appear to be worthwhile effort in applying such an approach to Shakespeare's plays as Kress recognises when he writes his proposals for "A curriculum of innovation" (1995, p34). In this he extends his ideas on genre and semiotics in English to suggest three categories of text; *culturally salient* , a text which is measured "against criteria of significance...in its own cultural domain" (Kress, 1995, p34) and which would include "texts from groups which are, at this point, socially and politically dominant, and... will speak of the histories of their cultures" (Kress, 1995, p 35); *aesthetically valued,* a text which is "valued for aesthetic reasons" (Kress, 1995, p35) by the culture; and *mundane*, texts which are "overlooked; yet they are the texts which are most telling in our everyday working lives. They form the bedrock of social and economic life" (Kress, 1995,p 36) and includes such texts as the office memo or a fire notice. Kress sees Shakespeare as clearly fitting into the category of aesthetically valued but also, currently into the culturally salient. But interestingly he points to the value of such a curriculum in pupils being able to compare texts across the categories;

> the office memo must be amenable to effective influence by features of the Shakespeare play...or the Augustan epic. In an effective curriculum all of these texts will be treated with a single, coherent and social-historical theory of text, and not as discrete, unrelated phenomena. (Kress, 1995, p 36)

At the time of writing a further review of the National Curriculum in English is underway, and despite rumours that the Shakespeare test at the end of Key Stage 3 would be dropped, a recent report in the *Times Educational Supplement* suggests otherwise;

> Education Secretary David Blunkett insisted that English and history lessons should be more traditional and rejected plans to allow teachers more power to decide what to teach... The QCA (*Qualifications and Curriculum Authority*) wanted Shakespeare to be dropped from the compulsory study for 11 to 14-year-olds... Now all secondary pupils will study his plays. (Cassidy, 1999, p 10)

Conclusion

From the literature which has been reviewed and discussed in this chapter, it appears that the ideological movement in the teaching of Shakespeare in the secondary school has been one of hesitant but gradual movement from that of classical humanism at the start of the century to progressivism, but with twin and opposing pressures being applied from the Government on the one hand to minimise and redress the movement, and on the other hand from Higher Education English and cultural studies departments to move in a more reconstructionist direction.

This review raises certain research questions which are central to this enquiry, namely;

1 What are the approaches to teaching Shakespeare favoured by teachers and evident in classrooms? Are the active methods which Wade and Sheppard (1994) and Hardman and Williamson (1996) identified in their surveys, evident in classrooms?

2 Is there a discernible pattern and process for the teaching of Shakespeare in today's English classroom, and if there is, how does it compare with previous models and processes?

3 What are the major influences on teachers' classroom practice for teaching Shakespeare - the dictates of the National Curriculum for English, the Key Stage 3 Shakespeare Paper or the teachers' beliefs and values?

4 Considering current classroom practice in teaching Shakespeare together with the beliefs and values of the teachers, what can be said about the ideology of teaching Shakespeare?

5 Is there a mismatch or conflict between the teachers' preferred approaches to teaching Shakespeare and the approaches needed to meet the requirements of *English in the National Curriculum* (DFEE, 1995) and the Key Stage 3 Shakespeare Paper?

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

When, in 1993, I started to formulate my plans for this research project I felt initially pressured in having to make a choice between either a qualitative or a quantitative approach to my research methodology. Working as I do in a School of Education in a Higher Education institution, where social science and educational studies in particular is a dominant perspective from which to view and investigate the world, I recognised that there was an unwritten law concerning research methodology which could be summarised (after Orwell) as "Qualitative Research Good. Quantitative Research Bad". By some researchers it appears to be regarded as written law for Filstead introduced his volume on qualitative methodology by talking about the 'assets of qualitative methodology' as against the 'shortcomings of quantitative methodology' (Filstead, 1970: 8). Even in the very words 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' with their roots in *quality* and *quantity*, it is fairly easy to see why, when considering throughout current western culture the high value which is placed, in the world of work in particular, on quality (quality chains, total quality management etc.) together with common phrases such as 'quality of life' and the homespun wisdom of 'It's not the quantity but the quality that counts', that everyone should respond more favourably to qualitative rather than quantitative. Quantity is hard, numbers, surfaces, outward appearances, temporality. Quality is soft, words, depths, essences, durability. Furthermore, quantitative methodology is usually aligned with the 'positivist' approach to research, whose origins are in the natural sciences, whereas qualitative methodology is more aligned with the 'interpretive' approach to research where the stance is "that social reality can only be understood by understanding the subjective meanings of individuals" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p86) and whose origins are in the social sciences

Cohen and Manion contend that research in education has to some extent become the battleground for what they term "the competing views of the social sciences - the established, traditional view and the more recently emerging radical view" (Cohen and Manion, 1989: 6). The positivist approach and quantitative research which align themselves closely with the former, have associations which imply cold calculation; objectivity, distance and divorce from social reality (treating individuals as objects), abstraction, artificiality, experimentation and numbers. Whereas the interpretive approach and qualitative research have associations with deep involvement in social

reality, the conscious intentions of individuals, human relationships and the words of natural human discourse, and a great respect for the needs and wishes of fellow humans who are quite different from inanimate natural phenomena. The interpretive approach and view is part of the culture, or 'paradigm' as Kuhn (1970) conceptualised it, that I live and work in and it accounts for some of the antipathy I initially held towards quantitative methods and the initial guilt I felt as I considered using quantitative methods in my research. However, just as positivist research, which is about the discovery of scientific and general laws, in practice may be concerned with description and explanation; so interpretive research, with its aversion to scientific experimentation and hypothesis testing, often has a theoretical goal. Similarly, the positivist approach and quantitative methods are traditionally associated with the generation and analysis of statistics and numbers whilst the interpretive approach and qualitative methods are associated with the generation and analysis of words. However, as has been pointed out by Lundberg (1964) and Scott (1995), qualitative researchers often use words as quantifiers:

> It has frequently been pointed out that ethnographers regularly make quantitative claims in verbal form using formulations like 'regularly', 'frequently', 'often', 'sometimes', 'generally' ..etc (Scott, 1995, p 46).

In designing this research project I was aware that I was deliberately employing a mixture of quantitative (postal questionnaire survey) and qualitative (participant observation, logs and interviews) methods in order to explore the field of my research in a progressively focused manner (in the sense that the initial postal survey involving English teachers in about fifty schools would allow me a broad overview of the field, from which I could identify certain interesting features and then at each subsequent stage of the research - classroom observations and interviews with teachers and pupils - those interest areas could be focused upon and the focus itself altered or sharpened according to the emerging data). But as Glaser and Strauss point out;

> ..there is no fundamental clash between the purposes and capacities of qualitative and quantitative methods or data...In many instances both forms of data are necessary - used as supplements, as mutual verification and as different forms of data on the same subject, which, when compared, will each generate theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1968, pp17-18).

And, as Carr and Kemmis indicate when comparing and discussing the positivist and interpretive approaches, "what must be resisted is any suggestion that these two approaches to educational research constitute mutually exclusive and exhaustive possibilities" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p99). They also draw attention to the similarity of each approach to the research act; "In both, the researcher stands outside the research situation adopting a disinterested stance...(with) the common methodological aim of describing social reality in a neutral, disinterested way" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p99).

Overall my research approach could be described as ethnographic in that, as Hammersley and Atkinson describe it, it occurs when

> the search for universal laws is rejected in favour of detailed
> descriptions of the concrete experience of life within a particular culture
> and of the social rules or patterns that constitute it. (Hammersley and
> Atkinson, 1983, p 8)

The particular culture being secondary school English Departments and classrooms where Shakespeare is taught. It is also ethnographic in the sense that I was concerned to carry out much of my research, in particular my observations, not in 'artificial' settings, i.e. in settings purposely set up for research which wouldn't normally have occurred, but rather in 'natural' settings, i.e. those settings and events which would be there and would have happened anyway with or without my presence as researcher or, or as Scott defines it, those settings which would require the researcher to be involved in 'the study of situations that would have occurred without the ethnographer's presence, and the adoption of a role in that situation designed to minimise the researcher's impact on what occurs' (Scott, 1995, p47). In my research these situations would be observations in a series of studies of classrooms in six schools and followed by interviews with teachers and pupils from those classrooms. For as Delamont and Hamilton confirm when discussing the role of the ethnographer in educational research, "In addition to observing classroom life, the researcher may conduct formal interviews with the participants and ask them to complete questionnaires" (Delamont and Hamilton, 1986, p36).

A further important and integral part of my research framework was that of perceiving the whole project from start to finish as a process whereby each part and method should inform both the preceding and the succeeding parts so that the progressive focusing described earlier could develop. In order for this to happen requires an understanding that the analysis of data and method and the subsequent generation of theory is also part of the process and that the analysis will be 'grounded' in the

data and will consequently inform the focus of successive stages of the research. I mention 'data' *and* 'method' for I believe it is important that the researcher attempts not only to analyse the data at each stage but in order to clarify that data the researcher should also analyse the methods used to collect the data so as to evaluate and then to weed out any effects that the method may have had on the data. On this point I agree to some extent with Scott when he says that 'it is hard to see how the researcher could in any meaningful way separate out their effects on the data, since data and method in this sense are indistinguishable' (Scott, 1995: 70). However, I will argue at a later stage that it can be possible to speculate on the effect of certain methods on the data. This dialectical relationship between data and theory is at the heart of what is now known as 'grounded theory' first formulated by Glaser and Strauss who asserted that 'the discovery of theory from data - which we call *grounded theory* - is a major task confronting sociology today' (Glaser and Strauss, 1968, p 1). They too emphasise *process* in theory generation; 'theory as an ever-developing entity not as a perfected product' (1968, p32). All of this is not to say that I had no overall initial idea of the direction and stages of my research, I did. I did not start off with a survey and after the analysis of the data decide what to do next. Before I planned the survey I had already mapped out my research strategies beginning with the survey and then proceeding to case studies with observations and interviews. However, these were held tentatively and I was fully prepared and expecting to change the order of things and of course the detail of actual methods I would employ. One of the reasons for this pre-planning was out of concern for validity.

In order to achieve one form of validity in the area I was intending to research, it was important that I collected views of the field from a number of different participant perspectives; which included my own as interviewer, participant observer and ex-teacher of English, from teachers and from pupils. The teachers and pupils would be from a range of schools and together this replication would allow me to make comparative analysis. Glaser and Strauss (1968 p22-30) suggest a number of different purposes for comparative analysis and those that match my purposes include checking the accuracy of evidence, to establish generalisations, to verify theory and to generate theory.

CASE STUDIES

I have already mentioned that carrying out case studies was to be part of my research design. As both Hammersley (1986), and Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) mention, *case study* has become a rather vague term which means different things to different people; for the purpose of this study what I mean by a case study fits the definition by Bell where she writes that a case study is 'concerned principally with the interaction of factors and events' (Bell, 1987, p6), and also with Hitchcock and Hughes' further definition that,

> a case study evolves around the in-depth study of a series of linked cases or events over a defined period of time (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, p214).

My reasons for choosing case studies were that I wanted to be able to follow up and explore in more depth any interesting findings that resulted from the questionnaire, for as Judith Bell mentions, 'Case studies may be carried out to follow up and to put flesh on the bones of a survey' (Bell, 1987, p 6). But it was the depth and the immersion in the research subject that I was after which was something that the survey alone would not allow me. I needed to gain a closer understanding of some of the people involved and the complex dynamics of the English classroom where Shakespeare was being taught. When Cohen and Manion discuss the purpose of observation in a case study, they say that it is to 'probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit ..' (Cohen and Manion, 1989, p 125) and I would argue that this is the purpose of all the combined methods of the case study and not just observation. Hammersley argues that cases can range from 'micro to macro, all the way from an individual person to through a particular event, social situation,...to a national society or international social system' (Hammersley, 1992, p 184) The cases I chose to study were somewhere in the middle of this range being a number of Year 9 classes being taught Shakespeare in five secondary schools (I discuss the selection of the cases in the *sampling* section below) and they match Hammersley's definitions of a case study that it 'involves the investigation of a *relatively small* number of *naturally occurring* (rather than researcher-created) cases' (Hammersley, 1992 p185).

For the rest of this chapter I intend to proceed in a chronological manner following the progressive nature of my enquiry that I have earlier described.

The agreement of these gatekeepers which resulted in some of them and their colleagues in the English Department completing the questionnaire, had only, as expected, afforded me a distant view of the places, the actors, etc. and I had still to visit classrooms to observe and interview teachers and pupils. Therefore, I decided, having identified a *sample group* (see below), to write in October to the sample group of HODs to ask for their agreement to allow me to observe lessons where Shakespeare was being taught to Year 9 and to interview the teachers taking those classes and students from each observed class. By the end of November, five of the nine written to gave me their agreement but this was not the end of my need to gain access.

Once I had approached the Heads of English and had obtained their permission to proceed, I then felt it important, even though the Heads of English had ascertained their colleagues' agreement, to meet with those teachers who I would be observing and interviewing (interestingly, through school timetabling, it turned out that I would only be observing two Heads of English). I would have felt awkward to have gone ahead without discussing my plans with those teachers as I would be not only exerting my power as researcher and power that had been bestowed on me by their Head of English but also I would have been giving the impression of acting too covertly and not allowing them to have an understanding of what I was observing and interested in. It is at this stage that negotiation becomes important, in the sense of a mutual swapping of information and ideas, which I think is important if the subjects of the research are to feel that they have some say in the purpose and direction of the research rather than be treated as mere research fodder. With this in mind, I spoke with each of the teachers and gave them the opportunity to make suggestions and to ask me any questions they liked. Most asked me questions to clarify my intentions but only one teacher, teacher BB, suggested that I might consider a different approach. He suggested that I interview some of the pupils in the class before I observe them in order to find out what their thoughts were before they started to study the play, so that I might compare them with their thoughts after they had studied it. I reluctantly complied with this request. I was reluctant because I had not proceeded with my research in the other schools in this way and because it would add another variable to my attempts at comparative analysis. I agreed because I did not want to jeopardise my relationship with this teacher and my subsequent research in his classroom. Perhaps I should have been more assertive for perhaps his suggestion was based on a too little understanding of my research intentions. What this incident made plain to me was that in such research where the researcher is concerned to build relationships democratically and to involve the subjects in

discussion, then the power in the research relationship changes, there is likely to more openness, honesty and possibly depth in future exchanges which is all to the good from the researcher's perspective but that it also might result in the design or direction of the research changing in a way that the researcher had not envisaged or wanted. With all of the teachers I tried to impress upon them that I would not be making judgements as to their competency as teachers in the hope that this would help them to be more at ease with me in their classroom. It was also necessary with some teachers who did not know me and my background in education to assert my professional credibility in order that they would recognise that I understood or at least could empathise with their working reality. For as Paul Cooper writes on this subject;

> ...in dealing with teachers, it is important that the educational researcher should present himself/herself as alert and informed, in relation to the current state of English education and schools....the researcher needs to combine ease of manner, trustworthiness and approachability, whilst presenting the image of being of a status worthy of the subjects' time and effort. Only if this is achieved can the researcher expect to be given the necessary access to less superficial levels of experience. (Cooper, 1993, p 326)

The final set of people with whom I had to gain access was the pupils in those classes. It seems to me that there is a tendency with researchers (myself included) not to treat pupils as respectfully as teachers; that whereas researchers in schools rightly consider and respect the teachers' needs to know about and discuss, if desired, the intentions of the research and will carefully prepare, as I outlined above, how they approach schools and teachers in order to gain access and professional acceptability, they do not, to my knowledge, approach pupils in the same open and careful way. In my opinion the reason for this may have much to do with the assumptions that researchers make about pupils' understanding of and interest in research but it may also be connected with power relationships in schools and society, and here I agree with Stephen Ball when he asserts that the 'adult-pupil relationship is a political one, set within a considerable inequality of power' (Ball 1985: 50). The authority in the classroom lies with the teacher and therefore permission to observe (both the teacher and the pupils) is sought from him/her. I have not heard either from colleagues or from research literature where a researcher has asked the pupils of a class if they will give permission for him/her to observe them as a class (as against permission to observe specific individuals). Even if it were done it would be likely to be a perfunctory request. Stephen Ball when discussing participant observation in schools and the negotiation of entry into schools in particular, reaffirms my view when he writes;

> ...it is the headteacher who makes the crucial gatekeeping decisions, sometimes but certainly not always in consultation with teachers. No one consults the pupils. Similarly once in the school access to classrooms must normally be negotiated with the teachers; pupils are rarely asked whether they want to have a researcher in their lessons. (Ball, 1985, p 39-40)

So as a researcher in a classroom I felt somewhat uneasy with observing those whose direct permission I had not sought. What I did do on each occasion that I was introduced to a class was to tell the pupils as to the general purpose of my research (but not in the same detail as I did with their teachers) and to ask them that if there was anything they'd like to ask me they could do so either then or at any other time that they see me around. As it happened, only one class of pupils (from School E) took me up on my offer. One reason for this reluctance I experienced of pupils asking questions of the researcher could be again due to the perceived power relationship, for as Paul Cooper writes when discussing the difference of approach between when researchers approach teachers to when they approach pupils;

> ...initial approaches to them (pupils) are nearly always made via the teachers. This unfortunate necessity carries with it the hidden danger that the researcher may become too closely associated in the minds of the pupils with the authority structures of the school. (Cooper, 1993, p325)

However, perhaps I and other researchers ought not to feel too guilty for not more openly negotiating access with pupils because the pupils do have another power which Ball expresses when he writes;

> While the pupils have little say in whether the researcher should sit in their lessons, they do of course have some option whether or not to co-operate any further with the process of data collection. (Ball, 1985 p 42-43)

SAMPLING

Burgess points out that 'sampling in field research involves the selection of a research site, time, people and events' (Burgess 1982: 76). As outlined earlier, the design of my research was to progressively focus from a survey of some 50 schools to observation of classes and to interviews with both teachers and pupils. At each stage I would have to consider the *sample* (in terms of the four components) I was wishing to research.

My overall approach to sampling could be described as what Glaser and Strauss (1967, p 45) term 'theoretical sampling' in that I although I had an overview of each likely stage of my design from the start, I did not consider the sample for the next stage until I had analysed the data from the previous stage and then used that to suggest who, where and when I might next sample.

Schools for the Questionnaire

In deciding the sample of schools to target for the postal questionnaire, I decided to limit it to the area I tend to know best professionally which is West Sussex and the south-eastern part of Hampshire; and there were two main reasons for my choice. First, there was the question of access where I argued that I would be more likely to gain access at any stage of my research into schools where either I or my workplace was known and had professional credibility, and also pragmatically, where I could easily get to, if necessary, at later stages of my research. Second, I had built up a working knowledge of both education authorities and many of the schools over the past twenty years and I could use that knowledge to help me to select my sample, particularly at this first stage; by this I mean that I was not going to try random sampling but quota sampling as I particularly wanted to cover a range of different secondary schools in terms of age-range, gender of pupils, location and population size. Cohen and Manion have described this type of quota sampling as 'dimensional sampling' as it involves 'identifying various factors of interest in a population and obtaining at least one respondent of every combination of those factors' (Cohen and Manion, 1989, p103). Consequently, rather than writing to all the secondary schools in the chosen area (approximately 100), I chose firstly schools that I knew and then through conversation with colleagues, added other schools in the area so that I could be sure of covering my defined range, ending up with 53 schools which I eventually wrote to. In each category of the range my intention was not to obtain, nor was it possible, an equal number or proportion of each type of school, but to try to ensure some representation so that variables might be considered and comparisons made.

In terms of the age range, 15 were in the 11-18 age range, 20 in the 11 to 16 range, 14 in the 12 to 16 range, 2 in the 13 to 18 range and 2 in the 12 to 18 age range which can be seen diagramatically in Figure 1 below.
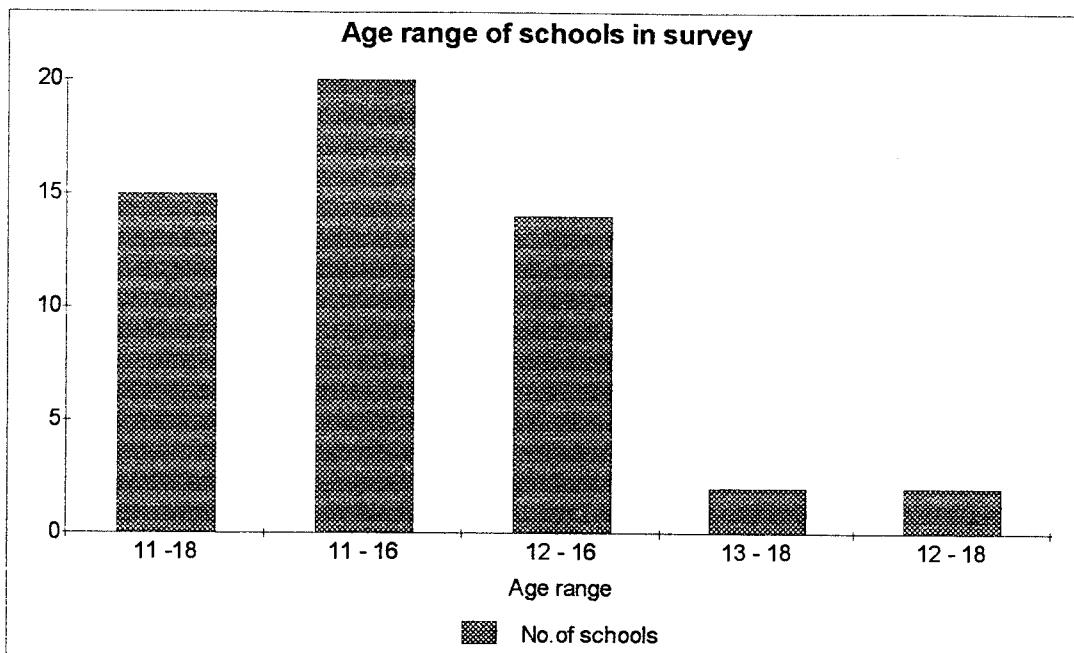
Figure 1 The age range of schools in the survey.

Concerning the gender of the pupils, 4 schools were single-sex girls schools, 4 were single-sex boys schools and the rest were co-educational schools.

In considering the location of the schools I chose (which I found more difficult to define accurately) 6 schools were rural, 39 were urban and 8 schools were inner-city.

The schools' range in population was fairly wide (see Figure 2 below) with four which had a population of under 500 pupils, twenty-eight which had between 500 and 1,000 pupils, nineteen which had between 1,000 and 1,500 pupils and two which had over 1,500 pupils.

population range of schools in survey
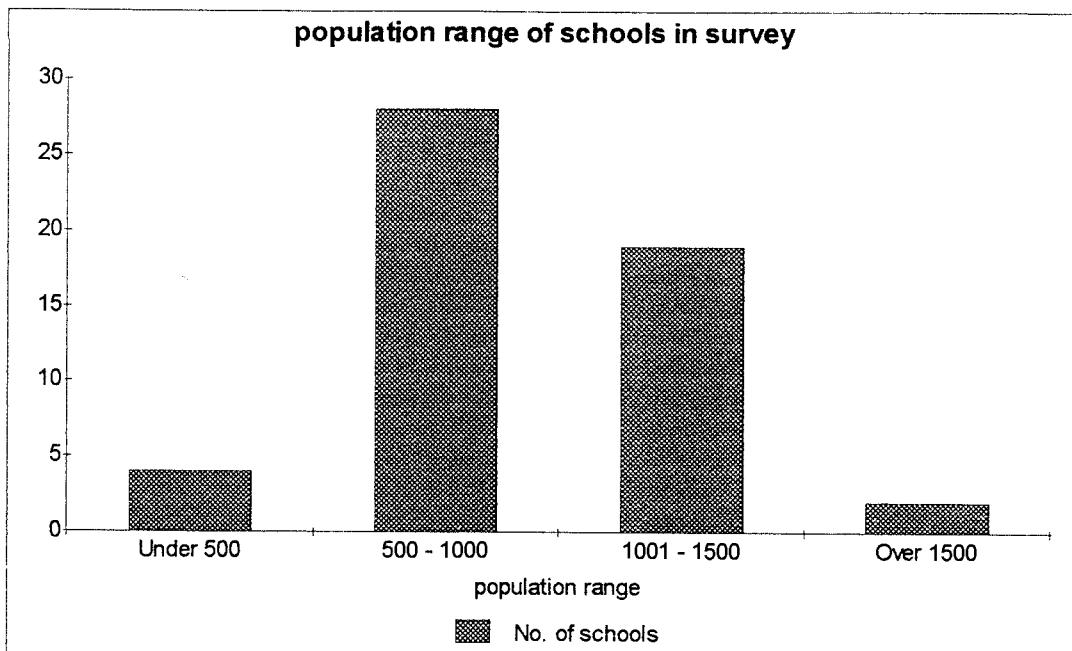
Figure 2 The population range of schools in the survey.

In my letter (see Appendix 1) which accompanied the questionnaire, I had asked the Head of English if they and one of their colleagues in the English Department would complete the questionnaire, as I thought at the time that I might be able to compare and contrast the responses of the two groups of English teachers. However, I was of course unable to direct which colleague the Head of Department chose and the subsequent variation was considerable (in terms of age, experience, qualifications and status within the school and department).

Timing of the questionnaire was important to some extent as I needed to have the results of the questionnaire returned well before the end of one school year (1993-94) so that I could choose particular schools for the next part of my study, knowing that the best time for me to carry out my field research would be in the Spring and Autumn Terms of the following year (1994-95). For the rest of this section on sampling, I will consider each stage in my research chronology of the six chosen case studies in turn in terms of people, time, events and place.

Schools for the field work

I had to consider which of the thirty-six schools that responded to my questionnaire I would choose for my field work. Here, I was looking for typical cases to try to ensure

that I had included a range of schools as described earlier. Having written to nine Heads of English asking their permission for me to carry out further research in their departments, the schools of the five who agreed covered this range so that School A (All of the schools, teachers and pupils have been coded to ensure anonymity; see Appendix 5 for details) was a 13 to 18 rural co-educational comprehensive school which had 790 pupils on roll, School B was an 11 to 16 urban co-educational comprehensive with 830 on roll, School C was an 11 to 18 urban co-educational comprehensive with 890 on roll as was School D but with a roll of 1540 and School E was an 11 to 16 inner city single-sex girls' comprehensive school with 1250 on roll.

Classrooms

In selecting sample classes within each of the sample groups of schools I decided to concentrate initially on Year 9 as these were children who were at the end of KS3 and it was also the year group, according to the responses to my questionnaire, where the most teaching of Shakespeare in this Key Stage occurred; the year that most teachers said they enjoyed teaching Shakespeare to and which they thought pupils most enjoyed being taught Shakespeare, and where teachers used the greatest variety of resources and teaching methods. I decided to choose two classes to observe per school in order that I could try to discern whether or not there was common practice within each school (as the reader will see later, this was not possible to discern). In each case, the selection of classes only took place after I had phoned or visited the Head of English and had discussed my intentions with them and their colleagues who I wished to observe and interview. However, it transpired that in two of the schools (C and E) I was unable to observe two different Y9 classes and had to reluctantly settle for one; due to timetabling difficulties in one case and because in the second, other Year 9 classes were either well into or had completed their Shakespeare teaching for the year. This meant that I was not able to make the internal comparisons I had intended, but in the schools where I was able to do this I was beginning to find that such comparisons of common practice was problematic to say the least as I was often not comparing like with like, in that not only were the teachers and the classes (in two schools two different ability sets) very different but they were also using different texts (and in another case different editions of the same play). Through this experience I would confirm what David Scott had written when he said, 'Choosing appropriate case though, can never be an exact operation. Practical constraints limit researchers' freedom of action' (Scott,1995: 74).

That I had decided to concentrate my observations on Y9, had consequences on my timings as this year group, the final one of Key Stage 3 would be tested on

Shakespeare on May 5th 1995 and therefore I needed to get in all my observations before that date to be sure of seeing some Shakespeare being taught. As mentioned earlier, my own work commitments meant that I could only carry out observations in the Spring and Summer Terms and it transpired that this was too late in some schools for some teachers as they had taught their chosen Shakespeare text to their Year 9 class in the Autumn Term. The other aspect of timing connected with this stage was that I obviously needed to observe lessons with the chosen classes where Shakespeare was being taught as not all teachers were teaching the Shakespeare text to their Year 9 class during every timetabled English lesson. This required more negotiation with the teachers and a decision to see approximately three lessons from each class; one each from near the beginning, middle and end of the series of lessons on the text so that I could get an idea of the progress and development of the teaching and learning. This resulted in certain variables being introduced as I was sometimes observing a class at the start of the teaching day, when most teachers would agree that pupils and teachers are at their most alert and receptive, and others at the end of the teaching day when the reverse is the case. The actual duration of the time of each lesson I observed varied between 40 and 50 minutes from school to school; not a significant variation.

The Interviews

The *selection of teachers* to be interviewed was part and parcel of the selection of the sample group of classes to be observed.

The *selection of pupils* for interview was based on the criteria of achievement in English and gender, so that I asked each teacher to choose three pupils for me to interview so that there was a mix of males and females and that they should be representative of the top, middle and bottom of the class in terms of achievement at English. I did not define what I meant by 'achievement at English' but recognise that it is a problematic term where although it would be difficult to reach a precise agreement with the teachers they are used to dealing in such categorisations of pupils, and I did not require anything too precise. I had to rely for the most part on the teachers' judgements but hoped that they would respond to my request to allow the pupils to decline if they so wished and not to ignore choosing pupils who they might think would not be articulate in interview.

THE SURVEY

One of the main motivating factors behind this research was for me as an ex-teacher of English in secondary schools who had struggled to change my methods of teaching Shakespeare in order to try to make it more meaningful and interesting for pupils, to find out how other English teachers approached the teaching of Shakespeare; to find out what methods others were using, what resources they used and their attitudes to teaching it. I thought that the most efficient way of gaining some of this information was to send out a questionnaire to English Departments of schools in the locality where the student teachers I teach obtain their initial teaching experience, i.e. West Sussex and South East Hampshire. As explained earlier when discussing *sample groups*, the schools in this locality would provide me with a wide range in terms of size, age, gender, location (inner-city, urban and rural) etc. However, I do recognise as Oppenheim (1992) suggests, that some interviewer bias may exist even in a postal questionnaire. With mine, where a number of the respondents are known to me then, according to their attitude to me, they may well have responded in a way which they considered I'd expect them to answer; and even those who did not know me may have conjured up an image of me from my introductory letter and the questionnaire focuses and adjusted their responses accordingly. I had hoped that the fact that I did not ask for respondents' names may have reduced this effect but I cannot be sure.

In order to formulate the questionnaire (a copy of which can be found in Appendix 2), I first of all brainstormed the area of Shakespeare teaching in secondary schools and then combined my major ideas with those that had formed the basis of the questionnaire used by Peter Benton (1986) when compiling information on the teaching of poetry in secondary schools for publication in his book *Pupil, Teacher, Poem*. Through doing this I came up with six basic areas which were;

      A Teachers' backgrounds

      B Resources used in the teaching of Shakespeare

      C How frequently teachers teach Shakespeare to the different years

      D Teachers' approaches and methods of teaching Shakespeare

      E Teachers' understanding of pupils' views of Shakespeare

      F Teachers' attitudes towards teaching Shakespeare

Concerning the first four areas, the questionnaire could, as Oppenheim (1992) suggests, be termed an inventory. However, the last two areas are more subjective asking for teachers' views and attitudes. My reason for ordering the sections of the

questionnaire was based on a funnelling approach whereby the sections begin by asking straight forward, factual questions and gradually become less factual and more concerned with opinion. After discussion with colleagues and the reading of texts concerned with the construction of questionnaires, I changed the order of the sections to the following;

A Ability of teachers' classes

B How frequently teachers teach Shakespeare to the different years

C Teachers' approaches and methods of teaching Shakespeare

D Opportunities for pupils to experience different interpretations of Shakespeare

E Teachers' understanding of pupils' views of Shakespeare

F Teachers' attitudes towards teaching Shakespeare

G Resources used in the teaching of Shakespeare

H Teachers' backgrounds

To some extent I retained the funnelling idea but I funnelled out at the end in returning to factually based questions in sections G and H. It may have been noted that the major order change is with moving the sections A and B on teacher background and resources respectively, to the final sections of the questionnaire. Concerning the teachers' backgrounds I was led to move this section to the end having read Oppenheim (1992) whom it seemed to me made the very sensible suggestion that if a respondent is motivated to fill in a questionnaire it is likely that they will do so because they are interested in the subject and if they then find that they have to fill in personal details to begin with, they may well become irritated and refuse to do the questionnaire; whereas if such questions are at the end, it allows them to concentrate first of all on the interest of the subject in question. As to the moving of the section on resources, I wanted the teachers initially to concentrate on their classroom teaching and the pupils in specific classes and also I took heed of the advice from Hoinville and Jowell (1978) who suggest that in order to maintain respondents' interest, attitude questions should break up blocks of factual questions. It may also have been noticed that I added an extra section about the opportunities for pupils to experience different interpretations of Shakespeare (by which I mean visits to see a production of Shakespeare on stage, or seeing a video of a Shakespeare play or hearing a recording etc.). In fact, I merely separated what had been a part of the section on teaching methods and approaches. The whole idea of sectioning the questionnaire appealed to me for not only might it help my analysis, but it might also help the respondents to focus on particular areas at a time and to

this end I indicated, where it wasn't apparent, the area of focus in my introduction to each section as in Section C which begins;

> *This section asks you to consider the methods and approaches that you use to teach Shakespeare.*

Recognising that the wording and explanations of a postal questionnaire are of vital importance as the respondent is not in direct communication with the researcher and cannot ask for clarification, I attempted to be as explicit and as helpful with my written explanations and instructions as possible. Hence I felt it important to specify at the start that I wanted each respondent to;

> *consider this teaching year (1993/4) and to have in mind one group from each year that you teach.*

and that this instruction to consider a specific year group in the current year was repeated whenever I felt it important to do so at the beginning of subsequent sections, for as Cohen and Manion advise; 'Repeating instructions as often as necessary is good practice in a postal questionnaire' (Cohen and Manion, 1989, p112). I felt that if I hadn't specified the current year and specific classes in a year group then I might either have overtaxed the respondents' memories or their answers may well have been generalised and vague.

In terms of wording and terminology, I realised that the title of the questionnaire used the phrase *teaching Shakespeare* which I repeated throughout the questionnaire and yet which could be open to different readings and I therefore defined it where it first became necessary in question 2 at the start of Section B, thus;

> *The expression 'teaching Shakespeare' is used here and throughout as a convenient shorthand and should be taken to mean any activity with pupils involving the reading, discussion, acting, directing and writing about Shakespeare's works as well as related drama activities and the viewing, on stage or screen, of his plays.*

Within each section of the questionnaire I considered separately the style of the questioning. Whilst there is a variety of questioning styles overall in the questionnaire, I retained the same style within each section. Thus in Section C each question was directed at the respondent, was active and in the present tense so that they might focus on their current experience and classroom practice, as with question 4;

> *Do you read the entire play with the class?*

In Section D, which was concerned with opportunities for pupils to experience different interpretations of Shakespeare, the subject focus changed to the pupils and the tense changed in order to allow the teachers to consider past and future in that academic year. Here, I offer question 11 as a typical example;

Will pupils in this year group have had the opportunity to see a live production of a Shakespeare play organised by the school?

Sections E and F were concerned with eliciting the opinions and attitudes of the respondents and in both I decided to ask them to respond to statements such as in Section E, which focused on the respondents' understanding of pupils' views of Shakespeare,

Most pupils in this year group like Shakespeare.

Or in F which focused on the respondents' views and attitudes to the teaching of Shakespeare in schools, where question 24 reads,

Teaching Shakespeare is more important than other aspects of English

The attitude questions I developed for this section had their origins in Peter Benton's survey of the teaching of poetry in secondary schools (Benton 1986) and the advice Oppenheim gives whereby such statements are created so as not to be bland but in order to provoke a very definite response, '..they (attitude statements) should be meaningful and interesting, even exciting, to the respondents' (Oppenheim, 1992, p 179). Initially all of the statements were of my own making and covered a range of attitudes that I had heard or read over the past few years, but when I discussed these statements with Peter Benton he suggested that where possible I could use the occasional statements of those who have particular stances and views on Shakespeare and how it is taught. With this in mind I constructed the section using a combination of both my own statements such as in question 23 *Shakespeare is only for the more able pupil* and those of others such as with questions 29 and 32 which are based on Prince Charles' Shakespeare Birthday Lecture (1991) and questions 34 and 35 from Peter Levi. In the section I wanted to create a range of different ideological statements from those like Prince Charles and Peter Levi who believe that Shakespeare transcends history and is universally relevant to those like Eagleton and Hawkes who believe that Shakespeare is culturally determined, and also those who see Shakespeare teaching as elitist and only for the most able and those who see it as appropriate and accessible to all pupils in mainstream secondary schools. When

finally ordering the statements in this section, I deliberately mixed them up in terms of their ideological base and gave no indication of their author, in the hope that the respondents would respond to the statement and not to their views of its author.

I have just described the styles of questioning that I employed but of equal concern to me was also the nature of the respondents' response, whether it should be a tick in a box or a written response. Overall, my strategy was to keep the nature of the responses as simple as possible both for my own ease in the later analysis of data and for the ease of the respondents; so that generally I wanted as many tick boxes as was possible and appropriate to the purpose of the particular section. In only the final two sections, G and H did I ask the respondents to write responses. Section G focused on the resources used by the teacher to teach Shakespeare and here it would have required lists of resources (such as editions of plays, videos etc.) of enormous length to even begin to cover the range that teachers might be using and so I simply asked the respondents questions such as question 38;

> *Which edition of the plays (e.g. Cambridge Schools, Arden), if any, do you prefer to use with each year group?*

and then gave them a line for each year group in which to write their response.

Section H asked respondents for personal details such as age, sex and qualifications, but did include one question, number 51, where I was able to ask for a tick in a box response;

> *For approximately how many years have you been teaching English (please tick the appropriate box)?*

For all the other sections I was able to ask teachers to respond by putting ticks in boxes and here I had to carefully consider, if it wasn't a nominal scale where a *yes/no* response that was required (as in Section D), how to devise the coding frame and how to scale how many tick boxes there should be. For the rest I decided on ordinal scales where the responses were rated on a five point scale. In the sections where an attitude or opinion response was required, as in sections E and F, then the five point scale included a final *Don't know* column (see the example of question 14 below) so that the respondents could not opt for a play-safe mid point position but had to either agree or disagree.

14. Most pupils in this year group like Shakespeare.

	1	2	3	4	5
Year group	Disagree			Agree	Don't know
7					

With the other sections that required a more factual answer I compiled a graduating five point scale without a final don't know box (see the example of question 8 below) as the latter was deemed superfluous.

8. Do you ask pupils to memorise lines?

	1	2	3	4	5
Year group	Always/ nearly always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
7					

A number of authors, such as Cohen and Manion (1989), Bell (1987), Walker (1985) and Oppenheim (1992) who write about the construction of postal questionnaires, stress the importance of attractive, clear and consistent presentation. Oppenheim talks about the need for researchers to respect the respondent and to 'maintain the general feeling that they are being treated, not in an adversarial manner but with respect and consideration' (Oppenheim, 1992, p 122). The two examples above illustrate the general pattern of the presentation of the questions I adopted with the question first followed by the boxes requiring ticks. Wherever the style and size of the grid allowed and where it was appropriate, as in sections C, D, and E, I placed the grid over to the right hand side of the page to create space to the side where respondents could add written comments if they so wished, and I indicated and encouraged them to do so at the end of the introduction to each section, thus the introduction to section C reads;

> *This section asks you to consider the methods and approaches that you use to teach Shakespeare. Refer only to the current school year. Please use the blank space beneath each question to comment on or give reasons for your answers.*

The other measures that I took, out of consideration for the respondent (for I too have been a respondent to many a questionnaire and have felt annoyed with, and sometimes refused to complete, badly constructed, poorly and confusingly worded and clumsily presented questionnaires), included limiting the amount of writing that a respondent should be required by keeping the number of open ended questions to a

minimum; by using different fonts and highlighting techniques where appropriate and by leaving space between sections and questions.

I suffered from pangs of ethical unease in the construction of the questionnaire when I decided to code each questionnaire This was done in order for me to be able to identify from which schools I had received replies and which not, so that I might then be able to identify who to send reminder letters, and also to identify the respondents' position and official status in the English department as I thought that I might be able to detect some significant similarities or differences between and within the different groups. The coding system I adopted was quite simple and consisted a four square box which appeared on the top right hand corner of the first page and which contained in the top two squares a number which I had designated to each school. The two squares below, I left blank but filled in as soon as the questionnaire was returned, with an *01* if the respondent was an Head of English or an *02* if the respondent was not and I was able to glean that information by looking at question 52 on the back page of the questionnaire. My unease came from the fact that at the end of the questionnaire I promised the respondents confidentiality and although I could still retain it by the fact that I had not asked for them to name themselves, I had included a coding square which was not explained and might cause them suspicion but also because I was acting covertly here and knew that from the information given in the final section together with the coding square I could in fact identify many of the respondents if I so wished. As it happened only one of the respondents deleted the coding square but I was able to identify the school by the post mark and later by process of elimination. The fact that I felt uneasy about this made me more concerned to respect the respondents and to make sure I safeguarded their confidentiality in future.

An important part of the process in devising and creating the questionnaire was to de-bug it, to discover where any weaknesses might be in order that what is finally sent out would be likely to be met with a favourable response by the teachers receiving it. To this end I asked my supervisor, other colleagues and Peter Benton to look at it before sending it to two Heads of English who had agreed to pilot the questionnaire by completing it themselves and asking a colleague to fill it in. I specifically asked them to let me have their comments on the questionnaire, its layout, wording and its general comprehensibility. These procedures were invaluable as their comments pointed to typographical errors and ambiguity in some of my instructions and question wording and thus allowed me to improve the questionnaire.

OBSERVING IN THE CLASSROOM

As I mentioned earlier, I had planned to carry out my classroom observations during the Spring Term 1995 as this would be the time when most teachers would be teaching their chosen KS3 Shakespeare text to their Year 9 classes. My first observation took place on January 9th in School A and the last was in the early part of the Summer Term on April 28th at School D. Before I began this research project I had been regularly involved in observing in English classrooms for more than five years, mostly as a tutor on a PGCE English course observing student teachers teach but also through other small-scale research projects. I knew from both experiences that I could, if I wished, make myself fairly unobtrusive in most classrooms and to have little influence on the proceedings of the lesson. I also knew that I could get involved in the lesson; either assisting the teacher or talking with and maybe assisting individual or groups of teachers, and I had to decide which of these two approaches to adopt. These two different types or positions of observation can be described broadly as either *non-participant* or *participant* observation respectively, but Gold (1958) extended the two positions into four 'master roles' with *complete participant observer* at one end of the continuum and *complete observer* at the other and with *participant-as-observer* and *observer-as-participant* in between. Ball (1985) considers that there are two positions of participant observing either *hard-line* whereby the observer shares and takes part in the activities of the researched or *soft-line* where the researcher's presence and purpose is not hidden but he/she does not have to take part in or share the activities of the researched. I had decided early on that I would not adopt the position of a complete participant observer, nor that of the hard-line as I felt that this would necessitate me in narrowing my focus within the lesson far too much, in that I might get involved in working with a pair of pupils on a drama presentation for instance, and that could cause me to miss other significant events or utterances and not to get the feel of the class and the lesson, which after all was one of my major aims; I wanted to observe all the participants in the lesson including the teacher. Neither did I want to adopt the stance of a complete observer as I felt that this would distance myself far too much from the pupils and teachers and possibly cause some justifiable suspicion and reluctance to participate fully in any ensuing interviews that I intended to carry out. The position I decided to adopt could be described both as *soft-line* and to some extent *observer-as-participant,* in that I always informed both the class teacher and the pupils in the class as to my purpose and reason for being in the classroom and offered them the opportunity to ask me any questions whenever they wanted. It is difficult to label the researcher's observing position as in my experience it is not a fixed position throughout the period of the

observation and that even if the researcher would wish the position to remain constant and unchanging there are factors at work in schools and classrooms which are likely to disrupt this wish. Again in my experience in observing in schools, the two major influences on the stability of the observer's position are the class teacher and the pupils themselves. The teacher can ask that the observer sits in a certain position in the room which can clearly affect the level of involvement of the observer and they can also ask/suggest that the observer gets more or less involved with the pupils and or the activity in the lesson. The observer can of course decline the invitation in order to maintain the preferred position but there is a risk here of upsetting the relationship with the teacher and sometimes the request is put in such a way that it cannot be refused or the seating arrangements of the class are so determined as not to allow the observer any choice. In my case, although in my initial meetings with each teacher prior to observing I tried to explain my needs and wishes as clearly as possible, I still had difficulty when beginning the observations in declining the requests of two teachers who wanted me to move around the classroom from group to group asking the pupils what they were doing or even helping them with their tasks (as I was perceived to be some sort of 'Shakespeare expert'). On one occasion in School D with Teacher G the class split up into groups to work on a task which involved them in directing part of a scene from A Midsummer Night's Dream and the teacher directed three groups to move into spaces nearby in the school where they could practise and then asked me to go round to have a look at each group; a request which it was not in my interest to decline but which involved me in being far more involved in the work of certain groups and where because they were the only group in the space it was obvious that it was them that I was observing. Another instance where I recognised that the teacher was identifying me as a participant was during my third visit to observe Teacher H and his class, when having earlier handed me as well as the pupils a worksheet and text (this happened with most of the teachers observed at least once) he came up to me twice during the lesson and asked me about how my research was progressing and also talked to me about how the class were getting on with studying Romeo and Juliet. The pupils tend to be less overtly manipulative of the observer and yet in my experience they can be more influential in changing the observer's position. As I suggested earlier, my intention after introducing myself to the pupils in the class, telling them about my purpose for being in their classroom and offering them the opportunity to ask me questions, was to sit somewhere at the back of the classroom where I could observe all that was going on and yet be as unobtrusive as possible, although I recognise that I was more unobtrusive to the pupils, rarely being in their eye line, than to the teacher. In some classrooms this was relatively easy to achieve whereas in others it

was not and it might have something to do with the ethos of either the particular class and or the school in reflecting expectations of behaviour towards visitors in the classrooms. In some classes pupils did not speak to me or acknowledge my presence other than with brief eye contact and in these I was able to maintain a constant observing position. However, in other classrooms my presence was readily and openly acknowledged in that individual pupils would say hello to me as I passed them on the way to my seat. On one occasion in School B as soon as I sat down a boy close by said with a big smile, 'Oh good. I likes you' and throughout the lesson it was clear to me that through his body language and eye contact he wanted me to take notice of the work he was doing in the lesson. I could not ignore this but it did alter my observation position in that class in that I was more participative and more closely involved with that one pupil for that lesson. In two other classrooms two children asked their teacher openly and for all to hear what was the point of studying Shakespeare. As on both occasions the two pupils directed glances at me before and during their request, it appeared to me that I was implicated in the question and although I did not respond to it, as the question had been made public and both teachers chose to answer it publicly, my participation level was increased. After the lessons in both instances the teachers commented that they felt that the question had been raised partly because I was there. On other occasions, particularly when pupils were involved in a drama activity or were in some other way physically presenting work to the rest of the class, frequently I would receive looks either from the presenters or from the pupils who were audience which were clearly expecting a response (smile, laugh, applause etc.) from me, which I duly gave, which again increased my involvement and participation in the lesson. Burgess makes the point that 'Aside from not wanting to alienate the people one is studying, the participant observer also wants to be liked and, in his own marginal way, to feel part of the group' (Burgess, 1982, p 55). The result was in my case that although I was able to maintain my preferred position with little change throughout the course of my observation, with some classes I became more participative than in others. As Burgess asserts writing about the participant observer;

> ...even if he announces to people that he is there to study them, people soon forget why he is there, and react to him as a participant. They treat him as a person even if he treats them as subjects of study. ...Consequently, the fieldworker is under pressure to involve himself. (Burgess, 1982, p 55)

Concerning the point I made in the previous paragraph stating that I explained to both the teachers and the pupils my reasons and purposes for being in the classroom, I

felt that there was nothing to be gained by being secretive or covert, that those being observed would not behave any more guardedly for knowing my purpose and that not to reveal my intentions would have been ethically unjustifiable. I would have felt more uncomfortable if I had adopted a more covert role. There were a number of occasions when overtly observing where I felt highly uncomfortable with my role as researcher observer. For there were occasions in the classroom where I was privy to events where either or both the teacher and pupil suffered embarrassment or humiliation and this added to the overall guilt that I experienced in carrying out observation. Burgess sums this up when he writes;

> Once the fieldworker has gained entry, people tend to forget he is there and let down their guard, but he does not. He is involved in personal situations in which he is, emotionally speaking, always taking and never giving. (Burgess, 1982, p 59)

Burgess attempts to placate the researchers' guilt by stating that the researchers need to convince themselves that they have no other choice if they are to 'get honest data' and that often the only way to get it is to be dishonest. He adds that in partial recompense the researchers may identify with those being observed 'taking their troubles to heart and sometimes even accepting the validity of their causes' (Burgess, 1982, p 60). Personally, I think this is poor recompense and that, certainly in my case, the researcher is likely to remain uncomfortable and feeling guilty.

Having discussed the influence that those being observed have on the observer's position and behaviour I recognise of course that the observer, no matter how careful he/she is not to interfere in the life of the classroom, will influence the behaviour of some of those being observed. There were times when I observed when I was aware of this as when pupils were misbehaving, turned to catch my eye and stopped misbehaving. I was also aware that some of the teachers may have put in more preparation for the lessons I was observing and in one case where they had extended the sequence of lessons so that I would be able to see a particular lesson. But there were other times when I was not aware at the time that I was influencing behaviour and it only came to light in subsequent discussion with the teacher. I got into the habit at the end of each observed lesson where I would thank the teacher, pass the time, ask any pressing questions and allow them if they had time to talk to me about anything and it was in these moments that they alerted me to the influence that I had. I wrote down their comments as I remembered them in my research diary and to illustrate my point I will briefly refer to a couple of instances. In School B after observing the second of Teacher BA's lessons, she told me that she was sure that my presence affected the class; that when I was there they were worse behaved and

'acted up'. However, she then added that she thought that she might be too sensitive to their behaviour when I was there. Either way I have to accept that I am obviously having an effect on her behaviour in the classroom and it is likely that I was also affecting the pupils' in some way that I was unaware of. In another instance in School C, Teacher CA mentioned to me after the second observed lesson that when she was being watched she became aware of the questions she asked and she felt that in the lesson I had witnessed that she could have focused and directed her questions more effectively. What these instances alert me to is that the researcher when observing must never assume that their presence does not change or influence what they are observing; it does. It must be recognised and somehow taken into consideration when analysing the data.

One concern that I had when planning for the observation stage of my research was in deciding when to carry out my observations and how many to do with each class; as Burgess (1982) points out when discussing the anxieties that researchers develop from the management of the research, there is the feeling that when the researchers aren't observing a lesson that they are missing something far more valuable maybe than the lesson they did observe, even though the researchers could go back and talk to the subjects about the non-observed lesson. Be that as it may, I couldn't and didn't want to observe all lessons as my purpose at this stage was to get a flavour of what lessons with Y9 being taught Shakespeare were like and to note similarities and differences and to use the data from my observations as a basis for the interviews I would carry out later with teachers and pupils. In the end I decided that I would try to see three lessons with each teacher and that these lessons should be spread out so that I would see one that was at the start or near the start of the course of lessons on the Shakespeare text, one that was somewhere in the middle of the course and one which was at or towards the end of the course. That way I felt I could get a sense of progression and that together with the weekly logs that I had asked the teachers and pupils to keep, would help me to understand the observed lessons in context of the course and also to understand something of the nature of a course of lessons on Shakespeare. Because of my own work commitments I was not able to see lessons with a particular teacher at the same time each week and I recognise that that too introduces a further variable in that I could see a lesson first thing in the morning with a class and then last thing in the afternoon, and as every teacher knows pupils and teachers are generally more responsive in the morning than in the afternoon; a point that was made by teacher AA during my third observation of his lessons and by teacher CA when after my third visit to her lesson she said, 'It's been difficult - a last lesson on a Thursday and they're all sleepy'. All in all I was able to stick to my plan of

three visits per class with only one exception and that was at School B where on what I had intended was to be my third and last visit to observe a class with teacher BB, pupils were busy preparing and rehearsing for a final presentation of their ideas on *Romeo and Juliet* and at the end of the lesson I felt that maybe the teacher and some of the pupils would like me to see some of the presentations and certainly I wanted to see them. I therefore asked the teacher if it would be acceptable for me to pay another visit to see the presentations and by his response I knew that he was certainly keen that I did so, and consequently I made a fourth visit to that classroom.

FIELD NOTES

A major consideration for me before I started my classroom observations was how and what to record. I liked the way that Beatrice Webb (1982) drew attention to the importance of field notes not simply in their value of recording observations but also that they are 'an instrument of discovery'. In terms of how to record, I quickly discounted the more formal methods of observation like those based on the Bales (1950) method of classifying behaviour, such as Flanders (1970), Williams (1984) or Hopkins (1985) because their categories would not match my need. Although I might have been able to adopt one to suit, I did not want anything too prescriptive and inflexible as I wanted to be alert to and be able to note the unexpected even if at the time it might seem to have little relevance. During previous classroom observation when researching gender issues in Drama lessons I had used a system advocated by Michael Bassey in a talk to M.A.Ed students at the Institute, whereby he utilised a school exercise book and on the left hand page he wrote down his observations and on the right hand page he recorded (either at the time or later) his analytical comments on the data. I found this method useful to a point in that it allowed me the opportunity to analyse and comment on data as it emerged and also to keep the two separate yet adjacent which proved useful during later analysis for as Burgess mentions, 'field notes can be used to begin data analysis alongside data collection' (Burgess, 1982, p 191). The disadvantage for me with the Bassey method was that it was not possible to see and compare different pages of observations side by side which I often felt would have helped. I therefore, for this current research, adopted a new system whereby I used single sheets of A4 with a fold down the centre so that I could still record my observations on the left and my analytical comments on the right but also be able to split the sheets if necessary in order to aid comparisons, a method which Webb (1982) supports. However, there is a risk with this system that data sheets from one set of observations if split might get mixed in with another set and

the researcher might not be able to relocate the sheet with its original set; to this end I devised a coding system for each sheet (see Appendix 4) so that certain information, the date, time and location of the observation together with the name of the school the teacher's and class's code and the number of the sheet in relation to that set of observation sheets.

A further option in terms of recording observation data was whether or not to use an audio tape or video recorder. I discounted the latter as I felt that it would disrupt the classroom even further and by its nature would cause me to focus on certain aspects of the classroom at the expense of others and would not allow me to respond quickly to occurrences outside the immediate focus. As for tape recording the classroom sessions I decided against this because I wanted to be able to note and respond analytically during the observations and with a tape recorder I would have had to find some way of synthesising the transcript data into my written data. Transcribing tapes takes an enormous amount of time and I wanted to be able to use the data from my observations initially to help me consider questions for the next stage of my research, the interviews. Having discounted the use of the audio tape before my observations, during the observations themselves there were one or two occasions with each class when I wished that I had an audio tape running so that I could have checked on some of the dialogue that I was unable to write down accurately at the time due to the speed of the interchanges between the pupils and the teacher. In future observations I will certainly consider using audio tape as a support to my field notes.

Coming back to the question of what to record, as I mentioned earlier I discounted the more formal methods like those based on Bales (1950). Writing about this area of the keeping of field notes, Burgess comments that 'the researcher needs to consider what is to be recorded and what is to be omitted' (Burgess, 1982, p191). Although I wanted to try to record as much as possible that was said and done in the classroom by the teacher and pupils relevant to my objectives (I did not for instance record in detail conversations which were about English or school activities that were not associated with teaching Shakespeare) there were specific areas that I was looking for which my earlier questionnaire had alerted me to, such as instances where pupils were having difficulty with Shakespeare's language and how the teacher made Shakespeare more relevant to the world of the pupil, and to other areas which I had an interest in such as gender response, involvement and interest, evidence of pupil learning and how the classroom was set out for each activity. To facilitate this process I drew up and kept a prompt list with words and phrases like 'gender', 'language diff' and 'pupil learning' boldly displayed on the clipboard with my

observation sheets. I found this to be very helpful in reminding myself of what I might record both at the start of a lesson and also during those points when for one reason or another my mind was wandering and I needed to bring my thoughts back to the purpose of the observation. This list of prompts did not get in the way of allowing me to respond to and note other areas or events during the lesson and they also helped me to carry out some of the analysis during the lesson that I spoke of earlier. This ongoing analysis also fed in occasionally to later observations so for instance I began to notice early on what I termed a teacher's 'dominant knowledge' and this I added to my prompt list.

In addition to using the observation sheets that I described above I also wrote notes in my research diary as soon after the observed lesson as possible and never later than six hours after. In the diary, I recorded some of my overall impressions of the lesson, my feelings together with a summarised account of anything that the teacher said to me at the end of the lesson. The recording of my overall impressions and feelings about each lesson was important as I did not find that I had the time to do such things during the observation as I was concerned with the component parts rather than the whole and yet I was ever aware of the atmosphere in the classroom and the relative interest of the pupils and teachers.

A further strategy for collecting data which I employed at this stage when carrying out the observations was in asking all of the teachers and pupils being observed to fill in a log. I was aware that in choosing to observe only three lessons in a course of Shakespeare lessons I would have only a sketchy idea at the most as to what went on in between time in the course and I felt I would like to keep in touch with some of the rest of the course if at all possible and I thought that by asking pupils and teachers to keep a log of what went on and their thoughts I might be able to do this. My first attempt at the log requested each pupil and teacher at the end of every lesson to write down responses to three questions as to what they had learned, what was most enjoyable, what the difficulties were and to add any further comments (there was also space at the top of each sheet for them to put the date and venue). When I piloted this version with two local teachers they both commented that to ask pupils and teachers to fill in the log every lesson would be far too onerous and that it might well be met with a negative attitude and response, and so acting on their advice I asked the respondents to fill in the log at the end of each week , a request which all of the teachers willingly accepted for themselves and on behalf of their pupils. An example of both the pupil's and the teacher's log can be found in Appendix 3.

INTERVIEWING TEACHERS AND PUPILS

The purpose, as I have suggested earlier, in carrying out interviews with teachers and pupils was for me to be able not only to validate through triangulation and comparability other methods and the ensuing data but also to be able to go deeper into the thoughts and attitudes of some of those whom I had seen participating in the lessons I had earlier observed.

Initially I had to decide on the type of interviews I wanted to hold. I did consider the possibility of conducting group interviews with the pupils, but my previous research experience had made me aware of some of the drawbacks. Whereas for some individuals the group interview, where individuals can obtain greater support from their peers and be less intimidated by the interviewer, could promote greater confidence in them voicing their thoughts, for other individuals, the fact that there were others of their own age present could result in them being less inclined to voice their thoughts (through fear of appearing foolish in front of their peers; another dominant member of the group allows them or drives them to take up such a position) or simply to concur with the consensus of the group or the thoughts of the most dominant member of the group. In addition there is the technical difficulty of having recorded a group interview and then of deciphering the voices at a later stage, a difficulty which was absent in the one-to-one interview. Having decided to opt for the individual interview, partly through my stated disaffection with the group method but added to the fact that I would be interviewing the teachers individually, did not mean that I was unaware of the disadvantages of the one-to-one interview. I was conscious in particular that one-to-one interviewing, particularly of children by adults, is affected by notions of power and authority, which can result in the child being guarded and highly selective in what they say (an issue which I will return to later). My experience this time round confirmed that I had made the correct choice here but that for some of the quietest, and coincidentally "least-able", a group interview might have given them some encouragement to speak more. More specifically in terms of choice of type of interview I had to decide whether to opt for structured, unstructured, focused or non-directed.

I discounted the unstructured fairly quickly, for although as Cohen and Manion attest, it allows "for greater flexibility and freedom" (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p 273) for the respondent, the context and sequence is entirely in the hands of the respondent and, as I only had limited time and the nature of the research was not intended to delve

into any personally sensitive areas, added to the fact that I had my doubts as to whether I or the pupils could handle such format, for as Bell points out, "Such interviews require a great deal of expertise to control" (Bell, 1987, p 72); expertise which I felt I did not have.

My use of a postal questionnaire to teachers earlier in the project and through which I gleaned substantial data, was one of the reasons for me not opting for the structured interview. I also wanted my interviews to appear more conversational than the structured format allowed. I say "*appear* more conversational" as in reality interviews are never like conversations, for in whatever format is decided, the interviewer sets the agenda and is in control of the communication, and where the interviewee reveals themselves to a greater or lesser extent dependant upon the seductive methods employed by the interviewer and their own wishes, the interviewer usually remains voyeuristically fully clothed, as Ball puts it;

> The interviewer comes to "know" his subject without ever necessarily having to engage in a reciprocal process of "social striptease. (Ball, 1983, p 94)

I wanted the interviewees to be able to have the opportunities to inject their own ideas and opinions; contributions which could have been missed if I had adopted a rigid agenda. I decided that I would adopt a focused interview format as the only other alternative, the non-directed interview, didn't allow me the control I required, whereas as Cohen and Manion explain with the focused interview;

> ...the distinctive feature is that it focuses on a respondent's subjective response to a known situation in which she has been involved and which has been analysed by the interviewer prior to the interview. (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p 273)

The next step, having decided upon the type of interview, was to consider the structure of the interview together with the order and wording of the questions. I agree with Bell (1987, p 70) when she comments that the wording for an interview is important but need not be as precise as that for a questionnaire, for with the interview there are opportunities for the respondent to ask for clarification if the meaning of a question is unclear.

As a result of the analysis I had been doing on the earlier questionnaire and the classroom observations, I had identified three areas that I wished to explore further in the interviews. They were; first, what I termed as the course (i.e. the series of lessons, some of which I observed, devoted to the teaching of a Shakespeare play in

Year 9), second, the Key Stage 3 Test on Shakespeare, and third, general questions about the respondent's attitudes and feelings towards Shakespeare and his position in schools. Before each interview I was careful to tell each interviewee that my questions would be concerned with those three areas in turn. Within each area I attempted to ask similar questions of both pupils and teachers so that I might be able to make some comparisons later (See Appendix 4 for examples of the questions for both). For instance, in the questions about the course, the first for the teachers was;

From those lessons on (title of play) which elements or aspects did you enjoy?

and for the pupils;

From those lessons on (title of play) what did you enjoy?

Another question in this section asked teachers;

What have you learnt through teaching the play this time?

and asked pupils;

What would you say are the main things you have learnt through your study of the play?

As can be seen, where I felt it necessary for purposes that acknowledged the different roles and language use of teacher and pupil I amended the wording to suit. One reason for giving such consideration to the wording of each question in this way was to assist my own confidence as an interviewer and another to clarify the meaning for the interviewee as much as possible so that the interview could flow without too many pauses. However, I went into each interview prepared to adjust the wording again if necessary, so that to some extent the pre-worded questions were prompts. This balance between planned, careful, exact wording and a sense of spontaneity and naturalness in questioning on the part of the interviewer is difficult to achieve and it is part of the dilemma that Kitwood refers to when commenting on interviews;

> ...the distinctively human element in the interview is necessary to its "validity". The more the interviewer becomes rational, calculating and detached, the less likely the interview is to be perceived as a friendly transaction, and the more calculated the response. (Kitwood,1977, in Cohen and Manion,1994, p 282)

I had tried out different methods of recording interviews in earlier research projects and had discovered that for me the most suitable method was to use a small Dictaphone during the interview and to write some reflections in my research diary as soon after the interview as possible. I have not encountered any difficulty with using such a tape recorder and always asked for the respondent's permission to use it before the interview began, and would say that my experience is similar to Stenhouse's who writes;

> I never try to hide or play down the tape recorder. On the whole I find that most subjects forget it or ignore it very quickly indeed. (Stenhouse, 1984, p 279)

My own note-taking during an interview is not quick or accurate enough which causes too many breaks in the flow of the interview and hinders the relationship between myself and the interviewee as eye contact cannot be maintained for long. My own notes in my research diary after interviewing pupils from School B seem pertinent on this point;

> I think I'm improving as an interviewer in that I need to look at my questions far less and can retain eye contact far more, which makes for a more fluid dialogue.

A number of commentators on research methods (Bell, Cohen and Manion, Burgess etc.), correctly emphasise the importance of careful consideration of the venue for the interview. Whilst agreeing, I was very much in the hands of the teachers. I asked for somewhere that would be relatively quiet and free from interruptions and that the place where I interviewed the pupils ought to be somewhere that was familiar territory for them such as a classroom (in order to minimise their feelings of alienation and discomfort). Not surprisingly, the venues for interviews of both teachers and children differed from school to school and sometimes from class to class depending on the availability of rooms. In School B for instance I interviewed pupils from one class and their teacher in the classroom where I had observed them being taught, but the pupils and the teacher from the other class I interviewed in the school's 'conference room'. The latter venue had a much more formal feel to it than I would have wanted when interviewing the pupils in particular. In all cases, the teachers, again not surprisingly, found it much easier to adjust to or to ignore their surroundings.

Although I was less then satisfied with the venues for the interviews, I was happier with the timing in that I managed to arrange for there to be sufficient time to interview

both pupils and teachers, I managed to keep within the time limit that I set myself and which I communicated to each interviewee (this timing was arrived at through piloting the interviews first), and did not think afterwards that any of the interviewees felt the pressure of time.

In terms of bias, I agree with Hitchcock and Hughes who write that;

> The main sources of bias and influence upon interviews is generally regarded as being the personal characteristics of the interviewer. (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, p 89)

and who cite key variables of age, gender, class and ethnicity. As I have alluded to earlier those personal characteristics of mine probably had a greater effect on the pupils than the teachers as for the pupils they carry greater signs of power and authority. However, each interviewee's perception and interpretation of the interviewer will result in what is known as the *response effect* in that some interviewees may want to please the interviewer or may conversely wish to block or even sabotage the interview. My experience this time was that all of the teachers to some extent were concerned to please me and yet, happily, their views didn't always coincide with mine which suggested to me that this aspect of bias had been somewhat minimised. With the majority of the pupils I did not feel this, rather that most of them regarded me as an authority figure and either saw me as an authority figure supportive of the school and the teachers or else as some kind of inspector and that either way it caused the pupils to respond in a way that was generally loyal and supportive towards their teachers. In my research diary after interviewing pupils from School D I noted the following;

> I'm becoming convinced that some of the pupils are giving me the answers that they think I'd like to hear or ought to hear, such as saying that Shakespeare was 'clever' or 'wise'. They rarely said what they disliked other than some bits were boring; and they often praise their teacher.

I was recognising and having to take account that some of the pupils' responses were in a sense not fully their own but were adopted understandings given to them by their teachers or perhaps as Cooper puts it that, 'individuals' perceptions of their own cognition *can* be culturally determined' (Cooper,1993, p 238). In my own observations I was discovering that many teachers were influencing implicitly or explicitly the pupils' understanding of Shakespeare through what I have termed their culturally dominant knowledge.

The other area where bias can and does creep in, and which is one where I had to do my best to eliminate bias, was in the wording of the questions put to the interviewees. If the interview had been unstructured or non-directive I would have felt that the wording I used spontaneously may well have been inadvertently loaded with words which reflected my own bias and influenced the interviewees inordinately. As with the construction of questions on the questionnaire, I was particularly careful to avoid leading questions.

In conclusion to this discussion, my intentions and my perspective as a researcher with this project are closely bound up with the close relationship I have had and continue to have with teachers and teaching, and my view of teachers' roles and purpose, in that I regard teaching as a profession in which teachers need to be self critically reflective of both their practice and their aims and values and able to participate with others in school and classroom research. If this participation in research happens then, as Carr and Kemmis state, the outcome of the research

> "is not just the formulation of informed practical judgement, but theoretical accounts which provide a basis for analyzing systematically distorted decisions and practices, and suggesting the kinds of social and educational action by which these distortions may be removed" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p31).

I complete this chapter with a diagram (see Figure 3) of my research design as a way of illustrating it in terms of the order of my research methods, data analysis and re-focusing.
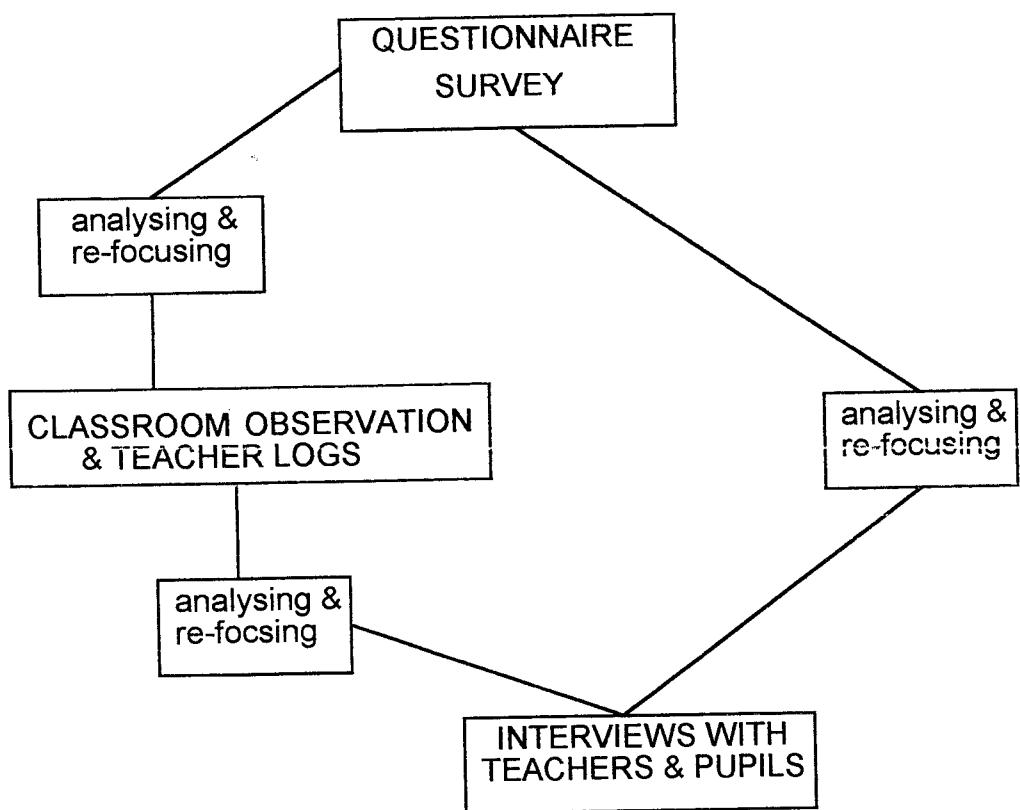
Figure 3 Diagram of research design

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF DATA
THE SURVEY

ANALYSIS OF DATA - THE SURVEY

In this chapter, I will present a synthesis of data collected from the survey I conducted through a postal questionnaire into the teaching of Shakespeare in 54 secondary schools in Hampshire and West Sussex (details of the timing and methods employed can be found in Chapter Two).

Briefly, the purpose of the survey was to provide an inventory of the time teachers spent teaching Shakespeare together with the methods and resources they used, and also to gain some understanding of their current attitudes to Shakespeare, teaching Shakespeare and their views of their pupils' attitudes to Shakespeare and being taught it. Overall, the intention was not to produce a finely detailed picture out of which major generalisations could emerge, for I recognised that the questionnaire is a fairly blunt instrument, but rather it was to provide me with a panoramic view of Shakespeare teaching in this part of southern England. From that panorama, using grounded theory I could develop some more interesting questions and theory to further and sharpen the subsequent stages of my research (classroom observations and interviews). With this in mind my approach to the analysis of the questionnaire data has been deliberately light at this stage although I am aware that there are some possibilities for cross-category comparisons at a later stage which could provide further interesting questions. In the interpretation of the data I have decided to refer to each of the years 7, 8 and 9 in KS3 (which is the focus of my study) separately but have combined both the GCSE years (10 and 11) and the A level years (12 and 13) as both are five term, two year courses where the methods and approaches of the teachers, and even the teachers themselves, would be unlikely to change over the five terms, whereas they could well do during each of the KS3 years which are rarely unified to the same extent.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the questionnaire was structured into separate but related sections and my analysis will broadly follow the order of the sections.

ABILITY GROUPINGS

In Section A I was interested to discover the different groupings in English that pupils were placed when being taught Shakespeare. The data I received from the 36 schools which responded to my questionnaire indicated that in English 14 set their

pupils throughout their school life, 12 taught their pupils in mixed ability groups throughout their school life and nine schools taught their pupils in mixed ability groups during some or all of the KS3 years but set them from Y10 onwards. It interested me that whereas teachers are compelled to teach Shakespeare to all pupils from Year 10 onwards and although they are compelled to teach Shakespeare during KS3 with most choosing to teach it during Year 9 immediately prior to the Key Stage Test, a number (24) chose to teach it to Years 7 and 8 and not just to those in a 'top set' or a mixed ability class but also to those in a 'bottom set'

TIME SPENT TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

In Section B, Question 2 was concerned with discovering how much time during the school year each teacher spent teaching Shakespeare to their classes in each year. The data indicates that the amount of time increases year by year with a sudden increase in Year 9 as can be seen in Figure 4.
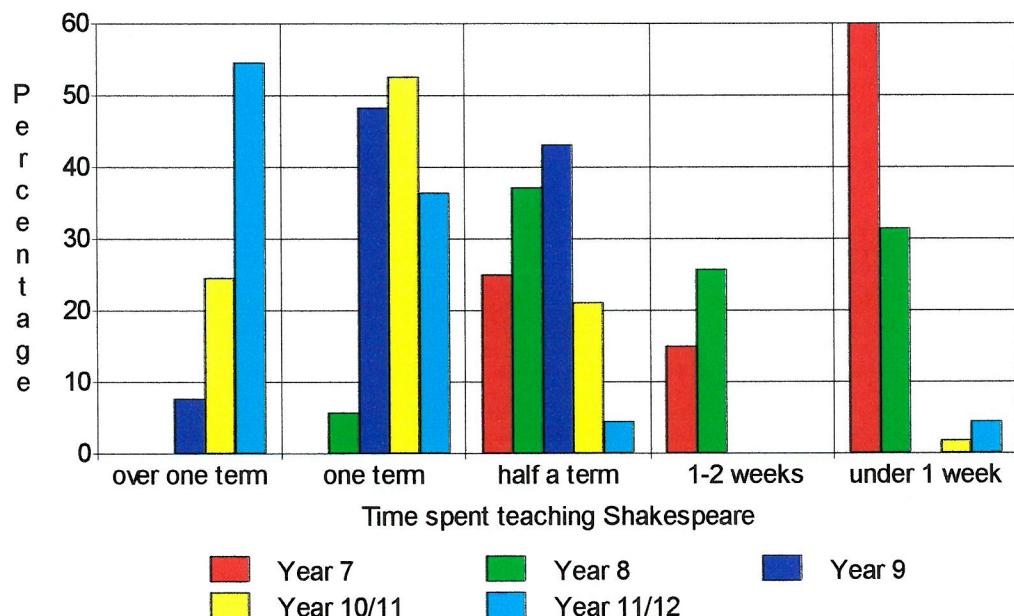
Figure 4 Time spent teaching Shakespeare

In Years 7 and 8 very little Shakespeare teaching takes place with 60% of teachers questioned teaching it for less than two weeks in a year, whereas in Year 9 none of the teachers spent less than half a term teaching Shakespeare and half of them spent a term or longer. There were increases in the years that followed but the increase was gradual resulting in over half of the teachers spending a term or more teaching Shakespeare both in the GCSE years and the A level years.

From my own experience of teaching English in schools from 1973 to 1990 I came across only a few teachers who taught Shakespeare to Year 9 and rarely spent as much time on it as those I surveyed, whereas the pattern for the other years would have been very similar to the findings from the questionnaire. That so little teaching of Shakespeare occurs in Years 7 and 8 with a dramatic increase in Year 9 which is sustained in the remaining school years can be understood simply in terms of the demands made on schools by external examining agencies (National Curriculum Council and the various GCSE and A level exam boards) that Shakespeare must be taught and tested. Concerning KS3, the demand is that all pupils have to study at least one Shakespeare text during the three years and that they will be tested on it at the end of KS3 which is of course at the end of Year 9, which explains why there is the sudden yet understandable increase in the amount of time devoted to teaching Shakespeare in Year 9. One question that arose from this which I incorporated into my interviewing of teachers, was whether if there were no compulsion to teach Shakespeare at KS3 and to test pupils at the end of Year 9 would they have taught Shakespeare at all and if so for how long.

METHODS AND APPROACHES FOR TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

Sections C and D asked teachers to consider the methods and approaches that they used when teaching a Shakespeare text to their classes in different years. My intentions in these two sections were to try to discover any differences in method and approach when they taught classes in specific years.

There were ten questions in these sections and for the purpose of discussion and analysis gathered the data into two broad areas, *reading* and *other activities.*

Reading
Concerning reading, I wanted to discover *how much* of any Shakespeare play the teachers asked the pupils to read and also *how* they approached the reading of the text.

What I mean by *how much* is whether or not teachers read the whole of a Shakespeare play with their class. From their responses to Question 3, I discovered (see Figure 5) that it only became common practice for teachers with Year 10 and 11 classes where about 70% of them read the entire play, and with Years 12 and 13

where 90% of them did so. I was not surprised to find that it was very rare in Years 7 and 8 for teachers to read the entire play as the approach to Shakespeare in those years is often one of a gentle and fun introduction. However, I was fairly surprised to discover that in Year 9, where teachers spend almost as much time teaching Shakespeare as they do with Years 10 and 11 (see Figure 5) that it was only common practice to read the whole play with about 50% of them. One reason for this might be that the Key Stage 3 Test in Year 9 only asks pupils to respond to one of two scenes from the play they have been studying and does not require knowledge of the whole play. Another factor that may be pertinent in understanding why there is a sudden rise in Year 9 of the number of classes where the whole play is read, is the presence of external exams like the KS3 Test, GCSE's and A-levels; for as some respondents wrote on the questionnaire next to Question 3, some teachers do not read the entire play if assessment is solely by coursework but they do if there is an exam.
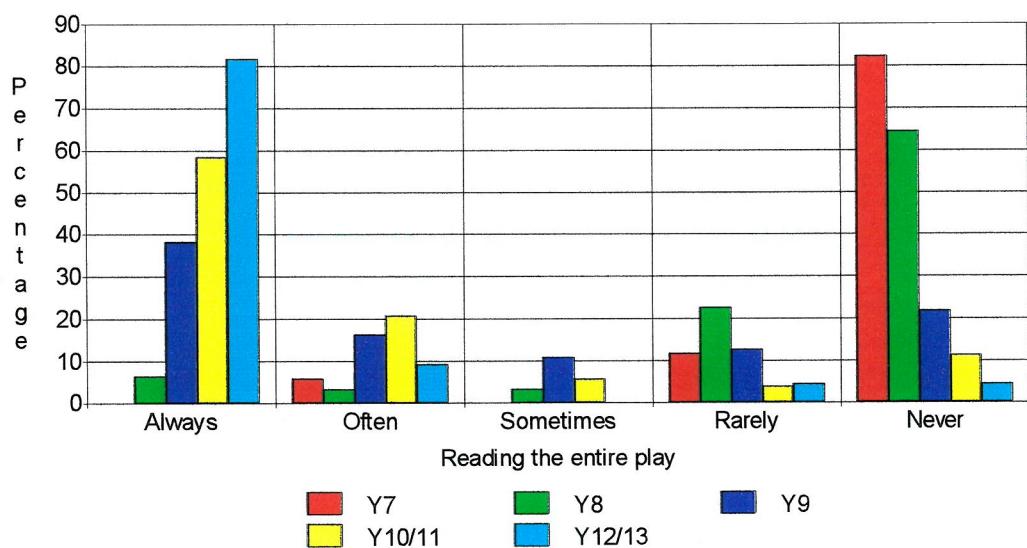
Figure 5 Reading the entire play with the class

My brief analysis of this data supported a question which I had already penned in for my interviews with teachers, namely whether or not they would have taught Shakespeare to their Year 9 class any differently if there had not been the KS3 Test at the end of the year.

As for *how* teachers approached the reading of a Shakespeare play with a class there were in my experience a variety of methods that a teacher could employ, including casting the play and reading it around the class, reading it aloud in small

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groups, acting out or performing and pupils reading it on their own. In my day as a pupil, the most common method was probably casting the play and then reading the play aloud around the class and as far as I was aware this was still a popular method with teachers. The data from Question 4 of the questionnaire confirmed that this was still a fairly popular choice with teachers from Year 9 upwards (as can be seen in Figure 6) and which coincides with the years where teachers are more likely to read the entire play
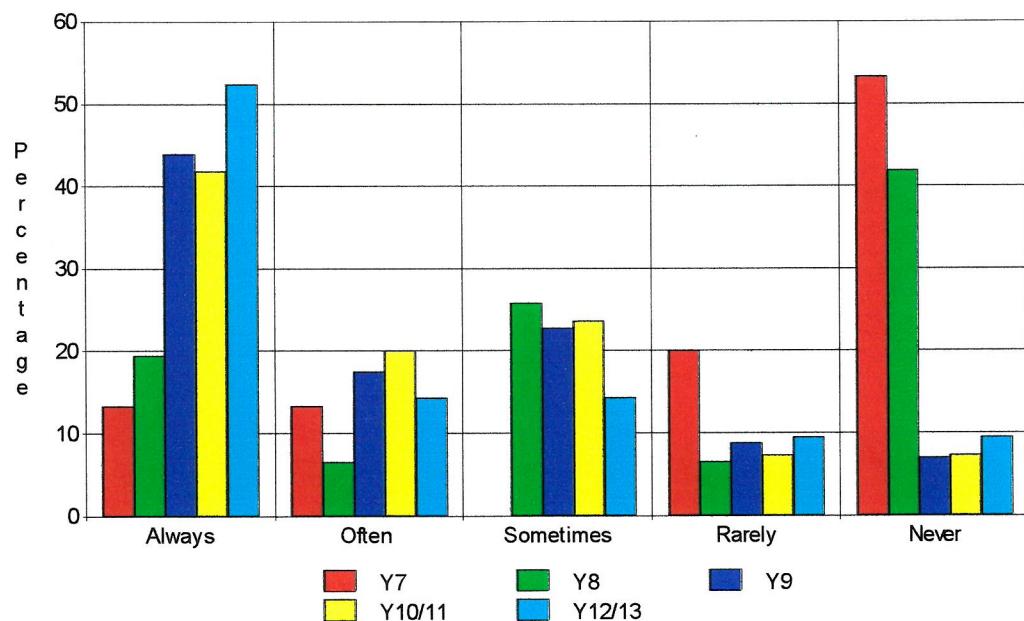
Figure 6 *Casting the play and reading it around the class*

As to the popularity of asking pupils to either read the play or parts of it aloud in groups or to read it on their own, the data from Questions 5 and 6 suggests that teachers fairly commonly employ the practice of group treading with all years as can be seen in Figure 7 but rarely ask pupils to read parts of the play on their own until Years 12 and 13, as can be seen in Figure 8.
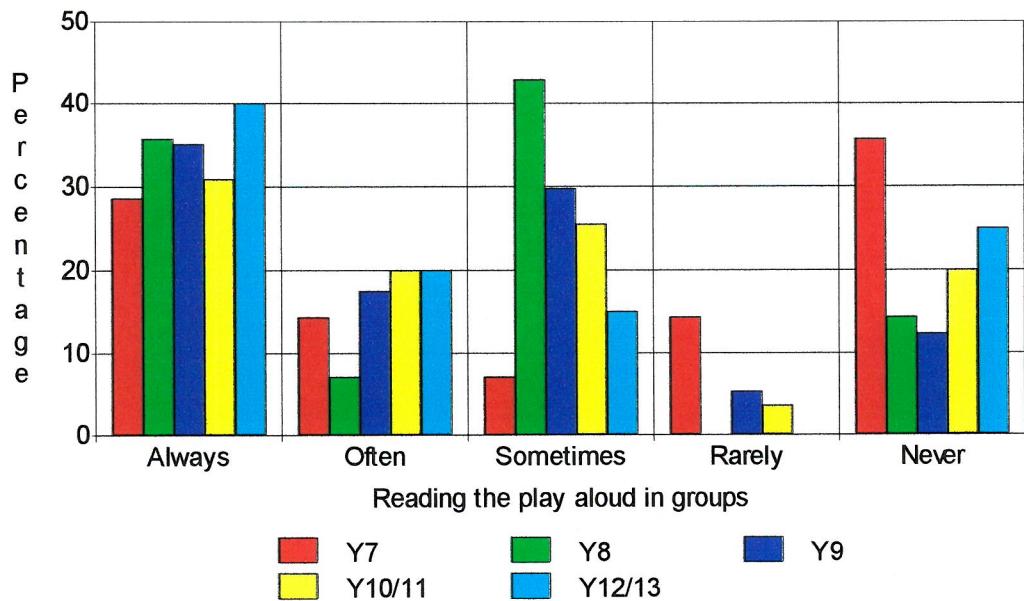
Figure 7 *Reading the play aloud in groups*
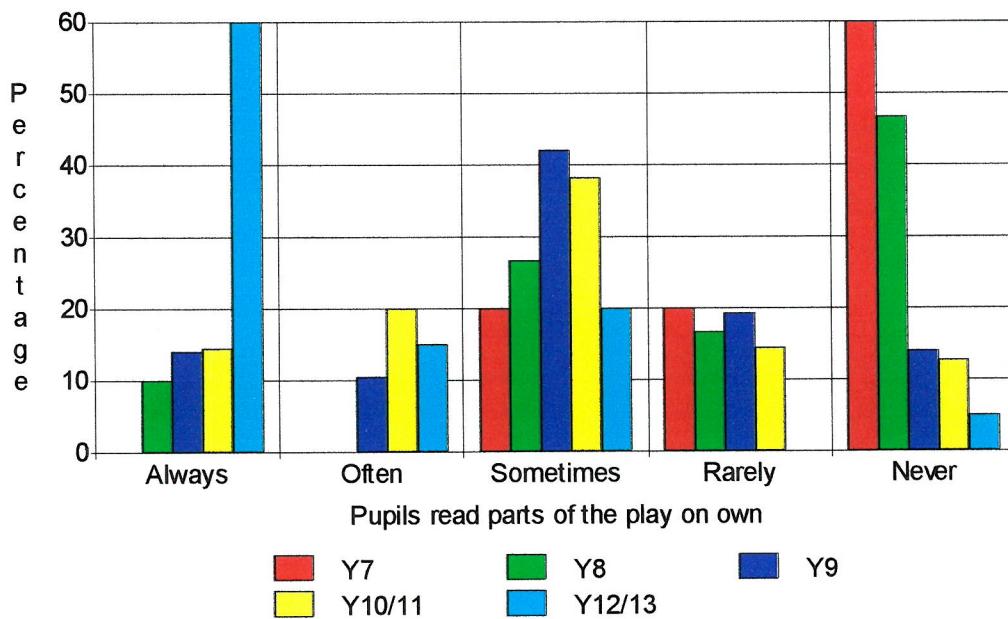
Figure 8 *Pupils reading part of the play on own*

Concerning the group reading, where between 43% and 60% of teachers indicated that they used this method always or sometimes, some of the written comments against Question 5 suggests that one of the reasons for the popularity of this method is to give pupils confidence in reading (particularly aloud) Shakespeare texts. One teacher writes, 'Pupils are asked to read a scene in groups before reading it aloud as

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a class', and another, 'To give each student a chance to read without feeling embarrassed'. It seems likely that this need to build pupils' confidence in reading Shakespeare is also behind the rarity amongst the teachers questioned (particularly in Years 7 and 8) of asking their pupils to read parts of the text on their own. Some of the written comments would support this idea and suggest that pupils are asked to read on their own to supplement other ways of reading or activities; thus one teacher writes, 'This is in addition to or before reading aloud in class', another, 'As revision or in prep (sic) for essays' and another 'This is in addition to or before reading aloud in class'.

Questions 7 and 8 focussed on two related methods of reading Shakespeare plays; methods that are most closely related to performance, namely performing scenes from the play and the memorising of lines from the play. The responses to these questions suggest that the practice of asking pupils to perform scenes is common across all years but the memorising of lines is rare.

As can be seen in Figure 9 pupil performance of scenes increases slightly in Year 9 (where only 6% of teachers rarely or never use this method) and decreases only fractionally in the remaining school years. It is likely that the increased popularity of this method might owe much to the increased use of Drama in English.
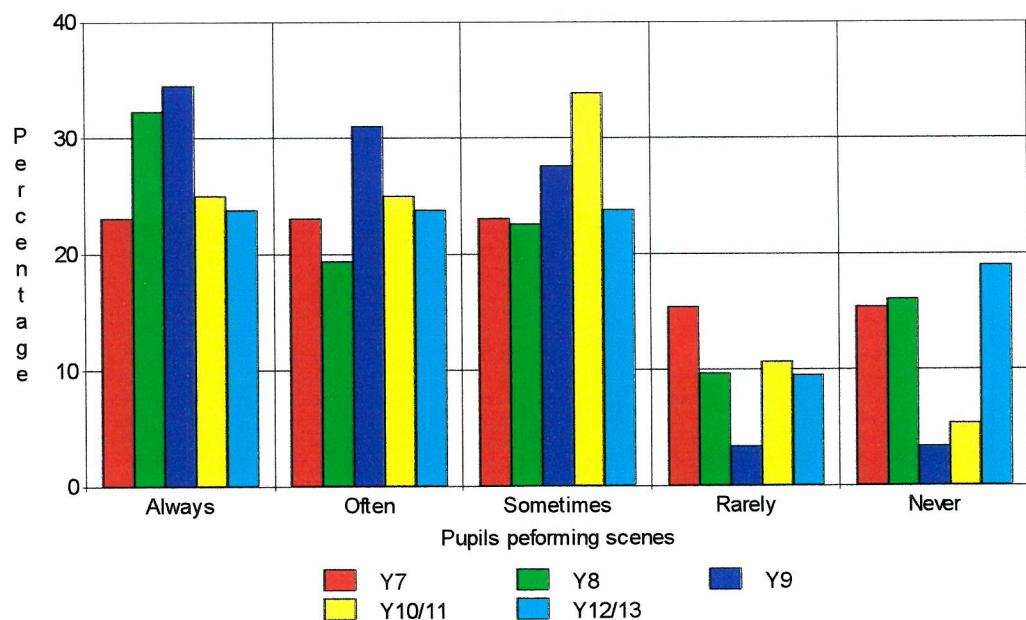
Figure 9 Pupils performing scenes

Memorising lines from Shakespeare was a very common practice both when I was at school and when I first began teaching, but that the survey indicates that it might be

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rarely used nowadays (see Figure 10) is of little surprise. In the 1950's and 1960's and through much of the 70's, in order to pass examinations in English which contained a Shakespeare component, the direct quotation of lines from the play being studied was obligatory, but since the introduction of Plain Texts exams in the late 1960's and the increase in coursework assessment at around the same time, the need for pupils to memorise lines diminished. As one teacher wrote in connection with this question, 'Open Book syllabus made the learning of quotations unnecessary' and two others referring to Years 10 to 13 said that memorising lines was only used for exam purposes.
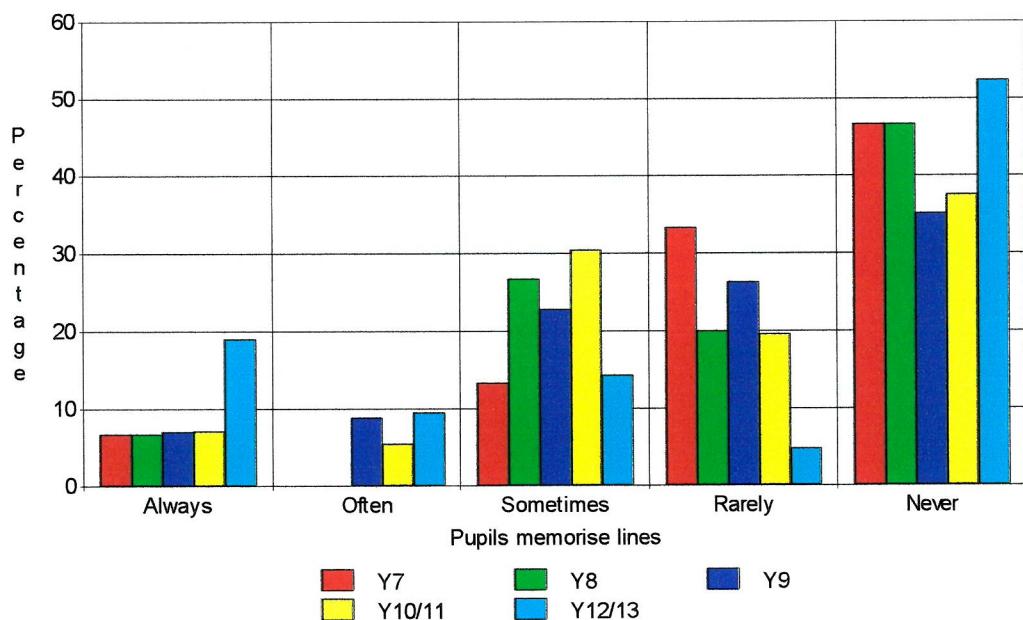
Figure 10 Pupils memorising lines

Other Activities

Under this heading I have included such activities as Shakespeare related drama, the use of plot summaries, the viewing of a live production and the utilisation of video and audio recordings. All of these activities are employed to assist pupils in gaining a better understanding of the play being studied. They provide different entry points into the play, often with possibilities of viewing it from a different perspective. Consequently, it can be a means whereby those pupils who might not find the traditional methods of reading the play (see above) suitable or appropriate to their learning style, can engage with the play or aspects of it. Here, the use of Shakespeare related drama activities provides a good example. For example, pupils could be asked to view and improvise a scene from the play through the eyes of a bystander; or they could be asked to role play characters from the play in a 'missing' scene; or they could be asked to improvise a modern day scene which contains

similar conflicts and/or emotions from a scene in the play in order that they might be able to make connections and see similarities between their experience and world and that of the play.

From the responses to Question 9 of the questionnaire, it appeared that most teachers used drama activities in their Shakespeare teaching as can be seen in Figure 11.
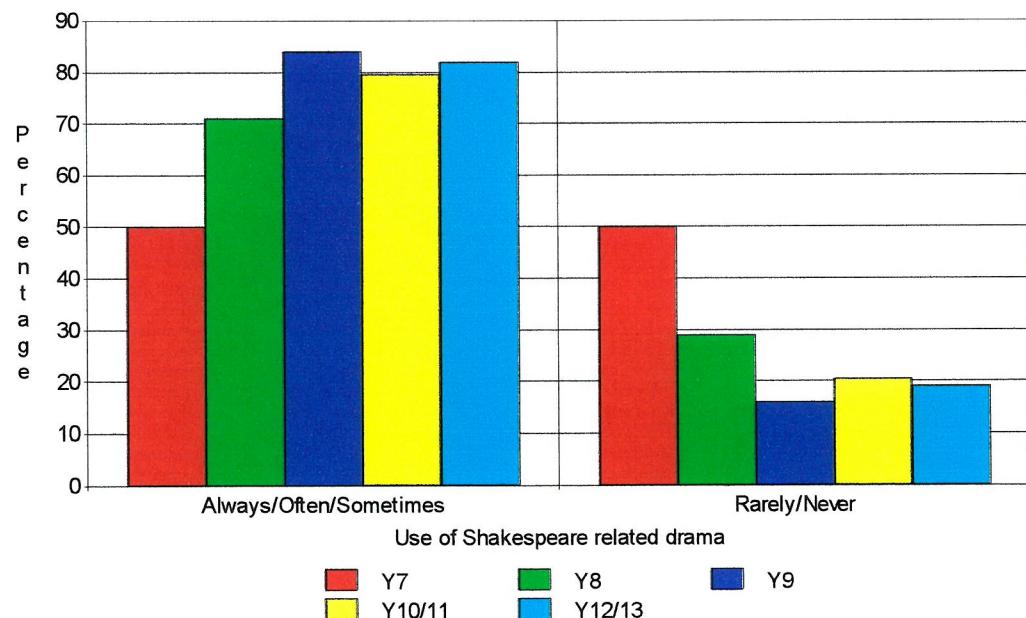
Figure 11 The use of Shakespeare related drama activities.

Well over 70% of teachers questioned affirmed their use of drama across all years (except in Year 7 where it was only 50%) in the 'sometimes' 'often' 'always' bracket (I realise now that I didn't need the five gradations in this question and that a simple 'Yes/No' would have sufficed). That so many teachers claim to use drama in their Shakespeare teaching interests me and the questions of how, how frequently and why they use drama will be a focus both of my observations in classrooms and the interviews with pupils and teachers.

It is also of interest to note (see Figure 11) that the greatest use of drama activities in Shakespeare teaching appears to occur in Year 9, as is also the case with pupils performing scenes from the play (see Figure 9), the two most active methods in terms of teaching Shakespeare.

In Question 10 I wanted to know how many teachers offered pupils a summary of the plot of the play before reading it, as in my experience this could be a helpful

introduction to the play as well as a means of placating pupil fears of not being able to understand Shakespeare. From the data it appears that most teachers share my view as can be seen in Figure 12 below,
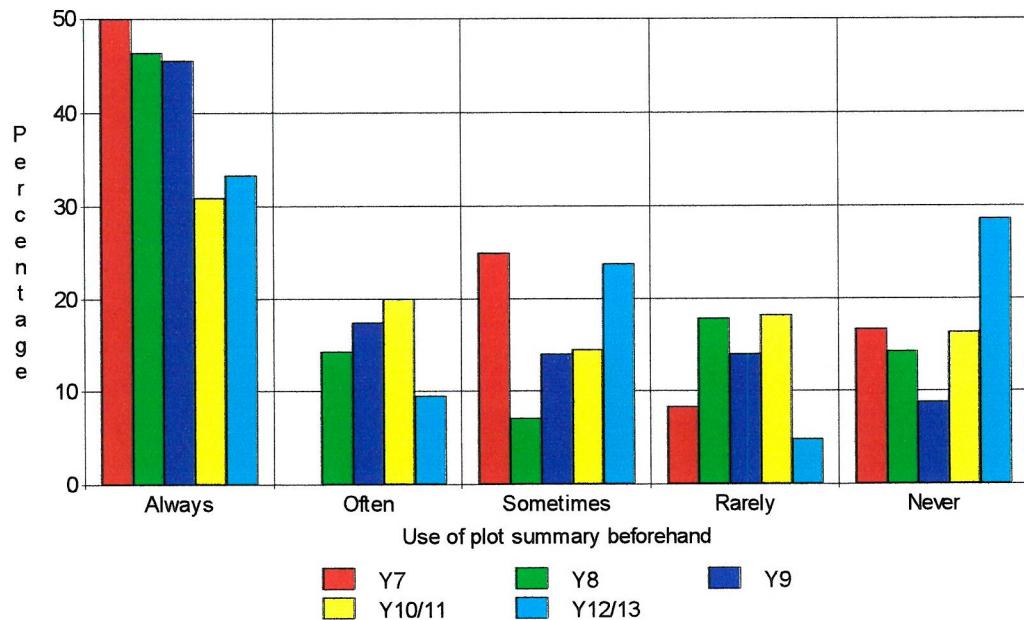
Figure 12 Use of plot summary before reading the play

From the above it can be seen that during the years of KS3 almost half of the teachers always summarise the plot beforehand with less than one-fifth never doing so. That the use of this method diminishes (only by about 10%) in subsequent years can perhaps be understood through teacher expectations that pupils of this age should be more able to understand the play without much assistance: as one respondent penned next to this question, 'Linked to ability and age. High ability do not need this.' However, another respondent pointed to another possible reason when commenting on the use of this method with Y10, 'They become highly agitated and annoyed if I reveal too much.'

Questions 11 to 13 (Section D) were concerned with discovering what opportunities pupils had for experiencing a version of the play (i.e. a live production, a video or an audio recording) other than reading it or performing parts of it themselves.

The most common means of experiencing a version of a Shakespeare play across all years was by watching a video as can be seen in Figure 13 below, where *all* pupils in Years 9 to 13 have the opportunity. The use of audio recordings is less common although they are used as much as video in Year 7. The opportunity to see a live production increases year by year with a dramatic increase in Year 9.
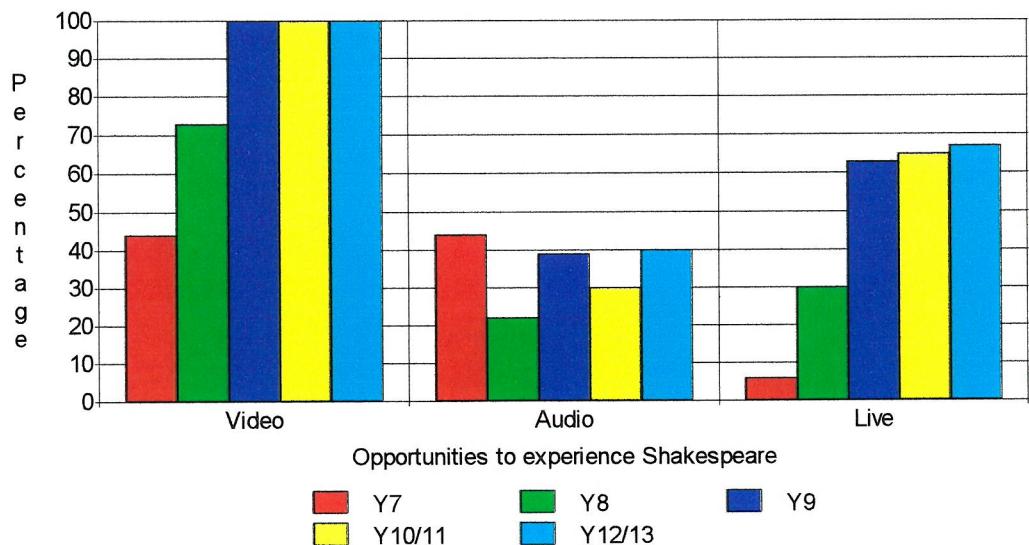
Figure 13 Opportunities to experience Shakespeare plays

That video is more popular than audio is not surprising as it is a much more attractive medium and one that is a familiar companion in the lives of most teenagers and many teachers these days, and of course it can portray far more in terms of character, setting and movement through its visual dimension. On the other hand, that video should be more commonly offered than the experience of seeing a live production is I think due less to the popularity of the latter medium but more to do with availability, in the sense that productions of Shakespeare plays are not ever present for schools to utilise, whereas videos often are. Cost also plays its part in that English Departments usually have to ask pupils or their parents to contribute to the cost of seeing a live production and some pupils/parents may not be able to afford it, whereas this is not the case with video. A further factor which one respondent alluded to when answering this question and writing 'The production we saw last year of Romeo and Juliet was awful', is the unknown quality of a live production which if poor could do more harm than good in terms of pupil learning and attitude towards Shakespeare., whereas a video can be previewed and judged in terms of suitability and accessibility by the teacher beforehand.

The data suggests that for many pupils these days their only experience of seeing a Shakespeare play is by watching it on video, should not be a cause for alarm, for without that experience they may have had no experience at all of seeing a version of a Shakespeare play other than those created in their own minds or through watching parts of it performed in the classroom by their fellows.

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However sight must not be lost that the data indicates that over 60 % of all pupils from Year 9 upwards are likely to have the opportunity of seeing a live production.

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS, FEELINGS AND OPINIONS

Section E of the Questionnaire moved away from asking teachers factually based questions to asking them to give responses based on their perceptions, feelings and opinions. In particular, I wanted them to focus both on their perceptions of their pupils in the separate age groups' opinions of being taught Shakespeare and on their own feelings and opinions to teaching Shakespeare to those same groups.

In terms of how they perceived their pupils felt about being taught Shakespeare, Question 14 indicated (see Figure 14 below) that generally they thought that most pupils in all the age groups liked Shakespeare and agreement was particularly high for Years 12/13 and Year 9. The exception was Year 7, but this was where, as was indicated earlier, the least teaching of Shakespeare happens and also where nearly 70 % of respondents said they didn't know if pupils in this year liked Shakespeare. That pupils in Years 12/13 who have studied Shakespeare for at least the previous two years and in some cases four or more years, and who have chosen to take English at A level should be perceived by their teachers as liking Shakespeare is of little surprise; but that pupils in Year 9 should be perceived as the year group that next most likes Shakespeare is.
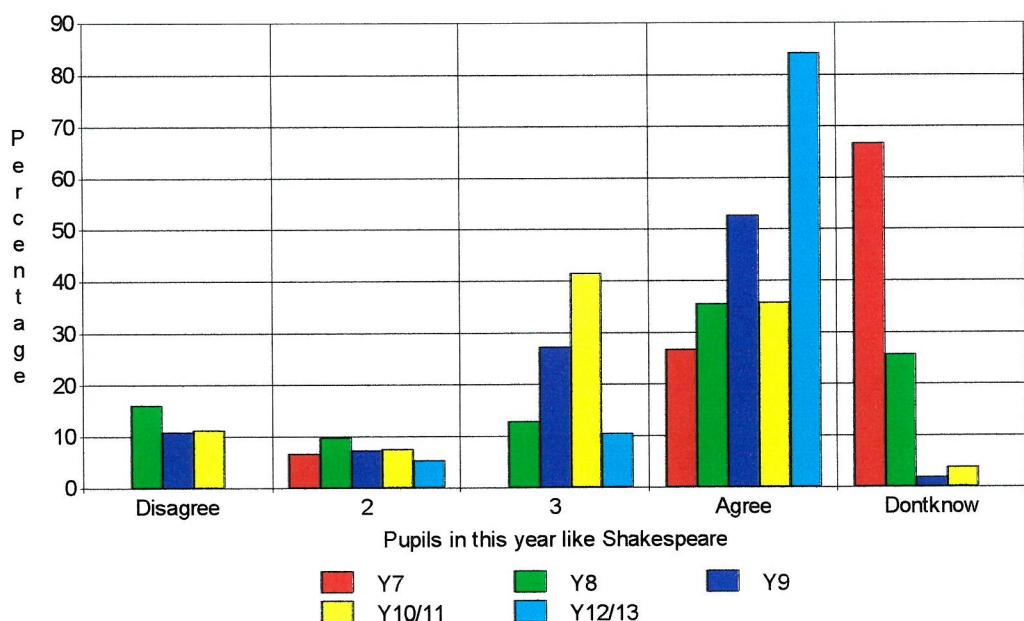
Figure 14 Teachers' perceptions as to whether most pupils in a particular year group like Shakespeare.

In trying to understand why teachers perceive and rate pupils' enjoyment of Shakespeare in Year 9 so highly, I looked at responses to Question 17 which asked teachers if they enjoyed teaching Shakespeare to each of the separate year groups (see Figure 15 below) to find that two-thirds of them agreed to some degree that they enjoyed teaching it to Year 9, and this led me to wonder if a teacher's perception of a particular year group's enjoyment of Shakespeare mirrors to some degree their own enjoyment of teaching Shakespeare to that same group, that pupil enjoyment and teacher enjoyment are mutually reciprocal or even dependent. Or perhaps it is that the pupils' behaviour and responses are reflecting what the teacher himself/herself values in Shakespeare.
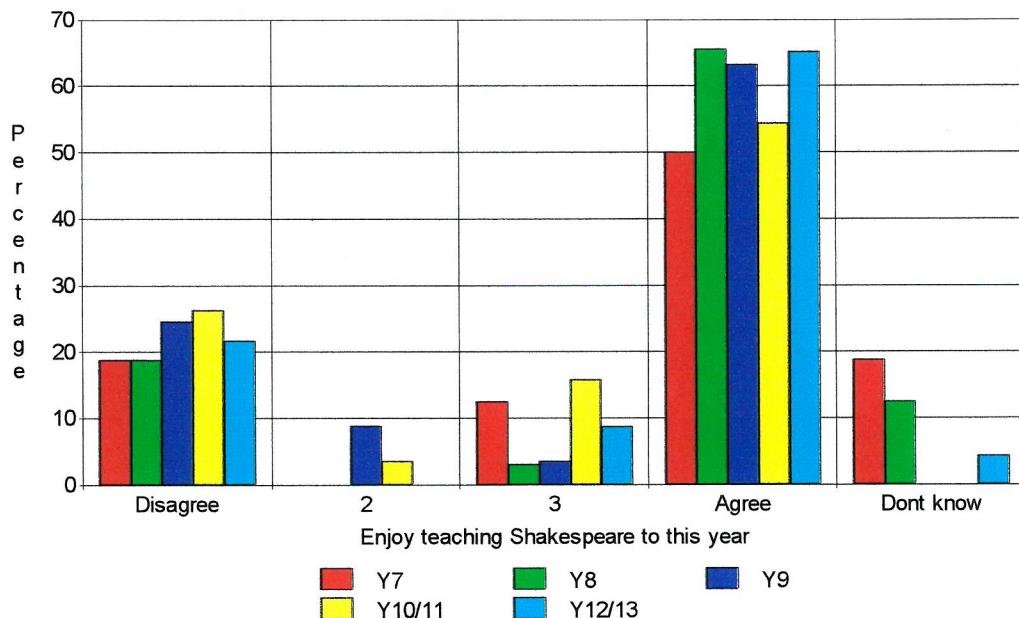
Figure 15 Teachers' enjoyment of teaching Shakespeare to particular year groups.

This theory is partly borne out when more of the data to questions 14 and 17 is considered. For instance, with Years 12/13 84% agree unreservedly that pupils in those years like Shakespeare and 65% indicate strongly that they enjoy teaching Shakespeare to the same years. Similarly, with Years 10/11 only 36% agree unreservedly that pupils in those years like Shakespeare and 54% indicate strongly that they enjoy teaching to the same years. Some discrepancy with this theory appears when considering the responses to the two questions and Year 8 where 66% said they enjoyed teaching Shakespeare to that year group but only 36% indicated that pupils in this year group enjoyed Shakespeare. However, over a quarter said that they did not know if pupils in this year did like Shakespeare, and this data taken together with data mentioned earlier that far less teaching of Shakespeare happens in this year when compared with the years above it suggests to me that a good

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number of teachers are saying that they haven't sufficient experience of teaching Shakespeare to Year 7 to really know if those pupils like Shakespeare or not. This appears to be partly reflected in responses to Question 18 which asked teachers if they felt as confident teaching Shakespeare to a specific year group as they did about other aspects of English, and where overall between 68% and 98% indicated that they did feel confident but in Years 7 and 8 the least confidence was expressed with over 20% of teachers indicating that they felt less confident.

Following on from discovering teachers' perceptions as to which year groups liked Shakespeare the next step was to discover if they thought Shakespeare was of more interest to boys than girls in the different year groups. As with Question 14, I discovered again, in responses to Question 15 (see Figure 16 below) that with Year 7 a third and with Year 8 a quarter of teachers did not know if boys liked Shakespeare more than girls
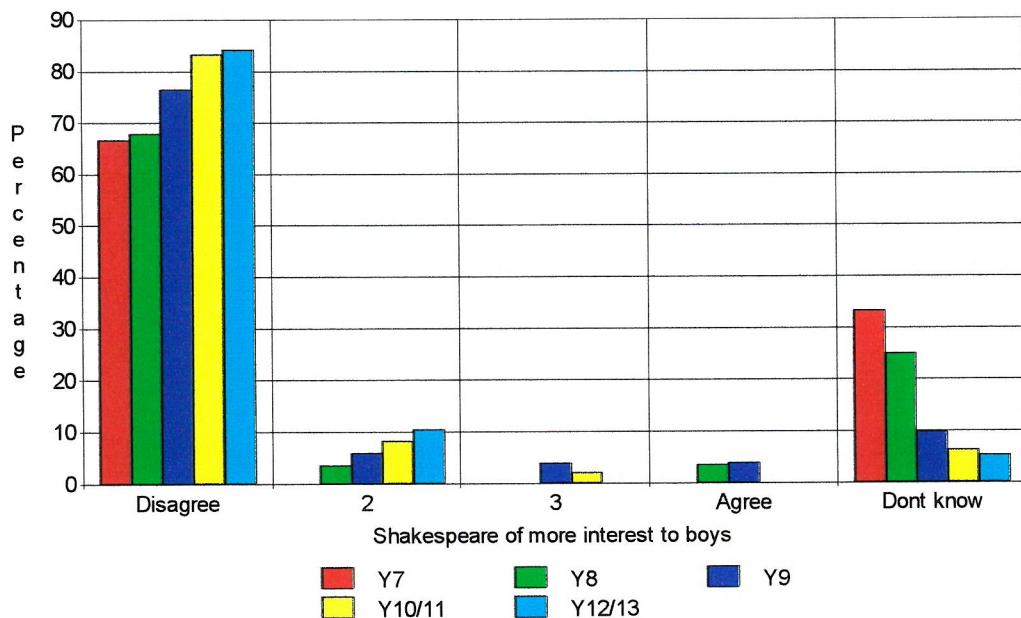
Figure 16 Teachers' response to the assertion that Shakespeare is of more interest to boys than girls.

For the remaining year groups, over 75% disagreed with my assertion that boys are more interested in Shakespeare than are girls. I think my questioning was faulty here as I cannot conclude from the data as to whether the teachers are also saying that girls are more interested in Shakespeare than are boys or whether they are saying that there is no difference between the sexes in their interest in Shakespeare. Perhaps this question would be more effective if it targeted which aspects of the plays it is that appeal to girls and which to boys rather than targeting Shakespeare in

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general. All I can detect from the data I have is that teacher' disagreement with my assertion becomes stronger year by year suggesting that boys become more interested in Shakespeare the more they study it. Not to be deterred by the failure of this question, I decided to follow it up in the interviews with the teachers in asking them if they thought their teaching of Shakespeare was more appealing to one sex rather than the other and then to ask them if they had strategies for making the work more appealing to one than the other.

It was my experience as a pupil that being taught Shakespeare too early in Secondary school could put pupils off Shakespeare in later years (as an English teacher I was to hear that same view expressed by a number of fellow professionals), and I tried to address this in Question 16 where I simply asked teachers to respond for each year group they taught to the assertion that teaching Shakespeare to pupils in a particular year group was likely to put them off it. Overall (see Figure 17 below), teachers did not feel that teaching it to any year had that negative effect but the pattern does indicate that fewer teachers are convinced in the lower years that teaching Shakespeare won't put pupils off it; so that a quarter of teachers agree to some degree that it might put pupils off in Years 7 and 8 and that this data in turn might partly account for the relatively little Shakespeare teaching that occurs in those two years when compared to the other years.
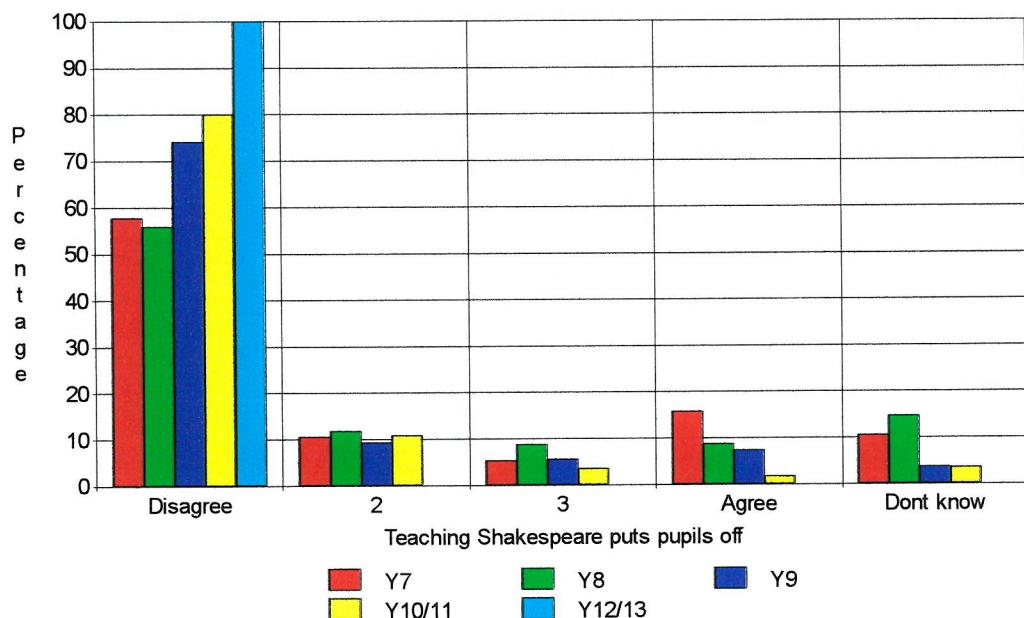
Figure 17 Teachers' responses to the assertion that teaching Shakespeare to pupils in specific year groups is likely to put them off it.

The assessment of pupils' understanding of Shakespeare is a current issue and one which has been commented upon in this thesis in the review of the literature and is addressed more fully in Chapter Six. Shakespeare's plays are, like all dramatic texts, a literary form and medium which are primarily intended to be experienced in performance, orally, visually and kinetically. With assessment in mind, and particularly knowing that at the end of Key Stage 3 pupils were to be assessed on their understanding of a Shakespeare text solely through a written exam, Question 20 asked teachers if they agreed that a written exam in Shakespeare was appropriate for all pupils in a particular year group. From their responses it was clear that the only year group where teachers thought that exams were appropriate were in the A level years 12 and 13, where over 70% agreed to some degree (see Figure 18 below)
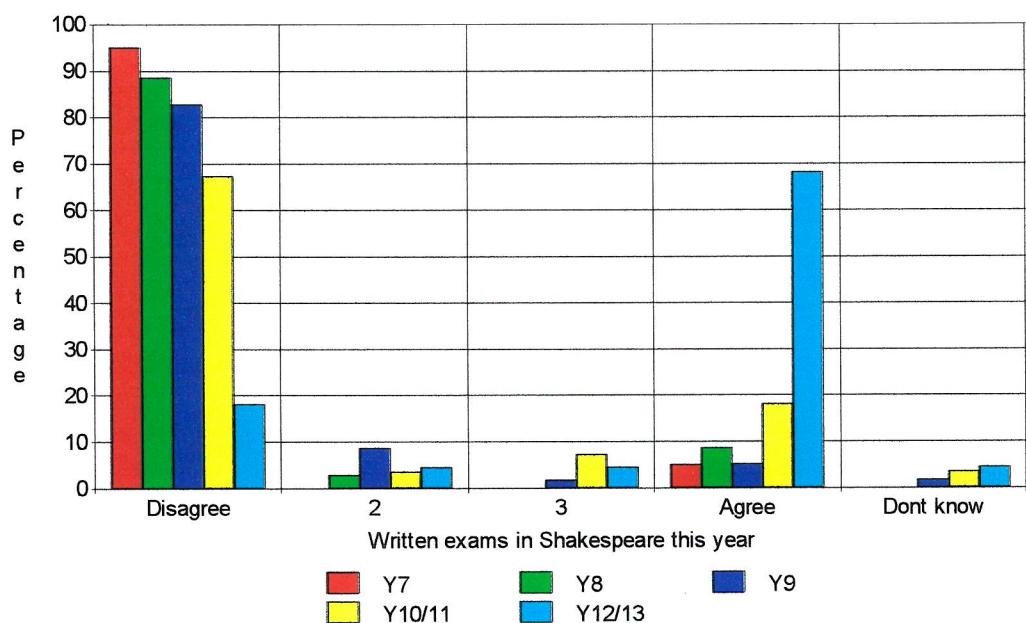
Figure 18 Teachers responses to the assertion that written examinations in Shakespeare are appropriate for particular year groups.

In all other years there is strong disagreement with written exams in Shakespeare, where even in Years 10 and 11 over 70% of teachers oppose them. The strongest opposition is in the Key Stage 3 years where disagreement exceeds 90%. What I cannot define from this data, and which needs to be followed up, is whether this strong disagreement is just in terms of written exams in Shakespeare or whether it illustrates a more general opposition to written exams in English at KS3 and 4, perhaps as a reaction to the DFE's introduction of written tests at the end of KS3 and also their reduction in the amount of coursework and increase in the proportion of written examination for GCSE English at the end of KS4.

Section F was also one which targeted teachers' attitudes but which did not ask them to relate their responses to a particular year group. There were, I felt, two questions in Sections E and F which were fairly closely related; Question 19 which asked if teachers thought that Shakespeare should be compulsory for particular year groups, and Question 26 which asked if they agreed that Shakespeare should be taken out of the curriculum in KS3. Over 75% thought that Shakespeare should be compulsory in Years 12 and 13 and over 60% in Years 10 and 11. However, when it came to KS3, the majority disagreed and thought that it should not be compulsory, with the most disagreement (over 90%) in Year 7 and the least (just over 50%) in Year 9. This latter figure for Year 9 partly reflects teachers' response to Question 26 where just over 40% indicated that Shakespeare should be taken out of the KS3 curriculum.

Concerning the remainder of Section F, from what has had to be a rather fleeting analysis of the second half (Questions 28-35) which are statements based on those from well known Shakespeare commentators (see Chapter 1), and where I hoped to be able to begin to discern teachers' ideologies concerning Shakespeare and the teaching of it, a rather hazy picture emerged of teachers who tend towards a classical humanist perspective who see Shakespeare as a genius whose reputation transcends social influences; whose work can be studied out of its social context, but also as a writer whose texts should be studied as poetry and as drama to be actively explored. I am loath to analyse these responses any further as there were many ticks in the 'Don't know' column for many of these questions plus the occasional written comment indicating that the teacher did not understand the statement. I realise now that with such statements in Section G, I have made an assumption which may well be wrong about many of the teachers questioned, that they would be familiar with ideas such as those associated with cultural determinism and cultural materialism.

As for the earlier questions in Section F, some have already been dealt with earlier in my discussion and I will now discuss the remainder. Questions 23 and 27 were somewhat related in that they were both asking teachers if they thought Shakespeare was appropriate for all pupils in British schools. Question 23 asked teachers whether they agreed with the statement that 'Shakespeare is only for the more able pupil' and all the teachers disagreed.

Question 27 asked them whether they agreed that 'Shakespeare is relevant to pupils from all cultures in our schools' and here there was a 75% agreement. Together, the responses appear to support a view that sees Shakespeare as of universal interest,

relevance and importance, a view that has been and continues to be challenged by such writers as Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (1985), John Drakakis (1985), Terence Hawkes (1986 and 1992) and others, and is a view which I will explore further in my interviews with both teachers and pupils.

Finally, Question 25 asked teachers if they agreed that 'It is the language that is the biggest difficulty in teaching Shakespeare' which was certainly my experience both as a pupil and as an English teacher, and it was also the view of most of the teachers I questioned as 85% agreed with the statement. Again I intend to explore this question of the difficulty of the language in my interviews with teachers and pupils.

To conclude this section of the chapter I will discuss some of my findings from Section G of the questionnaire which was focusing on the resources and teaching spaces that teachers used. I will reserve my discussion of the editions of the plays that teachers used until later when I can combine that with a more detailed analysis of those texts themselves. There are a great many varieties of such texts including those that are produced 'in house' at the school and the way each is structured together with its contents also varies considerably and must to some extent influence, support or even contradict the teaching approaches that the teacher employs.

In terms of Shakespeare plays that the teacher used with specific year groups, Question 36 asked them for the titles of play/s they used and Question 37 asked them that given the choice, which play would they choose to teach to particular year groups, for I wanted not only to see which were the most popular plays currently being used but also whether or not they were the teachers' first choice. In both Years 7 and 8 the three most widely used plays were A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest and Macbeth but with eight other plays also used. However, as a number of teachers pointed out, together with their responses to Question 3 that I discussed earlier, it is not often in these two years that the whole play is read, and the use of extracts is common. In both years there is very little difference between the plays the teachers do use and those that they would choose to use.

In Year 9, the range of plays used is predictably smaller as the KS3 test restricts pupils to answering questions on three plays only; A Midsummer Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet and Julius Caesar. Of those three, Romeo and Juliet is the most commonly used (by just over 50% of teachers), followed by A Midsummer Night's Dream (35%) and then Julius Caesar (14%). With Year 9, in response to Question

37, fifteen teachers indicated that given the choice most of them would still have chosen the three plays that are currently most used but there were a few (5%) who would have chosen plays such as *Twelfth Night, Macbeth* or *The Tempest.*

In Years 10 and 11 where choice is rather less restricted but still governed to some extent by the GCSE boards, *Macbeth* (65%) leads the field with *Romeo and Juliet* (32%) in second place, *A Merchant of Venice* (11%) a poor third and eight other also rans. In terms of free choice most teachers would still choose the three mentioned but *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* also figure.

For the A level years where choice is normally determined by the exam boards, *Antony and Cleopatra* is the most widely used with *King Lear, 'Twelfth Night* and *Othello* also featuring as popular. It is in teaching these years that teachers give the strongest sense of restriction of choice as almost a half would have chosen other plays with *King Lear* and *Hamlet* as the most popular choices. In my interviews with teachers I intend to ask who chose the play they were using with the class as I am aware from the above responses that a number of teachers did not choose the text they are using, and, as one respondent put it, 'I can't choose for any year!'

Question 40 asked teachers to indicate which spaces they use when teaching Shakespeare to particular year groups. Across all years, most teachers use only a classroom but there are some who use a drama space and some who use both. The greatest variety of use of space occurs in Year 9 which mirrors the earlier evidence (see the discussion of Section C of the questionnaire and particularly Questions 5, 7 and 9) which suggests that in this year teachers use a greater variety and more active methods than in other years. What this data does not tell me is whether teachers choose to use the classroom rather than a drama space or whether they have no choice in the matter, as one put it, 'The Hall/Studio is rarely available'. The data does imply, simply by noting that teachers with Year 9 groups make more use of Drama spaces than happens in other years, that some teachers can choose the space they work in, and I think to some extent, if a teacher has such choice whether they exercise it or not may be determined by their preferred teaching approaches - another target for the interviews.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this chapter I will synthesise and summarise what appears to be for me at this stage the main points of the findings from an analysis of the questionnaire.

First, that Shakespeare in the secondary schools surveyed is taught widely to all ages and abilities groups and that this practice has the support of most teachers.

Second, that Year 9 is featuring as a key year for the teaching of Shakespeare in the secondary school (not just in KS3) in that not only is it given more time than preceding Years and as much and sometimes more than succeeding years but that this pattern is repeated in terms of the variety of methods and approaches that the teachers employ, access to resources and opportunities to experience 'productions' (theatre, video etc.) of Shakespeare. Only Years 12 and 13 match or exceed Year 9 in any of the areas just mentioned, and teachers' perceptions of their own and their pupils' enjoyment of Shakespeare indicate again that the highest level of enjoyment occurs in Year 9 and then in Years 12 and 13. These findings led me to targeting Year 9 (its pupils and teachers) as the year group which is of most interest and most likely to further my research into the teaching of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3.

Third, that apart from Years 12 and 13, teachers thought that written exams in Shakespeare were inappropriate for all other years, but over 50% thought that Shakespeare should be compulsory in all years of the secondary curriculum including at KS3.

Fourth, that there are a number of popular methods which teachers employ when teaching Shakespeare. Those which are most popular could be termed "passive" or "desk-bound" (silent reading, watching a video, listening to an audio tape etc.) where video is most commonly used, particularly in Years 9 - 12. These findings are consistent with those from the surveys carried out by Wade and Sheppard (1994) and Hardman and Williamson (1996). Less popular are those which can be termed "active" (e.g. drama, performance, reading the play aloud etc.), and again this largely matches the findings of Wade and Sheppard (1994) and Hardman and Williamson (1996) although in this survey the use of Shakespeare related drama activities was more popular, particularly in Year 9. The purpose and effect of these methods and the response to them by pupils was to be a focus of the classroom observations and of the interviews with teachers and pupils.

Fifth, the majority of teachers agreed that Shakespeare was for all abilities and was relevant to pupils from all cultures. In the ensuing classroom observations it was to be of interest to discover instances of how teachers drew out or identified the relevances, and how they made such a complex text accessible to all abilities of pupils.

Finally, that the majority of teachers recognise that Shakespeare's language is the biggest difficulty in teaching Shakespeare. It was to be a further focus of classroom observation to discover how teachers and pupils faced and coped with this difficulty and the methods and strategies which both employed. At the same time it would be important to try to identify specific language difficulties. Was the teaching of Shakespeare at KS3 a hindrance or an aid to developing a child's literacy?

In the observations and interviews which followed there was to be an attempt to isolate and identify what, if anything other than the text itself, was singular to the teaching of Shakespeare.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION & TEACHERS' LOGS

ANALYSIS OF DATA - CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND TEACHERS' LOGS

In this chapter I will begin by outlining the process and methods of analysis which I employed on the data I collected from the classroom observations and the teachers' logs. That will lead to documenting the three emerging main areas of interest, namely;

- the context for the teaching of Shakespeare in the classroom
- the perspectives of both teachers and pupils on Shakespeare teaching
- the process which teachers and pupils undergo and utilise during Shakespeare lessons.

Finally, I will identify the main findings and discuss the key issues.

METHODS OF ANALYSIS

My observation of eight Year 9 classrooms of pupils being taught Shakespeare in five schools, allowed me to see twenty five individual lessons. Through these observations, through talking with the teachers before and after each lesson and through reading the logs which they kept, I hoped to get a sense of various typical features of Shakespeare lessons with this age group.

The field notes that I took at the time and the teachers' logs underwent informal analysis and the former were later transcribed to facilitate the first formal stage of analysis whereby I created a coding system; for as Miles and Huberman state, 'Coding is analysis' (1994, p 56). My coding system was developed, firstly, from the codes that I had used when observing, which in turn had arisen out of my initial research questions and the questions that arose out of my first analysis of the questionnaire data; and, secondly, as a result of considering Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) division of codes which not only complemented my own but which also extended further the possibilities for analysis. Hence, the list of codes that initially arose out of this process was as follows:

CODE	DEFINITION	DESCRIPTION
SET	Setting the context	Teaching space used. Time. Pupil grouping. Furniture arrangement
PER/T PER/P	Perspectives	Teachers' and pupils' ways of thinking about Shakespeare how it's taught & the Test. Attitudes. Values. Levels of interest and involvement.
WAYS/T WAYS/P	Ways of thinking about people	Teachers' & pupils' views & understandings of each other. Teachers' assumptions re. pupils' learning.
PROC	Process	Sequence of events, flow, transition, turning points & changes over time.
ACT	Activities	Regularly occurring behaviour.
EVN/T EVN/P	Events	Specific events, particularly those occurring frequently.
STR/T STR/P	Strategies	Teachers' & pupils' ways of accomplishing things - tactics & techniques for meeting needs.
RES	Resources	Resources used in the classroom.
RLT	Relationships	Teachers' and pupils' views of each other, including unofficially defined patterns which have a bearing in the context of teaching Shakespeare.
UND	Understanding	Pupils' understanding of Shakespeare.

The above list was used to code the transcriptions of my observation field notes, but having done so I reviewed the codes and the information they were highlighting and recognised that I could combine some, a process which Miles and Huberman term 'Pattern coding' and which they define as

> ..explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration or explanation. They pull together a lot of material into more meaningful and parsimonious units of data. (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p 68)

Thus, my initial codes were revised and summarised into the following three sets:

Context   The physical features of the classroom and lesson
                  including the space and the resources used.

Perspectives   Teachers' and pupils' views on and ways of thinking about
                  Shakespeare & how it is taught. Their levels of interest.
                  Their views on the Test. Pupils' understanding of
                  Shakespeare.

Process   The sequence of activities, events & teaching strategies
                  being displayed in the classroom.

THE CONTEXT

What did these Shakespeare classrooms look like? What were their physical and spatial attributes? What was the stage? What were the props?

From my observations and discussions with the teachers, the classroom appeared much like any other English classroom. For they were all situated for the most part in the teacher's classroom and generally, the furniture was not moved before or after the lesson, and the pupils sat where they always sat. However, there were significant regroupings of pupils and reorganisation of furniture in some lessons whereby the classroom was transformed into a theatre in the classroom. This arrangement I witnessed on two occasions with two different teachers in School B and was mentioned by the teacher as having happened in School C. In addition, in all the remaining classrooms some furniture movement took place to enable groups of pupils to perform or improvise scenes at the front of the classroom, or for the purpose of watching a video.

As for the 'props', the resources used in the lessons, there was a reliance on a text of the play; these ranged from a plain text which School C had produced itself from a CD ROM, to *Shakespeare Made Easy* (a modern English translation of the text) to standard school editions of Shakespeare. In addition, over half of the teachers used worksheets (either self-produced or from commercially published resources) and most used a video of the play being studied during the course of lessons.

Less commonly used props included separately photocopied scenes from the play, and in two cases (School A teacher AB and School B teacher BB) pupils' work which was used as a stimulus to motivate other pupils' interest and involvement.

In the physical context, then, the Shakespeare lessons did not appear dissimilar to other English lessons, for even the minor transformations for staging purposes would be evident in aspects of English work that may require or inspire performance (e.g. work with other drama texts, improvisation of scenes from a novel, the performance of a poem etc.) with this age group. Is it lack of or unavailability of more suitable teaching spaces and resources that prevents teachers from utilising a school's hall or drama studio, or from using costumes or props to bring the play to life? Or is it the teacher's lack of confidence, competence or motivation? These were some of the questions that were raised and which I tried to pursue in the interviews with teachers.

THE PERSPECTIVES

Under the heading code of perspectives was included teachers' and pupils' views and ways of thinking about Shakespeare, how it is taught, the Test, as well as their (particularly the pupils') level of interest and involvement. Also included were pupils' understanding of the Shakespeare text or scene being studied.

The Teachers
Taking the teachers' perspectives first, an interesting range was evident. At one end is an open view where the teacher would consider and encourage various interpretations and perspectives from the pupils. At the other end is a more closed view where the teacher would encourage or direct pupils towards a narrow or limited interpretation. This latter view was expressed either implicitly or explicitly by three teachers (CA, AA and BA). For instance, in one lesson prior to reading part of a scene, Teacher BA said to her class, 'We're going to read it and I'm going to tell you

what's going on.' This closed view was evident in the questions directed at pupils, the explanations given by the teachers, the public praise or highlighting of a 'correct' response by a pupil and also the editions of the play that the teachers were using. During the course of my observations I became increasingly aware of what I termed *teacher dominant knowledge*, that is, there were moments when the teacher would, through an authoritative comment or statement, imply very clearly to the pupils that what they were saying was the 'correct' interpretation. Sometimes, these statements or comments would follow a fairly open question and answer session with the whole class; sometimes they were directed at pairs or individual pupils. Although the statements I refer to could be made by teachers at any point in the lessons, the majority were made either at the start or towards the end of the lesson. When at the start, the purpose would seem to be to reinforce or to recap upon knowledge of the play that had been covered in the previous lesson, as in the case of Teacher AA where he began the lesson saying, 'Last week we looked at characters and the different groups.' He continues then to summarise the lovers' relationships at the start of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and then adds, 'Dad has laid down the law. Theseus says "Yes Hermia, the chips are down. I agree with your Dad."' Or with Teacher EA who before continuing with Act I of *Romeo and Juliet* says to the class, 'Situation: two families hate each other. Daughter of one and son of the other get together. Love at first sight. Remember; action very swift - all over in four days.'

The emphasis by the teachers in the two examples quoted and in others made at the beginning of the lesson is on character and plot, and these two elements form the major focal points for all teacher-pupil dialogue as I will illustrate later.

When such statements are made towards the end of the lesson, the teacher's purpose would appear to be to select, summarise and highlight the important points and interpretations of the plot or of character of the extract studied that lesson, in order to reinforce for pupils the accepted or agreed interpretation, as with Teacher AB who, having asked the class what the characters of the court thought of the Mechanicals' play directs the pupils to 'Look at Hippolyta's, Theseus's and Philostrate's comments on the play. Philostrate has some very bitchy things to say. He says, "This is a play ten words long but by ten words too long." Then, referring to the Mechanicals, 'All the way through they were trying to be very clever...Bottom dies and then gets up again - breaks all suggestions that it's a real event.'

As mentioned earlier, another method that some teachers employed to highlight or reinforce 'correct' or sought interpretations by the pupils was through public praise or

selective underlining of pupils' responses. For example, when Teacher AB discusses the court's response to the Mechanicals' play, he asks the class what Hippolyta thinks of it and to which one pupil replies, 'This is the silliest stuff I have heard.' To whom AB responds, 'Oh, Johnny you're a hero; that's what I wanted you to say.' Or another occasion when Teacher EA is asking pupils about the nature of families in *Romeo and Juliet* one pupil answers 'Rich. Powerful.' and to which EA responds, 'Well done. Powerful.'

The selection and highlighting of correct interpretations and of pupils' responses by teachers is not always verbal and sometimes is carried out by them writing on the board, a method that I witnessed four teachers employing; as with Teacher DB who at the end of a question and answer session about Romeo's reasons for being sad during which pupils had mentioned Tybalt's death and Romeo's exile and banishment, wrote on the board 'He's been banished' and 'He can't see Juliet' which none of the class had mentioned.

I also suggested earlier that another factor that could regulate the pupils' interpretative range is the teacher's choice and use of a particular edition of the play. This is not an area that I wish to investigate fully at this stage, but from my observations, it seemed that with some teachers the strategies they employed for pupils to read the play encouraged a narrow interpretation of the play. For example, Teacher CA used a plain text edition of the play produced in the school from a CD ROM. This version contained only Shakespeare's language and had no explanatory notes. Although CA sometimes encouraged the pupils to investigate the text through group work and through question and answer sessions, the pupils' interpretations were legitimised and verified by her, with the pupils having no alternative versions to consider as would often be available in other commercially published editions. Another example is with Teacher BA who used the *Shakespeare Made Easy* version of *Romeo and Juliet* which is a late twentieth century translation of the play. In this edition, Shakespeare's language is printed on the left hand page and the modern version on the right, but with BA the pupils were directed to look only at the modern version and thus their interpretation was arrived at through reading the two-dimensional modern interpretation supported in turn by the interpretation of the teacher.

By contrast, those teachers who were using more standard editions (such as the Oxford or Cambridge School Shakespeare) which contained Shakespeare's text, footnotes, plot guides, critical views etc. could and did use them to open the pupils'

minds to a range of possible alternatives. Teacher BB, at the end of his first lesson with the class on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, says to the class,

> In that one scene there are various things that happen. This week we're going to consider those and go inside your chosen scene, explore it and then show and then talk about how you've gone about it in the ways you have. We're likely to have different versions which are worth comparing.

Teacher BB's class was of top ability in School B, whereas BA's class in the same school was of low ability, and CA's in School C was of mixed ability and it could be argued that strategies and editions which were used to limit pupils' interpretations and thus diminish confusion or ambiguity, could at the same time build their confidence in understanding what the play was about and that this was particularly fitting for those pupils who might not have the reading and language experiences and skills to enable them to identify and discuss the possibility of holding alternative interpretations at the same time. However, there were other teachers, notably EA, AB and DA who were also teaching mixed ability or low ability classes and yet who chose editions and strategies which allowed for, or encouraged, a variety of interpretations by pupils.

When I considered which areas or aspects of Shakespeare study at Key Stage 3 teachers selected, it was the questions that they posed to the whole class that were particularly interesting. The most frequently asked questions were those associated with character, then those to do with plot and the sequence of events. Very rarely, in my observations were there questions asked about themes, images or structure. Similarly, the teachers' logs revealed that their main purpose in choosing any activity was for the pupils to learn about plot and character in particular. Many of the questions teachers asked pupils, whilst explicitly focusing on character or plot, would at the same time be drawing pupils' attention to Shakespeare's language. For example, when Teacher AA was discussing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Act IV scene i (one of the chosen scenes for the Test), he first of all referred to a speech by Demetrius, asking the pupils to interpret, which they did, and then followed this up with a question directing pupils to the language of the scene; 'What's he going on about, "..bid us to follow him to the temple."?' That Shakespeare's language could be a major barrier to pupils' learning was a belief that came from the teachers who completed my questionnaire, their comments in their logs and my observations tended to support this view. There were, for instance, occasions like the one above where the teacher directs pupils' attention to a phrase or sentence where the syntax was unusual when compared to modern syntactical usage, or where the vocabulary might be obscure or used in a way not familiar to many pupils today, as when, for

instance Teacher AB discussed the opening scene of A *Midsummer Night's Dream* and said to the class, '"He that was different in blood." "Blood", what does that mean?' There were also times when a teacher would make explicit reference to his or her belief that Shakespeare's language was a major difficulty, as when during the first lesson with her class, introducing A *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Teacher CA said, 'The language is difficult. I'm not expecting you to know every single word - we'll get the gist.' A comment by another teacher, AA, in response to a pupil who openly expressed her difficulty in understanding Shakespeare, sympathised with the pupil's problem and implied that it was not only the language that caused this difficulty but, 'People don't understand it cos it's meant to be performed on stage.' In my observations, five of the eight teachers stressed to their pupils the importance of performing or dramatising the text in some way. For example, Teacher DA said to her class the first time I observed the class, 'The best way to understand a playscript is to act it' In seven of the lessons I observed I witnessed pupils either performing a scene or parts of one, or carrying out an improvisation based on an aspect of the play being studied.

Perhaps connected with this emphasis on performance and drama is the idea that, as teacher AA expressed it to his class, 'Shakespeare could be good fun.' There was evidence from my observations of the teachers that they did indeed find teaching it fun; evidence from their body language, mannerisms, tone of voice and general enthusiasm, and with it an expectation that the pupils should also find it fun.

When prompted in the log to express what they enjoyed about the activity in a lesson, all the teachers connected their enjoyment with that of the experience, behaviour and work of their pupils. In particular, what gave the teachers pleasure were such things as observing pupils' enthusiasm, energy, effort and involvement when studying Shakespeare. These, I would argue are important indicators of successful teaching for any teacher as they reflect appropriate planning and choice of resources as well as pedagogical ability.

On the other side from fun was the impression that I and the pupils received directly or indirectly from a number of teachers observed that a major reason for studying Shakespeare was because it was a mandatory requirement for English at Key Stage 3 and they wanted to help their pupils to succeed in the Shakespeare part of the Test in May; duty rather than fun. In the last lesson of CA's that I observed, she told the class that when they returned after the Easter vacation there would be less than two weeks before the Test and that, 'What you need to do this and next lesson is to make

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sure you're absolutely clear about the characters, plot and sequence; how to spell the characters' names. As long as you've got that clear you'll do fine.' Teacher BA, during the first lesson observed, said to the class, 'We're going to be examined in this in May and if you don't know it you won't pass.'

The Pupils

Pupils' perspectives were more difficult to ascertain from my observations in the classrooms as their views were not so frequently made public as were the teachers', plus the fact that their responses were rarely self-generated or unbidden, more often coming in response to a teacher's question or instruction. What I was able to identify, however, were some of the pupils' difficulties in relating to and understanding Shakespeare, as well as their interest levels.

I noted with all the classes, even with the class using the *Shakespeare Made Easy* edition, that the pupils had difficulty in reading the language of the play aloud. In all but two classes (BB and DA) pupils would be asked to volunteer to read parts and then the reading would begin without the pupils having had any time to prepare or rehearse their part beforehand. There were, however, occasions where pupils, usually in groups, would be asked to prepare and rehearse a scene before performance, and the outcome of this would be a noticeable improvement (in the sense of greater accuracy of rhythm, timing and stress) on the former method. Such prepared readings were far outnumbered by those that were not. The unprepared readings were more frequently accompanied by signs of lack of interest (playing with a calculator, reading another book, talking to a neighbour etc.) from those pupils who were supposed to be listening to their peers read, presumably because the readers' difficulties were making it equally difficult for the listeners to follow and understand the text. On one occasion with Teacher AA, when Act IV scene i of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was being read in such a way, one pupil made her frustration and difficulty in understanding what was going on very plain indeed when she said aloud, 'How come everyone else can understand this but I can't? Does it mean I'm a thicky?'

Where pupils did display an interest and some enthusiasm in Shakespeare was generally when there was a concrete visual accompaniment to the written or spoken language, i.e. when they could experience some form of performance of the play, or part of it, whether it be a live performance by other members of the class or on video, the former tending to attract more interest than the latter. I did, however, notice on

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two occasions, once for a video showing and once for a performance by their peers, where pupils in the audience did display lack of interest, as in Teacher AA's class where, when the class was watching the BBC video of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I noted that some pupils were 'uninterested, writing on hand, three not looking at screen.' And with Teacher BA when fourteen of the class were busy acting out the final scene of *Romeo and Juliet* for the rest of the class, one of those watching who was seated near to me turned to a friend and said, 'Boring. It's boring.'

As mentioned earlier in this section, what caused pupils to have most difficulty in understanding Shakespeare's plays was the language, but there was evidence from my observations that pupils displayed a great deal of understanding of these difficult and sophisticated texts. In the classroom the manifestation of their understanding was apparent in a number of forms. Most commonly they displayed their understanding verbally in response to their teacher's questions; questions that were usually part of a whole class discussion but which were occasionally directed to individuals or groups of pupils. In their responses, some pupils would quote directly from the play being studied as in School A where in Teacher TF's class the pupils improvising scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* would intersperse modern dialogue with quotes from the play. Occasionally, pupils expressed their understanding verbally to a peer or to a teacher unbidden as with a pupil at School B who called out during a whole class reading of *Romeo and Juliet*, "Here Miss, she knows he's a Capulet cos it's a Capulet party." Such instances I was able to note, but where pupil understanding was expressed in pairs or groups was limited to those within earshot and it is likely that more took place than I was able to identify.

Another common form in which pupils expressed their understanding was through writing; notes, full sentences to a series of questions, traditional essays etc. However, periodically, some teachers would ask pupils or offer them the choice to display their understanding visually on paper with diagrams and sketches as well as the written word. Examples of this included Teacher AB asking his pupils to design a cover for their folder of work on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* based on the play itself; and Teacher BA asking her pupils to draw their representations of some of the oxymorons in *Romeo and Juliet*. In terms of pupil learning and their developing literacy, these types of approaches make sense both in the way that they allow pupils who may be more able to express their understanding graphically other than in writing and also because it encourages pupils, through a consideration of the written text, to visualise and to create visual images of aspects of the play, an important skill when studying a work of drama which when written was meant to be realised visually.

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Concerning *what* it was about the Shakespeare play that pupils understood, from my observations they displayed most understanding of those aspects which were directed to by the questions and tasks set by their teachers; i.e. in the areas of character, plot and language to a greater extent but also in historical background, concepts and themes; precisely those elements which would give them an overview and a context for the play they were studying.

THE PROCESS

Subsumed under the heading 'Process' were a number of codes connected loosely with activities and behaviour by pupils and teachers in the classrooms I observed. Initially, as with much of my coding, I tended to code everything that was in any way connected with that code, irrespective of its significance or relevance to my research aims. However, when reconsidering the originally coded data and looking to summarise it into pattern coding, I viewed the data far more selectively in terms of its relevance to my research aims and questions. For example, the initial code ACT referred to activities which were regularly occurring kinds of behaviour and which included the teacher's registering of pupils and the completion by pupils of their homework diaries. The former had nothing to do with my research aims or questions and was subsequently dropped but the latter occasionally did and so was retained. As a result, 'Process' refers to the processes and activities in the classrooms and also to the strategies that have a bearing on the teaching of Shakespeare that the teachers and pupils employed in order to meet their needs and to accomplish things.

Teachers

From my analysis, I identified collections of data that were associated with whole class teaching, those that were associated with group work in the classroom and two other collections which interested me and which spanned both whole class and group work, namely the tasks that teachers set pupils, and teachers' proclivity to 'modernise' Shakespeare.

To begin with *whole class teaching*, in the lessons I observed it was common for them to begin with an input from the teacher in the form of instructions to set up the first task, to outline the agenda for the lesson or to recap on work carried out in the previous lesson/s, or a combination of all three. Thus pupils would become aware of the teacher's expectations and how they fitted in with their previous work.

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The opening recap and setting of the agenda for the lesson was sometimes carried out through the teacher discussing them with the pupils, in the form of a whole class question and answer session with the teacher reinforcing 'correct' responses (as discussed earlier in this section) and/or writing them on the board. This type of discussion took place at other times during the lesson; notably when pupils had been asked to explore a scene from the play.

Another strategy that I only witnessed when the teachers were addressing the whole class was that of referring to the Test, I assume because they felt it to be an important message for all to hear.

In analysing the different strategies and activities teachers employed in the classroom it was possible to identify differing levels of engagement with the text by the pupils. The first level included those times when the text remained inert, as described earlier in this section when pupils were asked to volunteer to read aloud around the class. The level above this, the second level, was where there would be an attempt to partly animate the text, for instance where teachers would encourage pupils to visualise as they read, as with Teacher DB who asked the pupils to imagine what the Mechanicals' play involving a wall would look like on stage; or another was where the teacher paused the reading and explained in his/her own words or asked the pupils to suggest the meaning of the piece they had just read; A third level was where the teacher, either reading a part themselves or briefly taking over a part that a pupil was reading, would read the text with great drama, to the extent in a couple of cases (Teachers AA, CA and DB) where they would act, including gestures and movements. A fourth level of textual engagement and realisation occurred where the teacher showed the class a video of part of the play, usually the part that they had read earlier. Sometimes the video would be viewed without any accompanying comment or instruction from the teacher, but sometimes the teacher would give some instructions as with teacher AB; 'See how the BBC did the play-within-a-play about Pyramus and Thisbe. First watch it. Second, listen out for what people say about the play. You're a theatre critic about to write a report about the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta. Collect together statements about the play." It was noticeable that where the teacher had given specific instructions prior to viewing, the pupils appeared far more interested than those that had received no instructions. It was interesting to note that in their logs, two teachers mentioned the difficulty of knowing when to interrupt or intervene in the showing of a video in order to gauge or enhance pupils' understanding. Also on the subject of the use of videos, teachers in their logs talked

about the importance of showing the video of a play in order to help pupils to get an overview of the whole play, to confirm their knowledge from earlier activities and to fill in any gaps in knowledge. At the fifth level pupils would watch a live performance of the play on stage as happened when Teacher DA took the whole class to see a performance of the play at a local theatre one evening. The final level occurred when the teacher's purpose was for the pupils to perform part of the text themselves, and where often, as with Teachers BA, BB and DA, the classroom itself would be transformed into a temporary theatre. In these instances, the teacher sometimes assumed the role of director or actor, or they would ask that one of the pupils direct. On one occasion, Teacher BB asked that those pupils who were not performing should all act as director, and said to them, 'Our purpose is to direct and help the players.' During the performance he would call for a pause in the action and ask the directors questions such as, 'Go from line 150 now. Where and how d'you want these people to stand in relation to each other?' To refer to a point made earlier, this could also be seen as the teacher *apprenticing* the pupils.

All of the teachers observed deployed their pupils to work in pairs or small groups during their lessons. Very seldom did I see pupils being instructed to work on their own. Teachers deployed pupils to work in groups for many different tasks (I will consider the nature of the tasks that teachers set their pupils in the subsequent part of this section), whether it was for reading part of the play aloud, dramatising a scene, responding to a worksheet or responding to a question or instruction from the teacher. Apart from the occasions mentioned earlier when there was whole class reading of the play, teachers organised their pupils into groups for all of the tasks on Shakespeare that I saw during lessons. As with any group work tasks in English, teachers would circulate around the class to monitor pupils' work and to intervene where necessary. Here, as with whole class strategies, the teacher would often engage the pupils in the group in a short discussion and praise 'correct' responses, although some teachers (e.g. DA and DB) when fielding pupils' queries would not give them the 'correct' answer but direct pupils back to the text so that they could find the answer for themselves. Most teachers would end the group work by calling the class together and then asking them for feedback (which occasionally was some form of performance) on the task set, and would again praise and value correct responses.

The nature of the tasks that the teachers set their pupils reflected the subjects of the discussions and the questions that they asked pupils, in that they were concerned

primarily with the plot and characters of the play and, to a much lesser extent, themes and background information.

There was a wide variety of tasks set, and many involved the three English Attainment Tasks of Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening. Most of the tasks, as mentioned above, were meant for pupils to explore initially in groups. One group of tasks did not single out plot or character but required the pupils to gain a general sense of both. Examples of such tasks included asking pupils to read aloud (either as a class or in groups) part of the play, or for part of the play to be viewed on video. Where the reading aloud was conducted as a whole class exercise, the teachers gave no instructions beforehand as to what the pupils should be considering or focusing their attention upon (unlike the example given earlier by Teacher AB to the class about to watch part of the video of the play), tending instead to remind the pupils of the setting of the scene and what happened immediately before, as with Teacher BA whose instructions were, 'Page 71, Act I scene v. We're at the party. Tybalt has seen Romeo and wants to have a fight with him.' However, what tends to happen is that the teacher interrupts the reading aloud in order to ask or explain to the pupils about a part of a character's speech, as again with Teacher BA who soon after the pupils had begun to read aloud the aforementioned scene stopped them with, 'Right. What does he mean?' and later, '""Kissing formally." What does that mean?' It was interesting to note that when they set a reading aloud task for groups teachers did provide a focus for the reading, often in the form of oral instructions, as with Teacher CA. She had written the Act and scene to be read on the board and then gave the following instructions, 'On a large piece of plain paper. In groups of six read through and try to stage Act III scene i. It's the scene with the Mechanicals rehearsing.' Alternatively, as with Teacher AA, the focus and instructions were on a worksheet given out to the pupils prior to the reading.

Apart then from whole class reading, reading tasks were set with an accompanying focus for the pupils concerned with either character or plot. Those tasks which involved character, ranged from pupils creating a family tree, hot-seating, writing a letter as a character to a magazine's problem page, depicting relationship difficulties in a song, rap or poem to the traditional essay where pupils were asked to state their views of a character together with supporting quotes from the text. Similarly, there was a range of tasks for helping pupils understand the plot and which led them to explore the text carefully, such as writing a headline news story for a local newspaper about an incident in the play; or writing and presenting a report of an incident for TV News; or having to reorder a cut-up version of the prologue from *Romeo and Juliet,*

or representing the plot of the same play in a five minute version for a children's TV series. What these examples and others have in common is that they appear to suggest that teachers believe that pupils can gain understanding of Shakespeare's plays through an active transformation of the text. And that transformation is often from the Shakespearean language to that commonly used in the twentieth century, which leads me on to the ways in which teachers modernise Shakespeare.

Modernising is a strategy which I often saw teachers employ and which it would seem can make the language and ideas in the play more accessible as they are translated into the vocabulary, idioms, images and media of contemporary British culture which most teenage pupils could relate to and comprehend. In my observations I identified three sets of modernising strategies employed by the teachers.

The first was where the teacher used their everyday classroom language to recap the plot. Occasionally they would use colloquialisms and the vernacular to bring it that much closer to the pupils as with Teacher AA; 'Last week we looked at the characters and the different groups. Dad has laid down the law. Theseus says, "Yes, Hermia the chips are down. I agree with your Dad."'

The second set was where the teachers translated part of the text being scrutinised by the pupils, as with Teacher BA who as the pupils read aloud interjected with, 'The famous line; "Hark what light through yonder window breaks.."' and proceeded to put it into her own words. Or Teacher CA who when beginning *A Midsummer Night's Dream* wrote the cast list on the board including the word 'betrothed', asked what it meant and getting no answer said, 'You can put "engaged" instead.'

The third modernising strategy was when teachers drew upon modern analogies or equivalents in order to help pupils understand a situation or an idea, as for instance with Teacher AB who when trying to explain the meaning of "He that was different in blood", gives the example of 'Prince Charles marrying Elsie from Tescos.' Another was Teacher EA helping the pupils to not only understand the difference between feuding families in Elizabethan times and now but also to visualise the setting of the opening scene from *Romeo and Juliet* who said, 'It was about two families who hated each other. Today, if two families row they might go in a pub and throw a glass at each other, but in those days...Try and picture a square in the middle of a town; like the Guildhall Square in Portsmouth. Picture that plus the fountain outside Alders.'

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Such modernising strategies were evident with all of the teachers I observed, with the third set being noticeably prevalent - which again points to the concern that the teachers have over the difficulty of the language and society in Shakespeare that many pupils would experience.

Pupils

Whereas the strategies that the teachers employed to teach their pupils Shakespeare were predominantly of the teacher's choosing, the strategies that the pupils employed to understand Shakespeare did not have that same degree of choice, in that the 'rules' of the classroom largely dictate that the pupils accede to the instructions and demands of their teacher. However, within the tasks they are asked or instructed to complete they do have some room to choose their strategies to accomplish the task and to meet their needs to understand the aspect of Shakespeare under consideration. It is these within-task strategies which I will be discussing in this section.

From my analysis it was noticeable that these pupils' strategies could be divided into two; those which were chosen as or within a group and those which were the choice of an individual working on his or her own. Taking the group strategies first, in all of the classrooms I observed, as far as I could tell, the decision as to which individuals comprised each group was by and large left to the pupils to decide, with the size of groups ranging from 2 to 6. Having chosen the composition of the group, the group would then, sometimes, be able to choose from a range of tasks or to choose their own particular route or outcome within a task as for instance at School E where the pupils were asked by Teacher EA to "produce a five minute version of *Romeo and Juliet* for a TV series called Playstory; for children aged 6 to 9 years old," where one group created a puppet play, another an illustrated story book, another a mime and another a dramatic presentation. Whilst in School B with Teacher BB, each group was asked to look at three of the characters from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and firstly to choose whether to use, "Johari windows, cloud characters or hot-seating' to explore each character before choosing thereafter their form of reporting their findings from "statement, poem, ode, rap, flow diagram or time line." The offer of such choice seemed to motivate pupils and allowed the group to exploit the task to the best of their ability in terms of their learning by allowing them to deal with it in a way which matched their individual and the group's collective skills. Even with a task that on the surface does not appear to offer such a range of choice, I observed pupils employing strategies which utilised the different skills and propensities of individuals within the group in order to accomplish the task. Thus in School D with Teacher DB

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where groups had been given the Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet* cut up into separate lines with the group's task to work out the correct order, in one group a girl said to the rest of her group, "tell me what to write down and I'll write it down. Somebody read it out to me."

Of those strategies which were the choice of the individual working on his or her own, the most common one that I observed in all classrooms was where a pupil would unbidden ask a teacher a question as in School E where one pupil having been asked to write a letter from Romeo to a problem page in a newspaper asked her teacher, "How would Romeo start writing this down?". Another common strategy was for the pupils to volunteer to read a part aloud when the whole class was involved in a reading of the play. This was not always a successful learning strategy, particularly in addressing the language difficulty, in that it wasn't always the most accomplished readers who volunteered which resulted in some most unusual readings where it was quite clear that the reader had no understanding of what he or she was reading and neither did many of those who were trying to follow. However, in considering strategies which tried to overcome the language difficulty, I observed instances in classrooms in three of the schools of pupils asking for or getting a dictionary in order to help them understand part of the play they were studying. This may seem a surprisingly rare occurrence, but apart from the plain text edition used in School C, all of the texts used have extensive notes to help pupils to understand many of the unusual words and phrases in the text.

I was interested to observe the strategies which individuals employed whilst watching scenes from the play being shown to the class on video. Most pupils would simply watch the screen, but some would silently follow the lines in their text, whilst a few would actually combine text and screen and speak along with the video - a type of karaoke Shakespeare.

Apart from the volunteering to read aloud, all of the pupil strategies I have thus far discussed were positive and as far as I could tell, successful in that they met the pupils' needs to understand a certain aspect of Shakespeare and to accomplish the task. On the other hand, there were some examples of negative strategies from individual pupils; instances of them openly complaining about the difficulty of the work, or, more passively, usually during whole class reading of the play, simply not reading or following.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings arising from my analysis of the classroom observation data were:

- pupils' interpretation of Shakespeare is frequently regulated and directed by the teacher whose knowledge dominates
- some teachers adopted an "open view" to the teaching of Shakespeare which encouraged pupils to look for various interpretations of the play, while other teachers adopted a more "closed view" whereby the pupils were directed to a narrow or single interpretation of the play
- an understanding of character and plot were the most common elements which pupils were guided to focus upon
- understanding of Shakespeare plays could be gained by pupils through a series of strategies which took into consideration a need to understand both the "big picture" and the "smaller pictures" and to bridge the gaps between the pupils' experience and context and that of the text
- understanding of Shakespeare could be improved through pupils' involvement in associated drama activities and other activities which encourage pupils to a visual, aural and kinetic conceptualisation of the text
- Shakespeare's language was a barrier to understanding and many of the strategies employed were directed at overcoming this barrier
- the Test at the end of Key Stage 3 was a significant reason for Shakespeare being studied in Year 9

From the analysis of the process of teaching Shakespeare in the Key Stage 3 classroom there can be seen similarities in process and method with those from earlier this century. For instance the dramatic reading of the play by the teacher harks back to Circular 753 (Board of Education, 1910), and the performance of scenes was advocated in both the Newbolt Report (Board of Education, 1921) and George Sampson's book (Sampson, 1921).

KEY ISSUES

1 Teachers' ideology

Taking what I have termed the "open view" of a teacher's approach to the teaching of Shakespeare, this aligns with a progressivist ideology in that it encourages pupils to seek different interpretations of the play and is child-centred in the way that it values the individual pupil's response, and frequently employs creative and active methods. Whereas the "closed view" is more aligned to classical humanism in that the teacher works with a narrow or single interpretation of the play and directs the pupils to that interpretation.

2 Literacy

From this part of the analysis there appear some important issues relating to the way that the teaching of Shakespeare can aid the development of pupils' literacy.

The didactic strategy of the teacher recapping or summarising the plot or character relationships, can be viewed as valuable for the pupils in contextualising the text by presenting or reinforcing previous and background knowledge and/or re-positioning the pupil reader in the text and its world. It can also help pupils gain an overview of the plot and main characters, to secure a holding schema, from which more detailed and often difficult aspects of the text (syntax, vocabulary, images etc.) could be explored.

The choice of which edition of a Shakespeare text a teacher could use illustrates the dilemma faced by teachers as they try on the one hand to challenge and interest the reader whilst on the other trying not to demotivate and lose the pupils' attraction for the text. The *Shakespeare Made Easy* edition could be considered too easy and lacking in challenge, and yet for those pupils who have weak reading skills it could be seen as the ideal bridge between their reading skills and knowledge and that of Shakespeare's text. On the other hand, the CD rom plain text version could be considered as too challenging in not offering enough assistance for pupils to bridge the contextual or language gaps and difficulties. I would argue that the edition chosen by teachers needs to be one which combines and incorporates the challenge of Shakespeare's language but which also provides assistance and guidance for the reader (in the guise of annotations, scene summaries etc.) which together with the teacher's guidance can allow pupils to develop their understanding.

Active methods are attractive to teachers. They know that pupils enjoy such methods in English and that it adds a necessary variety to the diet in English lessons. But they are also an important aid to developing pupils' literacy. The 'fun' element connects with the idea that in order to develop pupils' literacy when dealing with challenging texts it is vital that the pupils maintain their interest and motivation. Second, the activities can be said to assist pupils in building up an understanding of that genre and in particular of how Shakespeare's dramascripts work. For example, character movements and tone of voice are rarely explicated but are implied in what characters say. By acting and staging scenes from the play pupils are forced to look for clues in the language to make the implicit explicit, the abstract concrete; important literacy skills. A further feature of this active method is the teacher's role where often she/he would be directing the pupils or acting. Here the teacher is helping the pupils' literacy develop by modelling the required behaviour and way of interpreting the text. By combining the teacher directing and acting and the pupils carrying out the same, this could be viewed as a type of apprenticeship (see Cairney, 1995).

Appropriate use of group work is seen by many as a key factor in literacy development in that it pertains to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, whereby group work allows pupils to test and increase their skills and understanding through working with more skilful or knowledgeable others (their peers or their teacher).

Transforming part of a Shakespeare text can be motivating for pupils for it demands that they find and re-make meaning in a more interesting way than a simple prose translation and also in a way that develops their literacy by modernising the text so that it more clearly reflects their own lives and culture.

Furthermore, by providing pupils with modern analogies for what at first could seem alien social activities, practices and concepts, the gap can again be bridged between the world of the Elizabethan text and the world and culture of the pupil.

It would appear that pupils employ a variety of strategies to assist their understanding of Shakespeare and which also help to develop their literacy. Concerning the latter, pupils appeared to like working in a group but tended to choose who they worked with themselves. In order to be more certain of the learning advantage of working in a group (such as for instance learning from a more skilful or knowledgeable peer) greater teacher intervention in the composition of groups would be required. Similarly the positive strategy of the individual pupil engaging the teacher's attention to gain assistance which was left to the assertion of that individual could become a

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comfortable and regular strategy for all pupils with the guidance of the teacher. On a similar note, concerning pupils watching of a video, again the different strategies which pupils can employ to understand video as it relates to text together with their purposes and advantages could be discussed and pupils could be guided to the most suitable - this would be a valuable way for introducing, through a type of metacognition, video literacy.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF DATA
PUPIL AND TEACHER INTERVIEWS

ANALYSIS OF DATA - PUPIL AND TEACHER INTERVIEWS

This chapter concerns the analysis of the data which was collected through interviewing teachers and pupils. First, it will begin by outlining the methods used to analyse the interview data. Second, it will consider and compare the main findings of both interviews with teachers and pupils, focusing in turn on the following areas connected with the teaching of Shakespeare at KS3;

- enjoyment
- dislikes
- difficulties in understanding
- learning
- relevance
- appeal
- teaching methods
- testing Shakespeare at Key Stage 3
- reasons for teaching Shakespeare
- possible improvements

Finally, the *key issues* which have arisen will be identified and discussed.

METHODS OF ANALYSIS

In a similar way to which I coded the classroom observation data (see Chapter Four), my initial coding developed out of the key theme in each of the questions I asked in my interviews with both pupils and teachers. The interview questions themselves had arisen out of my initial research questions and had been revised as a result of preliminary analysis of the survey and the classroom observations. These key themes became what Seidel, Friese and Leonard (1995, p 182) call 'parent codes' in that they 'identify groups of related text codes', or what Miles and Huberman refer to as 'pattern coding' (1994, p68).

Other codes then emerged from repeated re-reading of the interview transcripts; a more 'grounded' approach. Initially, this process generated an enormous number of codes within and across each parent code, but further reading and a reconsideration of the codes led to a revision of the codes with some being rejected because they did not work across the different interviews or because they were more appropriately subsumed into other codes. Furthermore, it was then noticed that a number of parent

codes would more suitably, in terms of analysis, be grouped together under one code; so that parent codes ATEST, PRTEST and WTEST became amalgamated under TEST.

What follows is an account of the findings of the analysis of each of the parent code themes for both the teachers and the pupils.

ENJOYMENT

This parent code emerged from the question to both teachers and pupils asking them which aspects of the lessons on the Shakespeare course they particularly enjoyed.

The Teachers

What did the teachers enjoy about teaching Shakespeare to the classes I had observed them with? Particularly prominent in their responses was that for all of them their enjoyment was primarily dependent upon the reciprocal enjoyment and involvement of the pupils of any particular activity. For instance, a fairly typical response came from teacher EA who said, "I quite like it when the class were able to get together in groups and do oral work based on the text, because I quite enjoy that, and this particular class quite enjoy that as well." More specifically, teachers pointed to gaining enjoyment from their pupils responding actively, "...where they were giving back something rather than the ones where I was saying that's what you ought to be doing" (teacher BB); the pupils 'performing' (whether it be to the rest of the class or simply reading the text aloud in groups); and 'creative' lessons where pupils were designing sets or costumes or writing from a character's point of view. It was also interesting to note that the stage of the course of lessons which teachers indicated they enjoyed most was the beginning, as teacher AA explained, " because they were very sort of receptive and open-minded to it and at the beginning they were prepared to take on the challenge of the difficulties of the text." Whether this initial teacher enthusiasm to starting a text is particular to Shakespeare would need further investigation.

Only very occasionally did any teacher indicate enjoyment of lessons borne solely from the activity or text. As an example teacher AB said that "...if I'm teaching a literary text which I feel is of high value then it generates enthusiasm within me " but even then he had to add the rider, "and I'm very enthusiastic to then enable them to enjoy the text", which points to the dependency I mentioned earlier but which also

implies equally the idea that pupils might gain some of their enjoyment from the infectious enjoyment of their teacher. Teacher DB gained enjoyment from "...playing around with how you play a scene" with the class but that some of his enjoyment of this activity was fairly independent of the pupils because of its "novelty - for me probably as well as them." These two examples together with one other from teacher AA who talks about enjoying establishing the plot of the play with the class, suggest that there is some intrinsic enjoyment of the text for some of the teachers teaching Shakespeare, which may hark back to their own enjoyment of their English studies as students, but that still this enjoyment is second to the enjoyment they gain from seeing their pupils enjoying and involved in the lessons' activities. This finding is supported in my earlier analysis of the teachers' logs (see Chapter Four) which identified teacher enjoyment as solely dependent upon pupils' enjoyment and involvement, and by my analysis of the classroom observations (see Chapter Four) where teachers' enjoyment could be seen to be connected with an expectation, often realised, that the pupils would enjoy the activity too.

The Pupils

One very clear difference between the teachers' enjoyment and the pupils' was that apart from one indirect remark, not one pupil made any response which linked their enjoyment to that of their teachers'. Pupils' enjoyment of Shakespeare lessons was more than often related to 'active' learning, often with their classmates. Concerning the latter point, a number of pupils mentioned their enjoyment of working in groups; as one said (pupil CAD) with regard to reading the play in a group, "I preferred listening to others but I did like it in a group of four, reading it in four, the four of us, like they can help you with the words" which in itself would seem to have important pedagogical implications for pupils with weak reading skills.

In terms of the 'active' learning, I am loosely defining that as those activities where the pupils would normally require an amount of physical as well as mental involvement from the pupils and also where their understanding and learning was not simply a matter of reception of information as in listening to the teacher explain part of the plot or what a character was like, but was transformative in that the pupil had to transform and interpret the textual material in a specific way. For example, the most enjoyable type of activity according to those pupils interviewed was connected with drama and the performance of the text in one way or another. This ranged from pupils reading aloud in small groups , reading aloud around the class, to groups performing scenes with props. Without any prompting from me, some pupils were

clear that these activities were not only enjoyable but that they aided their learning, as pupil BBD suggested when saying, "It was great fun; we did things like freeze frame. We had to get the movements of the character because that helped us with what they would be like" and pupil ABF who said that "...the drama I look forward to more because you can get to act because you are in Shakespeare times and the atmosphere and you can actually experience it."

A number of pupils mentioned enjoying writing and some point to particular writing activities which again could be termed transformative. For instance, pupil CAA talked about enjoying "when we have to write the circles of who loves who" as an aid to understanding the complex relationships between the lovers in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', and pupil EAD who mentioned that "I like writing your own version of an idea but not like in Shakespeare language but like our language now," a modern translation of Shakespeare's text.

Of those activities which pupils say they enjoyed and which could be termed more passive than those discussed above, by far the most popular was watching interpretations of the text (film, TV and animation) on video. What particularly interested me was that, as with 'performance', many pupils would, unprompted, refer to how viewing such videos would aid their learning of aspects of the play being studied. For example, teacher DB split the viewing of the video of Zeffirrelli's 'Romeo and Juliet' into sections and his pupil DBD commented, "... there was a bit of Romeo and Juliet, it was only fifteen minutes long. The amount we learned just watching that!" Similarly, pupil AAE said referring to watching videos of both film and cartoon versions, "You could learn a lot more from it than you could in the book because they helped you understand it."

Other activities which were mentioned as enjoyable only once by individual pupils included listening to audio recordings of the text, projects, working on the language and studying the characters.

It seems plausible to conclude that pupils' enjoyment of Shakespeare lessons is not only linked to activities which seem to teachers and others as attractive activities to pupils but also that pupils enjoy those activities which they recognise help them overcome difficulties and assist their learning.

DISLIKES

This parent code theme stemmed from the question to both parties which asked them if there were any elements or aspects of the course of Shakespeare lessons which they did not like.

Teachers

It is important first of all to say that there were very few dislikes but that, as with what they said they enjoyed, their dislikes were again clearly connected with what they perceived their pupils disliked. So, for example, teacher DB didn't like having to repeat certain skills and activities "which some of them (*i.e. the pupils*) resent."

A common area of dislike was that of having to deal with the pupils' difficulties with the language of Shakespeare's texts, an area with which I will deal in more detail later in this section, but it interested me to note that one teacher, DA, linked this to her dislike of the way that the obligation to teach a Shakespeare play to Year 9 was so demanding on an English teacher's and an English Department's lesson and course time "because it cut what we would have liked to have put in the Year 9 course."

Another common area of dislike, one connected with the above remark, was the compulsion of the Key Stage 3 Test. All the teachers interviewed felt that the requirements of the test, both explicit and implicit, meant that they had often to prolong the teaching of Shakespeare unnecessarily and often to teach to the test in ways which they would not normally have done and which were counterproductive to pupils' learning and their overall interest in and enthusiasm for Shakespeare. For example teacher AA said, "...had it not been for the Key Stage 3 Test I would stop teaching it (A Midsummer Night's Dream) about half way through, but the pressure of the test made me continue" and teacher DB said, "...towards the end we were kind of gearing towards the tests where I felt a noticeable lack of enthusiasm." Whilst teacher EA who compared the current teaching of the text to the previous year's experience when the tests were boycotted commented that "I know my teaching of it last year, when I knew there was no test at the end of it but we were going to cover it anyway; it seemed the whole atmosphere of the class seemed more relaxed and we could actually spend time developing various aspects of the work." Again, as with the language, more will be discussed concerning the teachers' and the pupils' thoughts and feelings about the Test in a later part of this section.

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Pupils

As with the teachers, the pupils too expressed very few dislikes; in fact, almost a third of all pupils interviewed said that there was nothing in the lessons they disliked, with comments like pupil BBD who responded, "Not really. I like doing it all; it was interesting;" or pupil ABD "...not that I can think of really. It was either good or average really." Looking at which pupils made such a response it was noticeable that out of the 8 pupils interviewed at School B six replied in this way and conversely not one of the pupils interviewed at School C and only one from School D said there was nothing they disliked. This implies to me that dislike of aspects of the Shakespeare course may be linked to the teaching style, methodology or approach of the individual teacher as much as the text or activity.

Of those responses which did indicate dislike, the most common was connected with the language of the texts which those pupils found difficult. For instance, pupil AAE disliked "The reading part of it because it was rather hard to understand." and pupil CAA disliked "...when we had to write about how we would play it. It was hard because the language was hard to understand." Interestingly, the dislike of three of the four pupils interviewed from School C was connected with difficulty with the language and this was significant because this was the only class I had observed who were using completely plain texts of the play (i.e. there were no footnotes or glossaries to help the pupils) and perhaps again, as mentioned in the previous chapter, this points to the need for teachers to carefully consider the editions of the text which they use.

Another area of dislike which a few pupils from two different schools mentioned was that of repetition, as in one case did their teacher which I have mentioned earlier.

Similarly, a dislike which the teachers mentioned and which was also mentioned by a few pupils was that of the tests, but dislike in terms of the pressure it put on them rather than for the reasons which the teachers gave.

DIFFICULTIES IN UNDERSTANDING

Pupils' Views

When asked what were the difficulties he faced when trying to understand the play, one pupil, DAD, replied, "The whole lot generally. It is very difficult." Only two pupils replied that there was nothing causing them problems.

Understanding and distinguishing the different characters was mentioned as a problem with only one of the plays, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', a play which is noted to be difficult for readers sorting out the differences between the lovers in particular.

Two thirds of the pupils expressed difficulty with the language of the plays in one way or another. Most of them said that it was a general difficulty to understand the language of the plays which was often like another language to them as is summed up in the following typical responses;

> "...trying to say the different words and things as they've got a different language than us..." EAB

> "Some of the languages they spoke, like different words, they didn't mean anything" BAD

> "The old English really; some of it was a bit hard to understand." DBD

Connected with the above were comments which specified that the difficulty of understanding lay in the words themselves, as in EAA's comment, "They were really complicated words." Some pupils mentioned that the accompanying notes and glossary in some editions helped with their language difficulties. Pity then those pupils in School C who only had plain texts. Similarly one of the classes in School B initially read the play using a modern translation and then as the Test drew near they used the Shakespearean text which led pupil BBD to comment, "When we read the proper Shakespeare text, the one that was written years ago, it used really strange words and you had to refer to the other side." Some help for pupils to move between their language and that of Shakespeare's text would seem to be welcomed by pupils; but would they all go as far as pupil DAD who thought that it would be "...a good idea to translate the whole lot into modern day English and either make it into a film or something, because low down you don't understand some of the old words that were used. It would make it easier for us to learn and probably easier for the teacher to teach us."

In what follows it will be seen that some teachers have sympathy with that last view but see the issue in a more complex manner.

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Teachers' Views

I did not ask the teachers directly for their views on what difficulties their pupils had in understanding Shakespeare, but their awareness of the difficulties came out in responses to other questions. As I mentioned earlier when considering what they disliked, all of the teachers remarked in particular upon the language difficulties which their pupils faced.

Some of their responses pointed to specific language issues, so that, for instance, teacher AA thought that part of the difficulty for pupils was "...the use of imagery." whilst teacher AB felt that "the language was remote to some of them; especially to begin with..." This last remark leads into a series of connected responses made by the two teachers interviewed in School D and which seem to me to be particularly apposite. Both allude to the remoteness of the language of Shakespeare's plays and to the role of the teacher in bridging the gap for the pupils between Shakespeare's language and present day English. Herein lies a dilemma which both teachers recognised in some of their pupils; that the pupils' enthusiasm spurred them to get involved directly with the language of Shakespeare's plays, to try swimming across the divide using their own power and ability rather than using the stepping stones or bridge supplied by their teacher; and as teacher DB explained, this can lead to further difficulty for the pupils; "I am thinking of a few who... tend to get fussy about every word and miss the slightly wider picture of the extract." Later, he picks up on a related issue, "...at one point we were thinking about 'shroud' and they did not know what 'shroud' was which quite surprised me, and I think that typifies some of the assumptions I was making which was making it difficult for them." He then considers the dilemma embedded in these two remarks and which must face all teachers teaching Shakespeare"...how much do you pick out these individual words and translate and how much do you just leave it more as a sort of flavour and rhythm?" To what extent should the teacher modernise and translate Shakespeare? His colleague, teacher DA, was equally aware of this dilemma and of her pupils' desire to forgo the bridge and to get immersed directly in the flow of the language, for as she said about her pupils, "They measured themselves against how confidently they could read it," and she refers to a lesson where the pupils were working on a role play of a theme in one scene before studying that scene, but she found that "...when they were working in groups, most of them had gone back to the text. They wanted to actually use the real text." But, as she recognised, this led to more difficulties for "...it obviously slowed it down and was a stumbling block." The resulting frustration for her the teacher was "...how could I layer my knowledge of the language to them without expecting too much too soon?" She felt that by using the language of the play in the

very first lesson of the course she might have "...set the seal for saying that the language in this book is important" and that as a result they did not have the confidence "...to let me take them right away from it" to work from their own understanding of the theme to bridge the gap. This, I think, is a key issue and dilemma and ties up with earlier findings in my analysis of classroom observations where teachers were often to be seen modernising and bridging the language gap in various ways; through their speech, referring pupils to glossaries and notes, using video or even modern translations. Teachers, then, appear to display an awareness of a number of specific literacy and language difficulties which their pupils face including imagery, the remoteness of the language from their pupils' and them getting a sense of the whole text.

And it is bridges which teachers would seem to want; not a complete decamp to the nearest and familiar bank of today, for again as teacher DA says, "I will still be ferreting around the different ways of making the language accessible...because it's so beautiful and strong. I wouldn't want to back away from the language. I would want to keep finding ways of working so that they feel it isn't just an old language that is closed to them." Or as teacher AA enthused, "...the richness of the language, of the imagery should be something which dazzles them. It should engross and engage their minds more fully than any other literary text."

LEARNING

On reflection, the question I posed to both teachers and pupils in terms of what they had learnt through studying their particular play, was problematic. Problematic in that it is very difficult for anyone to explicate in detail and describe their own learning of a specific subject over a lengthy period of time (in some cases five months and all no shorter than four months) and to be able to identify what for them is new learning and knowledge. It is most likely that the responses given to the question revealed the highlights of their learning; those pieces which are closest to the surface of the mind. The responses from both pupils and teachers tended to be in generalised terms rather than detailed exposition of plot or characters from the play for instance.

Pupil Learning

From the pupils' perspective, the area where most of them had indicated that learning had taken place was with the language of the play. Here, the pupils alluded to three subdivisions of language; pronunciation, new vocabulary and the change in meaning of certain words over time. Pronunciation was important to them in order that they could read it aloud with confidence. The learning of new vocabulary, or as some of them expressed it 'new words' or even in one case 'weird words' was significant in terms of them being able to understand the play; and a number were also interested to note how words that we use today had had a different meaning in Elizabethan times.

Staying for a moment with the pupils' interest in words changing their meaning over time, another popular response to the question was that they had learnt about changes to and differences between life in Elizabethan times and now, with such comments as, 'Their clothes were a lot different. They had arguments in the street' (BAA) and 'The ways things went on before I was born'. (EAC)

Other responses indicated that they had learnt about Shakespeare and his life, the characters (here too there were comments about how different the characters were in Shakespeare's time) and the plot of the play.

When the teachers were asked about their own learning through teaching the play, it was interesting to note that two of them (DA & DB) responded by saying what they had learnt about their pupils. DA was impressed with her pupils' (a bottom set class) determination and stamina to gain understanding of the play, and DB of his pupils' (a top set class) existing knowledge and how the studying of the play had helped pupils to develop certain skills (such as referencing). This learning of the teachers about their pupils appears to inform or be behind some other comments regarding teachers' own learning.

It is interesting to note that pupils when asked about their learning gave prominence to aspects of language. This could reflect the emphasis, given their teachers, to the importance of coming to terms with Shakespeare's language, or the pupils' perceptions of the main purpose of being taught Shakespeare, or perhaps a recognition of where their greatest learning achievement has been. If it is the latter, it means that metacognition is taking place and that pupils could be led to perceive the study of Shakespeare as a means to improving their literacy.

Teacher Learning

It is to be remembered that when all of the teachers were interviewed it was at or towards the end of the first time that any of them had taught Shakespeare as part of the KS3 testing and assessment for English. Therefore it is understandable (as referred to at the end of the previous section) that some should respond to a question about their own learning by showing concern for what they had learnt about their pupils, but also to comment on the success of what was a relatively new teaching venture. Hence, there are a number of comments which indicated that they had learnt that Shakespeare could be taught successfully to any pupils in this age group as is exemplified in this response from AB who said that Shakespeare can be made accessible to kids who are thirteen if you teach it the right way.

RELEVANCE

Is Shakespeare relevant to the lives of young teenagers living at the end of the twentieth century? Relevance in such a text as a Shakespeare play, written so long ago, has to be sought, it isn't immediately apparent. It is a learnt skill, and one which, because of their own extended educational experience with Shakespeare, is more familiar to and advanced in teachers than their pupils. A number of pupils, when asked about their own learning when studying Shakespeare, pointed to differences they had recognised between life and language now and in Shakespeare's time, which suggests that they were encouraged to make direct comparisons between the two ages. Did the pupils see similarities between the lives, culture, ideas and emotions of the characters in the play and their own lives? Similarly, did their teachers think that the play being studied was relevant to the lives of their pupils?

Pupils' Views

In the interview, the pupils were asked "In what ways, if any, do you think the play connects with or is similar to life now in the 1990's?"

From my analysis I identified three fairly distinct categories of response; those who said that they saw no or little connection, those who could see a linking theme, and those who saw similarities in the relationships of characters.

Concerning the 25% of pupils who saw little or no connection, where they did it tended to be about the character's relationship and behaviour as can be seen in this example from ABC

> Not really, because nowadays you wouldn't have people telling you who you could marry and who you can't, and if they did run off to the woods or something then they would be found quite quickly. And if your parents don't like someone that you are going out with; apart from that it isn't really very similar.

Amongst those 25% of pupils there was at least one from each of the classes I observed, and in each of those classes the teacher would explain or draw out the similarities and relevances, which might suggest that these pupils were not convinced or still did not perceive the relevance. However, many more pupils did see the relevance and similarities.

As mentioned earlier, the two plays that the pupils I had observed and interviewed had studied were 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and the two themes that some of the pupils identified as being relevant to their own lives were love and family feuds. The former theme is evident in both plays whereas the latter is evident only in 'Romeo and Juliet'.

The third area where pupils saw similarities was in that of the behaviour and relationships of the characters, usually over matters of love and marriage. In particular, a number of pupils pointed to the parent-child conflicts which arise over choice of boyfriends or marriage partners, as CAD says;

> I think there is still a lot of fathers who don't think say boyfriends are good enough for their daughters and they may say to the daughter "You can't see them".

The aforementioned themes and social relationships are very broad and are likely to be of particular relevance to the lives of these young adolescents who are of a similar age to the young lovers in both plays.

Teachers' Views

The teachers were asked if they thought that studying the play was relevant to the lives of pupils in their class. None responded with a firm "No", but two (BB and CA) thought that the relevance was somewhat tenuous. As with the pupils, the teachers drew attention to the relevance of certain themes and relationships in the two plays.

The thematic range identified by the teachers was greater than that of the pupils', and included additionally power, magic and the treatment of women. However, similar to their pupils, the themes that they thought were the most relevant were the same; love, marriage, family feuds and parent-child relationships. Two of the teachers, DB & AB, pointed to the similarity in ages between the pupils and many of the main characters, and another teacher, DA, demonstrated just how directly relevant themes in 'Romeo and Juliet' can be to the lives of pupils when she says;

> We did work a lot on the sort of bickering in love which was actually quite relevant to that class at the time; notes going backwards and forwards and people thinking they weren't attractive enough to get the person they wanted.

SHAKESPEARE'S APPEAL

Taking the idea of the relevance of Shakespeare to pupils a stage further, two other questions in the interviews with teachers asked them if they had thoughts on the appeal of the play to the different abilities of pupils in their class and to the boys and the girls.

Shakespeare's Appeal to Pupils of Different Abilities

The three teachers whose pupils were in low ability sets expressed surprise at how much Shakespeare did appeal to their pupils. They indicated that the appeal lay partly in the novelty of being confronted with such an unusual and demanding text, but also in the difficulty of the work which was challenging and set high expectations. As BA said on this subject;

> ...the difficulty value; they actually enjoy that, and that again is something which I don't think I really appreciated before.

Where pupils were taught in mixed ability classes, both teachers thought that the low ability pupils found the work difficult, and both confirmed that in order to make it appealing to the range in the class it was important for the teacher to employ a range of approaches, as AB explains;

> The only thing I can offer is a mixed activity so that sometimes there are structured organised activities where there is a narrative progression through a text and then they had to ask some questions afterwards. There is the sort of drama aspect to it, there are interviews, so the only thing where I could involve the mixed ability thing was by doing a range of activities some of which would be more

successful with lower abilities and some which would be more successful with higher abilities; but in the end having a range of activities hopefully embraced the mixed ability range in different ways.

There is not sufficient data available to be confident about the appeal of Shakespeare to the different pupil abilities other than to say that in some teachers' hands it does appeal. It would be of interest in future research to look at the appeal of Shakespeare for low ability pupils when taught in sets and again when taught in mixed ability classes.

Shakespeare's Appeal to Boys and Girls

The teachers were also asked if the play being studied appealed to boys and girls. Initially, all of them said that the play appealed to both, but in further justifying their opinion it was possible to detect certain gender assumptions. For example, that romance and relationships were more appealing to girls. Teacher AB, in the following quotation, seems to connect that appeal to what he perceives as the greater ability and maturity of the girls in the class;

> I'm well aware that the girls for instance in this group are on the whole far more able than the boys in the group. It is a play where the gender question is very relevant and it is to do with the relationships and so on. The girls at this stage have far more sophisticated and mature concepts of what a relationship is, why they do and don't work, and boys as such don't want to talk about it so they will be silly.

Similarly, DA's example supports this view when saying;

> Hypolita in the video is very feminine and very fairy-like, and in the production she was a new woman. She was very much in charge, very very sexual...and I had quite a few, mainly boys, saying they couldn't understand why she was striding round in silly trousers.

All of the teachers said that they felt that both plays appealed in some way to both sexes. Perhaps with Shakespeare language is the "leveller" and that it is wrong to assume that boys will not be interested in love relationships or that girls are not interested in politics and violent acts.

TEACHING METHODS

During the interviews, the teachers were asked two questions which related directly to their teaching methods; one asked them if there were any methods which they felt had been more successful than others and another if there were any methods which they felt were far less successful than others.

Successful Methods

The consensus amongst the teachers interviewed was that group work as an organisational device was particularly helpful, perhaps, as BA suggested, "...so that they (the pupils) could rely on each other and help each other. In particular, the teachers indicated that they organised pupils into groups for the purpose of performing short scenes and role plays, to read extracts aloud and to collaboratively interrogate the text.

The teachers' responses showed that they were aware of and employed a number of different methods which they regarded as successful, and pointed to what they saw as the importance of ensuring that their pupils were offered a variety and mixture of methods and tasks. EA talked about wanting to "...bring in variation around the text rather than just sit and read huge great chunks of it" and AA described a lesson, which I observed, which contained group reading, role play, whole class discussion and individual written responses to tasks on a worksheet.

A more specific approach indicated by some of the teachers (and again witnessed in my classroom observations) was that of the teacher assisting the pupils to make bridges between their world and the world of the text. This was apparent when DA described how she approached starting 'A Midsummer Night's Dream',

> I didn't start with what was illusory and what is real. We started collecting their ideas from the real world; what's strange and what's different and just by collecting their ideas I was caught up in trying to show them patterns.

Or with teacher AB,

> What I call systematic dramatisation worked in the end very well...it is to do with updating the characters into a modern scenario.

It may be noted that teacher DA mentioned 'patterns' in the sense of assisting the pupils to recognise patterns in their own ideas which she explained could then be transferable to patterns of ideas or themes within the text and related to the plot and the shape of the drama. Subsequently, this approach, she said, helped the pupils to

understand the shape of the play and the place of one of the chosen scenes for the Test. Similarly, teacher BB considered that one of his successes was in helping the pupils to conceptualise "...the dramatic shape of the play". Looking for shapes and patterns is to encourage pupils to be able to view the play and some of its major constituent parts from a distance and as a whole in order to more easily understand the interplay and overall effect of those parts.

At the other end of the scale is the success some teachers attribute to focusing on short extracts of the play as is clear in this example from teacher DB,

> ...ten, possibly twenty lines, and they are given specific instructions, either to work out the gist of what is being said or the emotions of the ...characters.

Similarly, teacher EA felt that "small sections of the reading at a time" was more successful in terms of pupils' involvement in the play, their pronunciation and general understanding.

Other successful approaches which were mentioned by the teachers included role play and performance, which has already been mentioned in connection with group work, and also the use of board work during whole class discussions as a means to helping pupils not only see the shapes and patterns mentioned earlier but also to help them see how what they are considering and have learned fits in with the requirements of the Test.

Unsuccessful Methods

Some of the teachers were aware of being in a dilemma as to how much they should dominate proceedings when teaching Shakespeare. On the one hand they were aware that if their input was too great then pupils felt a lack of involvement in the lessons and lost interest, but on the other hand if they didn't then the pupils might not engage at all with particular ideas or interpretations. The teachers saw teacher domination as an unsuccessful approach but could not see any alternative. For example in teacher AA's case he talks about his class having

> ...lost interest and therefore I had to generate interest from the front of the classroom...it meant that I was dominating or trying to generate too much; but against that if I just left it to them and they didn't actually do the reading then I felt frustrated.

Some teachers also mentioned the reading around the class was not successful in that those pupils not reading quickly lost interest, the reading itself was often poor

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and did not aid understanding rather adding to pupils' frustration and difficulty with Shakespeare's language.

A Distinct Method for Teaching Shakespeare

Do teachers approach the teaching of Shakespeare in a significantly different way from the way that they teach other forms of English Literature? The teachers' response to this question when interviewed would at first glance appear to be "No". However, after a pause for thought, all of the teachers qualified their initial response and indicated ways that they did teach it differently. My analysis of their responses suggests that there are two significant areas of difference; that of the use of drama and that of the amount of detail and depth in which the text is explored.

Concerning drama, the three teachers who indicated this as a difference were saying that they employed more drama activities (including role play and hot-seating) than they did with other literature (including plays by other playwrights).

As teacher AB said,

> I used far more drama improvisation or controlled drama situations...because in my opinion drama is a most effective way of actually gaining the pupils' support in the activity and at the same time they enjoy it, and perhaps symbolically they are taking in Shakespeare without having it forced down their throats.

Four of the teachers said that they went into far more depth or detail when teaching Shakespeare than with other texts. For instance, teacher EA said,

> ...the teaching of Shakespeare was more detailed than if they were doing a novel...with 'Romeo and Juliet' I felt I had to be more detailed, break it down into smaller sections and be a little more detailed about the text itself, picking out language, picking out images.

THE SHAKESPEARE TEST

Teachers' Views

The teachers were asked what they had thought about the KS3 Shakespeare Test and whether anything surprised them about it.

All expressed their feelings strongly. One teacher, EA, objected to all KS3 Tests, but only one, AB, said that he liked and approved it. The others did not like or approve of the test. However, all said that they recognised some positive attributes of the test.

It was possible to identify two common areas of disapproval; the marking and the test's restrictive nature.

Concern was expressed about the quality of the external marking of the tests; the inconsistency and the lack of feedback to teachers as to why certain marks were or were not awarded.

A further objection was to the way that the test did not allow in its questions for a local response which could take account of the experiences, such as a theatre visit, or circumstances under which pupils studied Shakespeare, as was suggested by teacher DA,

> ...the best response for me came after seeing the production, and I think that was a very valid piece of writing, but the question in the test didn't allow them to maximise on that.

That the test could not accommodate such a response was interpreted as unfair to pupils by some teachers as those pupils were not given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of certain aspects of the play which the test itself, inadvertently or otherwise, did not focus upon or value.

The test was also criticised for restricting the teacher's scope as is clear in EA's response who reflected on the previous year when there wasn't a test and when,

> ...the class seemed more relaxed and we could actually spend longer developing various aspects of the work.

The teachers also recognised some positive aspects and advantages of the test. All of the teachers reported that on the day the content and structure of the test did not surprise them as it was much as the pilot and other examples had led them to expect. This reassured both them and their pupils.

The teachers were aware of the stresses and the anxieties that their pupils might go through during and before taking the test and utilised a number of strategies to alleviate such feelings in their pupils. One of the most common strategies was for the teacher to play down the importance of the test and the results; as teacher DB attested;

> I emphasised to them that the result of it wasn't at all important because the work they have done during the whole term is what we go on; and I try to play it down as much as I could so that they do not get too worried.

Or, as teacher EA said;

> ...some were worried about it and I said 'Look, don't worry about it, but do look on the positive side, it is good practice for KS4'.

Teacher BB's approach to it was highly pragmatic. He talked his pupils through the structure, timing and content of the test and summarised what he thought their attitude to the test should be, such as;

> ...work out how many words are available; work out how many minutes you have got; do a division. How many minutes have you got to earn a mark?

Perhaps as a result of these tactics and approaches, the teachers related, sometimes with surprise in their voices, how positively and calmly their pupils faced the test on the day. As teacher EA said; "I was surprised at how well they behaved; they were positive...they organised themselves."

Three of the teachers, all critical of the test, suggested ways in which they thought the test could be improved. They all suggested that its scope be broader to allow pupils more opportunity to display their knowledge and understanding of the play. Teacher BB commented;

> I think it would actually get a fairer view of how kids are doing if they were offered more choice; not just from making more plays available but actually in the ways the questions are put.

Pupils' Views

The pupils' views of the test were sought at interview after they had taken the test. Three questions were asked focusing on their experiences before, during and after the test.

When asked about their feelings just before the test, most pupils said that they were nervous; as with pupil CAA who responded, "I was more nervous about the Shakespeare one than the other one." Only one pupil said that she felt "OK" before the test but two others suggested that their nervousness was tempered with a reassuring confidence which was based on the work and preparation they had done earlier, as for example with pupil CAB, "I was quite nervous, but in another sense I was quite confident as well cos I thought I understood most of it."

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What then was causing or feeding the pupils' anxiety? Half of the pupils expressed a general sense that they thought it would be a hard or difficult test. To be more precise, their anxiety seemed to fall within two areas; *uncertainty* and *self-doubt*.

Uncertainty related to those responses where the pupils expressed feelings of worry of not knowing what the questions would be, the structure of the test and whether there would be sufficient time for them to complete the test.

As for *self-doubt*, some pupils worried that there might be some failing within themselves which could lead to them not doing well in the test, such as not knowing what to write or forgetting important parts of the play. Pupils EAB and BBA's responses were fairly typical here;

> I thought, "It's going to be reaiiy difficult... and I'm going to run out of time and I'm not going to think of how to explain myself properly." (EAB)

> I was really nervous. I kept thinking "I'm going to forget everything when I get in there...I'm not going to have enough time to finish it." (BBA)

Compared with the other parts of the English test, the Shakespeare questions do demand more from pupils' memory in terms of recall of scenes, plot and character, and therefore it does raise questions of fairness to all pupils knowing that whilst certain pupils are able to recall such information with ease others, particularly under examination conditions, are not.

When pupils were asked if anything surprised them about the test when they took it, two thirds of them from each class replied that there was nothing and went on to suggest that this was because they had been well prepared for the test beforehand and knew what to expect. Typical responses were;

> No. We had already gone through briefings and lessons, and our teacher had shown us the sheets. We had a good idea what we were going to do. (DAD)

> No. We knew about the general bit and what the questions were going to be so we were well prepared. (BBC)

Of those who responded that there were surprises, most of them said that the surprise was that the test was easier than they had expected as with the following two pupil responses;

> Yes. It did seem fairly easy. (EAB)

> I thought Shakespeare was meant to be harder but found the Shakespeare one quite easy - it seemed to be a lot easier. (AAB)

The two pupils for whom the test held an unwelcome surprise, one said that it was harder than expected whilst the other thought that the print could have been larger.

Overall, it would appear that the pupils had been well prepared and that their early worries, about the test being too difficult or that they wouldn't remember things were largely unfounded.

However, although most pupils said that the test contained few surprises, was not so difficult and that it was largely as they had expected, there were still some pupils (six) who admitted to worrying about how they had performed in the test afterwards. These pupils were concerned that they might not have explained themselves clearly, had made mistakes or had missed something out. In other words, their worries were about their own competence rather than the difficulty of the questions or the play. Pupils EAB and CAD provide fairly typical examples of this;

> Cos I had quite some time left I thought, "I probably haven't answered the questions right; I haven't explained myself properly." (EAB)

> I was worried about whether I did the right questions and that anybody else would understand what I put. (CAD)

On the other hand, most pupils said that they felt relieved and confident; "Quite confident" (DAA), "I was relieved it was over" (ABA), and "I was relieved it was over but I quite liked it" (DBB). This general post test confidence and optimism was further borne out in the pupils being asked how well they thought they had done in the test. Only three thought they had not done as well as they had expected, two were not sure but the rest thought that they had done well or satisfactorily.

In conclusion, it would appear that the pupils' early worries, about the test being too difficult or that they wouldn't remember things were largely unfounded, and that for most of the pupils the test was a positive experience in that during and after it they

felt that it had met or exceeded their expectations, that they felt they had done well and that they had been adequately prepared for it.

REASONS FOR TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

Teachers' Views

The teachers were asked what they thought was the reason for teaching Shakespeare to their Year 9 class. All suggested more than one reason but it was possible to group their reasons into three separate areas which I have called, *pragmatic, ideological* and *aesthetic.*

The first area, *pragmatic,* arose from three teachers responding to the question that they had to teach it to Year 9 because the government ordered them to do so. Only one of them agreed with this government mandate.

The second area, *ideological,* arose out of all of the teachers responding that the teaching of Shakespeare was now seen as a key part of English cultural heritage and a centrepiece of the English literary canon. Whilst all the teachers acknowledged cultural heritage as a determining factor in Shakespeare being taught at Key Stage 3, only AB gave it his full support;

> I give some support to the notion of Shakespeare producing important drama texts and that they are certain texts that should be read when you have control of what pupils read.

The others were more sceptical, if not cynical, and suggested that Shakespeare's inclusion was more to do with cultural fashion, hence DB suggesting that the need to teach it could be "...the spirit of the times, going back to roots as it were" and AA saying, "Shakespeare has come to be a sort of cultural snobbery...and he's become literary heritage."

The third area, *aesthetic* , which again all of the teachers subscribed to, arose from them giving reasons for teaching Shakespeare to this year group associated with Shakespeare's qualities as a dramatist and writer. AA spoke of the "richness" of Shakespeare's language, and CA and EA of Shakespeare's "challenging texts" which they felt pupils of this age needed to engage with. DA said that "...they (the pupils) can see him as a good story writer and somebody who is exciting on stage."

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REASONS FOR TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

Pupils' Views

When the pupils were asked a similar question as to why did they think that all pupils of their age had to study Shakespeare, they too gave a variety of reasons, but, unlike their teachers, none said that they had to because of government orders. However, their responses could be associated to some extent with the other two areas I assigned to the teachers' reasons.

For the ideological area, the pupils did not mention such words and phrases as "tradition" or "cultural heritage" which their teachers did, rather they talked in terms of "history" and "the past". Half of the pupils gave reasons within this area with responses such as;

> You have to get an idea of the history of English and how it was written. (DAE)

> They (Shakespeare's plays) are kind of the basis of English really. (BAM)

> You've got to learn about the past. (BAC)

> Because it's an important part of our history and it is something we need to learn about. (ABC)

Some pupils thought that not only was it important to study Shakespeare with reference to history, but stressed that it was also to learn what *language* used to be like and to be able to compare it with our own today. There could also be seen to be suggestions of pupils recognising that the study of Shakespeare is about promulgating Shakespeare as a cultural icon, as perhaps in this response from KRD; "Because it reflects to people that Shakespeare was a good writer." Five other pupils mentioned Shakespeare as a "good writer" or "successful playwright" as a reason.

These latter comments tie in with reasons given by some pupils that Shakespeare was studied because he was a good writer who could help them improve their own English.

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Finally in this section, five pupils said that they didn't know why Shakespeare should be studied with pupil DBB saying;

> ...because it's not useful when you get older and go for a job. It might be part of the National Curriculum but nobody's really explained why we have to do it.

MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings arising from my analysis of interviews with teachers and children are as follows:

- Teachers' enjoyment of teaching Shakespeare , as is supported in the earlier analysis of teachers' logs, is closely linked to the enjoyment, involvement and learning development of their pupils and is rarely connected with personal pleasure arising from the study of the text itself, and that the starting of lessons and activities was the most enjoyable part of the lessons.

- Pupil enjoyment of Shakespeare does not appear to be linked reciprocally to that of teachers' enjoyment but instead arises out of certain ways of working in the classroom (e.g. working in a group to explore the text), activities which promote both active learning where the text has to be transformed (e.g. into drama or an alternative written form) and the opportunity to experience visual interpretations of the text.

- The Key Stage 3 testing of Shakespeare was disliked by teachers and pupils, for the unnecessary pressure it put on pupils and (from teachers) for the way it took up so much curriculum time at the expense of other English aspects and for its restriction in not having the flexibility to allow pupils to display their full knowledge of and interest in Shakespeare.

- The language of Shakespeare was perceived as the greatest difficulty in studying Shakespeare by both teachers and pupils; in particular its remoteness and obscurity which prevented pupils from easily understanding either the whole text or smaller units of meaning. However, teachers and pupils both pointed to the attraction and challenge of the language.

- Pupils perceived their learning advancing through language development (pronunciation, vocabulary and an understanding of the way words change their meaning over time, their knowledge of Elizabethan life and times and the character and plot of the plays being studied).

- Teachers recognise the need to employ a range of teaching methods, strategies and approaches in order to suit the learning needs of all pupils, but that

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Shakespeare did appeal to all abilities and to both boys and girls in this age group and was relevant to their lives through its dealing with universal themes.

- A range of teaching approaches, methods and strategies was identified as successful by teachers, emphasising that group work was particularly effective in enabling pupils to interrogate, sometimes to dramatise, and reach an understanding of the text co-operatively.

- Too much teacher domination and intervention was recognised by the teachers as a danger to successful teaching of Shakespeare but that it was difficult to get the balance right.

- Whole class reading of the text was seen as a particularly unsuccessful method, a finding which is supported by data from the survey and classroom observations.

- The reasons teachers give for teaching Shakespeare to this age group are pragmatic (i.e. DFEE dictates that they have to), ideological (Shakespeare as an icon of British literary heritage) and aesthetic (the high quality of the texts). Whereas pupils did not offer any pragmatic reasons for being taught Shakespeare, they did propose similar ideological and aesthetic reasons.

- Ideologically, the teachers interviewed and observed have a tendency to progressivism with their child-centred approach in valuing the pupils' responses, interest and making sense of the text for themselves; their fear of directing pupils' learning too much and in their opposition to the compulsory testing at Key Stage 3.

KEY ISSUES

Following a careful consideration of the findings of this and previous chapters, three issues emerge which incorporate the majority of those findings;

- *The reasons why teachers teach Shakespeare in the English curriculum at Key Stage 3*
- *Strategies and activities for the teaching of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3*
- *The compulsory testing of Shakespeare at the end of Key Stage 3.*

These three key issues will be explored, through reference to this research and related research and literature, in the next, concluding, chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION: KEY ISSUES & IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TEACHING OF SHAKESPEARE AT KEY STAGE 3

As indicated in the previous chapter, this concluding chapter will explore each of the following three main issues arising out of the research;

- *The reasons why teachers teach Shakespeare (other than because they have to) in the English curriculum at Key Stage 3*
- *Strategies and activities for the teaching of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3*
- *The compulsory testing of Shakespeare at the end of Key Stage 3.*

This will be followed by a brief outline of implications for the teaching of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3 and a consideration of future research in this area.

REASONS FOR TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

Complying with the DFEE regulations for Key Stage 3 is the major reason why teachers teach Shakespeare in Year 9. Although there is a lack of hard evidence, from my own experience of teaching English in schools and from talking with teachers, until the teaching of Shakespeare was made compulsory, few English teachers taught Shakespeare in Year 9 or in the earlier years. It was felt that pupils were too young to appreciate the sophistication of Shakespeare at that age and that there were few texts, other than *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest* which were suitable (and the former two were commonly studied in Years 10 and 11 for GCSE). In the survey conducted, over 40% of teachers questioned said that Shakespeare should be removed from the Key Stage 3 curriculum. It should be remembered that from the mid 1970's until 1990 there was no compulsion to teach Shakespeare at any stage of secondary schooling other than for A level English Literature and that the variety of exam board syllabuses and the choices within them made it possible for teachers to avoid the teaching of Shakespeare, and that this might go some way to explain why some teachers shied away from wanting to teach Shakespeare at Key Stage 3. For experienced teachers, they might have had little recent experience of teaching Shakespeare for the reasons just given, and could be uneasy about how to approach a text with its given language difficulties with pupils of only 13 and 14 years of age with varying language skills and capabilities. New teachers, who might have themselves been at secondary school in the 1970's or 1980's, may well have had minimal (or poor) experience of being taught Shakespeare at school or at University (where it is possible to take a combined English degree which does not feature Shakespeare) and could be similarly anxious

about having to teach Shakespeare. The survey and interviews I conducted with teachers indicated that the reasons why teachers *would* teach Shakespeare to this age group included firstly the need for pupils to experience the work of a central figure in their cultural heritage; secondly for pupils to work with, appreciate and understand the richness of Shakespeare's language, and by so doing to enrich their own language and thirdly, because Shakespeare's work was thought by many to have universal value and appeal, it brought pupils in touch with important human relationships and feelings as well as with social, political and moral issues. Recent exponents and enthusiasts of teaching Shakespeare such as Rex Gibson and Peter Reynolds would argue that the study of Shakespeare can indeed engender such discussions in the classroom, but I would argue that although this might be true, given the choice, teachers would not initially reach for Shakespeare when they wanted to discuss certain issues as there are many texts available (drama, poetry, prose, fiction and non-fiction) which are more easily accessible, in terms of language and cultural and historical context, for pupils, but that they might well reach for Shakespeare if they wanted to discuss and bring to the attention of their pupils, the rich poetry of the language. In terms of models of English described by Dixon (1967), the responses given by the teachers in my research would suggest that they adhere to a mix of the cultural heritage, the personal growth and the skill models. Do these views and reasons given by the teachers questioned and interviewed in any way match with their practice?

In the classroom observations and follow-up interviews which I carried out, there was some evidence that teachers were occasionally emphasising Shakespeare's greatness as a cultural figure, as well as teaching Shakespeare in order to improve pupils' reading skills (and frequently their oral and writing skills) and to discuss social and moral (and occasionally political) issues. It was the former (Shakespeare as a major cultural figure) that was least visible and explicit in the classroom observations, but all the others were in much evidence. This evidence is consistent with that found by Goodwyn and Findlay (1999) and which was commented upon in Chapter One.

Concerning the improvement of pupils' skills in English, reading was predominantly targeted; in particular the skills needed to read a Shakespeare play, both actively (reading it aloud) and intellectually (reading for meaning). Here, teachers were seen to adopt various strategies including modelling, apprenticing and scaffolding, all of which will be defined and discussed at a later stage of this chapter.

The personal growth model associates the teaching of English with a civilising function (which in itself is borne out of the Arnold, Newbolt, Sampson, Leavis lineage), one which enhances a pupils' sense of morality and their understanding of society, how it works and their place in it. There is a sense of this in *English in the National Curriculum* (DFEE, 1995), Programme of Study, Reading where it states that "Plays selected should include works that: extend pupils' ideas and their *moral and emotional understanding*" (DFEE, 1995, p19). Shakespeare's plays bring many moral, social and political issues to the fore and teachers frequently gave evidence (in observations and in interview) for selecting certain issues (parent-sibling relationships and power, teenage love, suicide etc.), which would appear to have relevance to the world of the pupils, to be used as a basis and sounding board for discussion and debate. Pupils could consider the example given in the play and reflect upon that and compare it with their own beliefs and understandings and that of their peers thus extending their understanding and awareness. It is arguably healthy in any democratic society that such discussions should take place and that society's values and practices should be challenged, but from the evidence of the classroom observations the discussions tended to be limited to family and love relationships and rarely to larger political or power relationships. I saw no evidence of the plays being used, in a reconstructionist way, to challenge current established political or social values and practices in the way that writers such as Hawkes (1986 and 1992) and Dollimore and Sinfield (1985) propound.

Following the above and earlier discussions and considering that there was also a favouring amongst teachers surveyed, observed and interviewed of a child-centred, reader-response approach, one which recognises the importance of the pupil's interpretation and a belief in diverse readings and productions of any Shakespeare text (but which was carefully tempered by teacher interventions, directions and assertions in order that pupils' views and readings were within the parameters for interpretation implied in the Test papers), it would be possible to categorise the teachers ideologically as mainly progressivists. However, this is difficult for a number of reasons, notably for the limiting and narrowing effect of the Key Stage 3 Test on the scope of teachers' autonomy to choose certain approaches and methods (which will be discussed more fully later in this chapter). When the wide range of approaches, methods and techniques employed by teachers for teaching Shakespeare, in this research project, is considered, it could again be interpreted as largely progressivist, but it could also be interpreted, perhaps cynically, as merely pragmatic in that teachers realise that such a range of methods and techniques is necessary and expedient in order to unlock such difficult texts for pupils, allow for

varied perspectives on the play, to keep the pupils interested and which also meets the narrow demands of the Key Stage 3 test (see also later in this chapter, *impact on classroom practice*).

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE TEACHING OF SHAKESPEARE AT KS3

The two most recently introduced and compulsory changes to affect the English curriculum in schools are the inclusion and testing of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3 and the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and its constituent Literacy Hour in Key Stages 1 and 2. This Literacy Strategy does not, as yet, extend fully and formally to Key Stage 3, but a number of secondary schools (one of which, School D was the subject of this research) have introduced Summer Literacy Schools for those Year 6 pupils who are transferring to the secondary school with literacy difficulties, and have introduced their own Literacy Hour into Year 7 and are developing literacy strategies for that key stage. This is not only a recognition that the literacy achievements of the pupils they receive from primary schools need to be built upon, but that pupil literacy difficulties and development could well benefit from a more systematic targeting in the secondary school. In my exploration of this first key issue, I will suggest that successful strategies for the teaching of Shakespeare are consistent with practices which are held to improve and develop literacy.

Here, I need to explain what I mean by literacy. It has been argued for some years now (see Graff 1987, Meek 1991, Wray 1994, Cairney 1995) that there is not a single literacy combining reading and writing but a plurality of literacies which include such areas of knowledge and learning as computing, visual arts and the media. Richardson (1998, p118) contends, for instance, that school literacy is one distinct form of literacy, and whilst I follow his argument I side with Halliday (1996) and Kress (1997) who argue that literacy should continue to mean reading and writing. Referring to what others want to include as literacy, Halliday writes, "The problem is that if we call all of these things literacy, then we shall have to find another term for what we called literacy before; because it is still necessary to distinguish reading and writing practices from listening and speaking practices" (Halliday, 1996, p 341), and Kress adds that if literacy is pluralised to include other modes of communication other than language then it devalues the term literacy "so that it comes to mean nothing much more than a skill or competence" (Kress, 1997, p115). Therefore for the purpose of the ensuing discussion, arising out of my analysis of research into the teaching of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3, when I mention literacy I will be referring to

its traditional conception of reading and writing. Furthermore, my concern will not be with functional literacy which Mackie defines as the acquisition of those skills which "are adequate for carrying out those actions required of them by their society" (Mackie,1980, p47) but with a developing literacy which requires and encourages a more critical and reflective interpretation of texts and their cultures.

When contemplating the main findings of my research together with research into literacy and other relevant literature, it became apparent that those strategies and activities which were successful (in the eyes of the pupils and the teachers as well as the researcher) for the teaching of Shakespeare, shared features which were recognisable in the literacy research literature as being essential elements in the development of literacy. Those elements were *motivation, collaboration, context* and *metacognition*, and the subsequent part of this discussion will address each of those elements in turn.

Motivation

It would seem to go without saying that in order for a pupil to develop as a reader in school and in particular to make progress with a Shakespeare text he/she needs to be motivated. From the classroom observations and interviews with pupils and teachers carried out as part of this research, it was evident that many pupils were motivated by and enjoyed lessons on Shakespeare. It is likely, and was apparent in my own research, that a teacher's enthusiasm can be a motivator, but what else was it about Shakespeare and those lessons which motivated them?

First, I believe that Shakespeare has become more appealing to young people recently, mainly through his increasingly high status, prominence and profile in our society (education and the media in particular) which has seeped down from high culture and has infiltrated much of our popular and everyday culture (T-shirts, coffee mugs, banknotes etc.) and is notably and recently evident in the increased number of new and popular films of Shakespeare plays (directed by such as Branagh, Nunn and Noble). One such film, *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Baz Luhrmann, was very popular with teenagers; no doubt partly through the appealing depiction of Romeo by teenage heart-throb Leonardo Di Caprio and the modern setting of the text, but also through the appeal of the story itself; after all, Zeffirelli's 1968 version of the same play has remained a firm classroom favourite with teachers and pupils. In addition, my research suggested that Shakespeare's reputation amongst the pupils was high and that many of those interviewed regarded Shakespeare as an important cultural figure in our society and one whose work had to be tackled as a necessary part of an

individual's cultural growth and credibility; to "have done Shakespeare" was a significant achievement. However, studying and understanding a Shakespeare play is not an easy achievement for any pupil and therein lies another important motivating factor; challenge.

Gunther Kress makes the important point that nowadays much written material (documents, questionnaires, pamphlets etc.) are now more accessible and reader friendly demanding less effort from the reader but "in requiring less effort they have the effect of weaning us away from effort" (Kress, 1997, p6). I would add that much of the recent canon of secondary school literature (e.g. Kes, Talking in Whispers, Buddy etc.) also demands little effort from most pupil readers and does not challenge or extend their literacy. David Wray supports the need for challenge in literacy practice and in "making sure that children's need to be intellectually stimulated is satisfied" (Wray, 1994, p118), whilst Vygotsky firmly believed that teaching should be targeted above a pupil's developmental level as "the only 'good' learning is that in advance of development" (Vygotsky, 1962, p98). A Shakespeare text is challenging in a number of ways. It is challenging because of the difficulty of the language. It is challenging because it is a distinct form within the genre of playtexts, both of which pupils would not be as familiar with as they would with prose genres. In English for Ages 5 to 16 (DES, 1989, 7.17) it is asserted that pupils need challenge in the literature they study in order that their own language and thinking is extended. The Shakespeare texts are also challenging in that the world they depict is distant and unfamiliar in terms of many of its ideas and beliefs, cultural and social practices and history.

However, challenges can be too demanding and unattainable, and can easily demotivate the learner and lead to failure. This is a distinct possibility when pupils are confronted with Shakespeare if it is not presented to them skilfully and sensitively and if the tasks and processes the pupils will encounter are not thoughtfully planned and prepared, with the teacher showing keen awareness of the abilities and prior literary and literacy experiences of his/her pupils.

It is, I will suggest, through a consideration and choice and variety of activities and strategies together with awareness of the remaining elements of collaboration, context and metacognition that pupil motivation can be maintained at a level sufficient to stimulate but not to overwhelm pupils.

Collaboration

By using the term 'collaboration' I mean those learning strategies which deliberately or otherwise, when organised in the classroom allow pupils to work with others (teachers, peers etc.) in order to tackle and achieve a learning task. In practice, this can be manifested in a number of ways; pupils working in pairs, small or large groups; pupils working with the teacher or classroom assistant. It can involve sedentary work or active drama.

The theoretical argument for the benefits of collaboration appears to have its roots in the work of Vygotsky in particular, following his concept of the *zone of proximal development* whereby the learner learns by being assisted or guided by another whose skills and understanding of the subject under consideration are sufficiently but not excessively in advance of the learner's. When applied to the development of literacy, collaborative strategies would include *scaffolding*, where the teacher or a peer helps the learner by doing what the learner could not do at first and then allowing and encouraging the learner to take over gradually parts of the process or task as the confidence and ability of the learner determine; *modelling*, which is usually a more distanced approach than scaffolding, and which involves the teacher in modelling the reading skill or behaviour for the learner/s to follow and eventually to attempt and adopt; and *apprenticing*, which combines elements of the former strategies whereby the learners are active in their learning from "observing and participating with peers or more skilled members of their society" (Rogoff, 1990, p 7). In the classroom research carried out, I observed variations on all three collaborative practices referred to above. Pupils frequently worked in pairs or small groups, but collaboration was often left to chance; in the sense that when teachers paired up or grouped pupils together in order to work on part of the text, they rarely did so with any particular consideration for the varying reading skills and capabilities of the pupils in that grouping. Similarly, when and where a teacher could give guidance and assistance (either to individuals or to a pair/group) was often down to the confidence and assertion of one pupil to make the initial approach to that teacher. If the teachers had deliberately and systematically planned and organised scaffolding or apprenticing which acknowledged the understanding and reading skills of the pupils, it might have been even more effective. On the other hand, I witnessed many excellent examples of teachers modelling reading skills and behaviours with their pupils. This was always planned and often took the form of the teachers reading the text aloud in a dramatic fashion whilst the pupils followed or sometimes the teacher physically enacted part of the text (often with the assistance of pupils), demonstrating how the text can be interpreted vocally, visually and physically - essential in the study

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of a Shakespeare play which was written to be performed. Occasionally I observed instances of the teacher directing pupils in a scene from the play, and once a most exciting lesson where the whole class was involved in enacting a scene from *Romeo and Juliet* where some of the pupils were the actors and the others were directors for each actor and where the teacher acted as a model and a coach to the directors making suggestions and giving examples of appropriate and effective directions. There exist many excellent published resources for teachers of not only generic collaborative strategies for use when teaching Shakespeare (Little 1998, Gibson1997 & 1998) but also collaborative strategies for specific Shakespeare texts such as the *Cambridge Shakespeare* series edited by Rex Gibson and the various NATE publications.

Context

In order to help pupils gain an understanding of a Shakespeare text it needs to be contextualised, for there are few facets of the text with which most Key Stage 3 pupils would be at all familiar. At one level there are the wider social, historical, epistemological, religious and political contexts which surround and inform the text. Referring not to Shakespeare but to any text which readers in schools might encounter, Brody (1994, pp73-79) emphasises the importance for developing literacy, of readers having or obtaining relevant and clear background knowledge of a text so that the reader can build a robust schema which can then more readily accommodate the new text and construct a "meaningful text schema" (Brody, 1994, p77). She contends that research has shown that "Readers who possess accurate and relevant knowledge concerning a new text understand it better than those who possess inaccurate/tangential knowledge" (Brody, 1994, p77). Margaret Meek discusses how the meaning of texts change over the course of time and asserts that there is a need, and I would argue particularly for a Shakespeare text, to learn the contexts and conventions of how certain discourses work (Meek, 1991, p 35). It follows, of course, that decisions as to the amount and extent of that background context would have to be made by teachers, acknowledging time constraints and the capabilities of their pupils, but from the research carried out this wider context was often given directly by teachers as part of the introduction to Shakespeare and the text to be studied, or indirectly through the video or film of the playtext being studied, so that pupils would have some understanding of that other Elizabethan world. At another level there would be occasions when the need for context would arise from the direct study of part of the text, and here there are connections with the first level of Freire's *critical reading*, whereby, according to Roberts (1998, p111), there needs to be a "constant interplay between text and context" which not only allows the reader to contextualise

the historical or political background and influences upon the text and author but also allows the reader to reconsider her/his own world. To some extent, this need to contextualise has grown out of the work of those involved in what has been termed *reader-response theory* and in particular the work of Wolfgang Iser. Iser (1978) argues that there are 'gaps' in all texts which the reader is invited to fill. These gaps might point at one level to the wider social, historical epistemological etc. context of the text or to the other level of the closer narrative and character elements or to the literary conventions of the text. From the research, teachers were seen to employ a variety of effective contextual links and strategies. One such set of strategies I termed *modernising* (see Chapter 4). Sometimes these strategies would be apparent in the ways teachers adopted the modern vernacular when talking about and interpreting the text. For instance, one teacher when recapping a previous lesson on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* said to the class, "Last week we looked at the characters and other different groups. Dad has laid down the law. Theseus says, 'Yes, Hermia, the chips are down; I agree with your Dad." Another strategy would be when the teacher drew parallels between events, relationships, characters or themes in the play with similar features in the community or in the local or national news or in TV programmes. A further, very commonly used contextual strategy, was for the teacher to use other media representations of the text (most commonly video and film but occasionally audio tape and comic books) to bridge the gap, one that is singular to playtexts; that of the gap between what is scripted and what is performed. This strategy would seem to assist pupils in getting a grasp of the larger picture of the Shakespeare text; an understanding of the basic plot, main characters and also of the visual and kinetic dimensions of the playtext which are sometimes indicated explicitly through stage directions in modern playtexts but seldom in Shakespeare, and which without the aid of some form of visual representation (theatre, video etc.) would require particular and sophisticated reading skills to unearth. I would argue, most KS3 pupils would not possess such skills, being unfamiliar with this type of text. Once pupils have gained a sense of the larger picture of the text, many of those whom I observed and interviewed then found it easier to deal with the smaller pictures within the text; individual scenes, character dialogues, soliloquies and speeches. There would then be something concrete for their imaginations to see and hold onto and build upon as they read. This ability to picture in the mind's eye what the text is suggesting could be happening on stage is a very important facility to develop and it would be hoped that this (which is a commonly found in readers engaging with fictional prose texts which generally have more explicit and implicit contextual indicators than do playtexts and Shakespeare in particular) could then be developed for pupils to employ more readily with other playtexts.

Metacognition

Metacognition, or thinking about thinking, has been considered in relation to research into and understanding of reading for a number of years (it can be traced back to Vygotsky and also to reader-response theorists). David Wray (1994) has been instrumental in this country for gathering and synthesising research into metacognition in reading from various countries. This research suggests that the development in pupils of an awareness of their own literacy, their own reading and thinking processes, is likely to lead to an enhancement of their own literacy, and that there are positive steps which can be taken towards furthering this awareness (Wray 1994, p121). There have been developed numerous strategies and activities which teachers can employ to encourage metacognition in reading, ranging from reading logs (with targeted prompts or questions) to 'think diaries' and the explication of self-interrogation techniques, many of which can be applied to the study and reading of a Shakespeare text (as can be found, for example, in Hackman's *Responding in Writing* (1987). Such activities were not evident in my own research into classrooms where Shakespeare was being taught. Such activities with supporting resources, were first introduced into English classrooms in the secondary school in the 1980's and it is unclear why their use has diminished - perhaps it reflects the increased paper work which teachers are now involved in; perhaps the strictures of the curriculum at all stages whereby there is less scope for teachers to develop their own as there is more emphasis on examinations and less on coursework; and perhaps the introduction in the late 1980's and early 1990's of pupil profiling across the curriculum which encouraged pupils to reflect upon their learning and development in all subjects, but which in practice is often carried out perfunctorily and with little concern for detail and response to an individual piece of work.

THE COMPULSORY TESTING OF SHAKESPEARE AT KS3

The survey I carried out indicated (see Chapter Three) that 90% of the English teachers questioned were opposed to written examinations to assess pupils' understanding of Shakespeare at the end of Key Stage 3. In my discussion of those findings I expressed my uncertainty as to the reason for this opposition, whether for instance it was simply a reaction to externally imposed change or something more deep-seated. Since then, other research on the same subject has been carried out. Two major projects, one carried out by the University of Exeter and sponsored by SCAA evaluating the Key Stage 3 assessment arrangements for 1996 (University of

Exeter, 1997), and one joint study by the National Association of English Teachers, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers and the Association of Teachers of Mathematics (Moss and Pope, 1998) evaluating the Key Stage 3 Tests in English and Mathematics, both found that English teachers were still opposed to the testing of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3. The Exeter project, for example, found that 60% of teachers "made it clear that they would prefer Shakespeare to be assessed through statutory teacher assessment," and although "there was a strong indication in 1995 that many teachers were unhappy about Paper 2 (the Shakespeare Paper) and would prefer to assess Shakespeare through coursework, we did not ask them about this in the 1996 questions. However, 30% of the teachers took this question of validity as the opportunity, unsolicited, to call for the demise of Paper 2 altogether" (University of Exeter, 1997, p78).

From a consideration of my own research and that of others, I believe that there are four major areas of concern about the compulsory testing of Shakespeare at the end of Key Stage 3;
* *its restricting effect on the English curriculum*
* *its effects on pupils' learning*
* *its impact on classroom practice*
* *its purpose and validity*

The restricting effect of the Test on the English curriculum
From the survey I conducted (see Chapter Three), it appeared that in Year 9 none of the teachers spent less than half a term teaching Shakespeare and half of them spent one term or longer. Just on this evidence alone, there must be concern that with so much classroom time being devoted to the teaching of Shakespeare in this one year it is likely that other important aspects of the English curriculum are being squeezed or ignored. Commenting on the results of surveys carried out by the NUT and the ATL into the operation and effects of end of Key Stage assessments, Terry Furlong found that "The teaching and preparation of the Shakespeare play took up a wholly disproportionate amount of curriculum time in Year 9" (Furlong, 1995, pp11,12) with teachers not able to spend sufficient time on other important aspects of English such as poetry, fiction, media etc. Similarly in the NATE/ATL/ATM survey, "Respondents suggest that the narrowing of the curriculum caused by the tests means that they do not reflect the full extent of pupils' abilities in English or the full requirements of the National Curriculum" (Moss and Pope, 1998, p 10). The Exeter survey comes to a similar conclusion; "The effect of Shakespeare being studied for the test is a narrowing of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, particularly in Year 9"

(University of Exeter, 1997, p31). In QCA's own survey of the 1998 Test, they mention that "Many schools reported that they felt obliged to devote a significant proportion of the year 9 curriculum to teaching Shakespeare, with resulting lack of breadth and balance to the English experience as a whole." (QCA 1998, p27). This purported narrowing of the curriculum is to be regretted and it can be seen to be working against the Programme of Study for Reading in the National Curriculum in English with its aims to encourage pupils to wider reading; "the main emphasis should be on the encouragement of wider reading in order to develop independent, responsive and enthusiastic readers" (DFEE, 1995, p19). It also privileges those pupils who, through their family and culture already have access to Shakespeare, and disadvantages those who do not; emphasising the idea of cultural capital. Furthermore, Debra Myhill argues that, "Within a very narrow curriculum there is not the freedom to ensure that the literature and language upon which children will be tested is both accessible and relevant" (Myhil, 1993, p20). Or as Chris Davies points out referring to the value of English to young people at Key Stage 3 in their struggle to make sense of the world, "English has a very special role to play here but there is currently very little prospect of that happening if there is only time for *Romeo and Juliet*" (Davies, 1996, p 47).

The restrictions considered above on the curriculum for English at Key Stage 3, also appear to have a restrictive effect and influence on both pupils' learning of and responses to Shakespeare and on how Shakespeare is taught in the Year 9 classroom.

The effects of the Test on pupil's learning and impact on classroom practice
In my observation into classrooms of the teaching of Shakespeare in Year 9, it was evident that the teachers' main objectives for pupils' understanding of Shakespeare were focused on character and plot and, to a lesser extent, themes. On the other hand there was far less evidence of exploration or discussion of the theatricality of the plays, their historical or political contexts or their language devices. The tests have minimised or completely ignored these latter aspects too, concentrating rather on questions which highlight character, scene structure and occasionally performance. The NATE/ATL/ATM survey identified four types of questions on the 1998 paper; "traditional 'O level type' analytical questions on character; similar questions on scenic structure; character empathy questions; and directorial practice questions." (Moss and Pope, 1998, p 15). My own analysis of the papers from 1993 to 1999 confirms their analysis of that paper and finds that the categories can be utilised to include all of the questions on the Shakespeare Paper from the other years

as well. There then arise implications as to how pupils are prepared for the test. The first two types, traditional O level type on character and scenic structure, could be considered together as requiring a similar desk-bound approach, but the other two, character empathy and directorial practice, would require separate and a more active preparation and approach. Having said that, however, some of the latter two types of questions (e.g. 1995, Paper 2 tasks 3 and 5) are worded in such a way to allow pupils to respond in a more traditional way if they wish, rather than writing empathetically or directorially. Looking at all five years' papers, the number of questions categorised as traditional O level type questions (character only) account for 50% of the total. The rest were almost equally divided between the other three. If the traditional character questions and the traditional scenic structure questions are added together the result is that 75% of the questions in the four years' papers can be categorised as of the traditional O level type. Furthermore, if the traditional character questions are added to the character empathy questions again it amounts to 75% of all questions being character based. Teachers will only study one of the three set plays, with two questions on each, and it is interesting to note that the analysis of the questions show that there will always be one question at least on character and that although it is likely to be traditional it might not be (as in the questions on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the 1998 paper). It is also interesting to note that *Julius Caesar* attracts far more traditional questions (75%) than any other play and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the least (but still 40%). The fact then that the traditional question and those based on character are more than twice as likely to arise than others, would not have escaped the notice of many English teachers and could suggest that they could be inclined to hedge their bets, play safe and give most of the time for the preparation for the test to the traditional type and with a focus on character. When discussing how contexts can and should influence a pupil's response to interpretation of a piece of literature, Macken-Hovarik makes the point that "In the examination context their (*the pupils'*) response needs to be aligned with the interests and agendas of those 'in charge' of the examinations" (Macken-Hovarik 1998, p79). If this happens, and there is evidence from the Exeter report to suggest it does (University of Exeter, 1997, p29), then it is likely to engender a more passive, desk bound and line-by-line approach to the test resulting in a possible narrowing and restricting of teaching and learning activities, with, for instance, minimal opportunity for pupils to explore Shakespeare in performance or how the text can be transformed which the other types of question encourage. The Exeter report highlights the "high number of convergent readings of the set plays" and points to "a lack of adventurousness in interpretation and response, and a degree of convergence which is unusual even in examination conditions" (University of Exeter, 1997, p29). These findings jar with the

Programme of Study for Reading which state that when pupils study Shakespeare they "should be encouraged to appreciate the distinctive qualities of these works through activities that emphasise the interest and pleasure of reading them rather than necessitating a detailed line-by-line study" (DFEE, 1995, p20). The Exeter report also suggests that by setting the scenes prior to the test it does in fact encourage such a line-by-line approach. John Yandell, having considered from his point of view as a Head of English how much the test stifles what the plays can show in performance, comments that, "When the complex interplay of reader, text and context is reduced to the sterile procedures of the exam, both the text and reader lose their power" (Yandell, 1995, p5). In the ATL and NUT surveys, a further unwelcome impact of the test on pupil learning was that the "results effectively demotivated many pupils, particularly the most and least able" (Furlong, 1995, p12). It would also seem to follow that if the tests restrict the quality, content and amount of learning that can take place, then it is likely that the pedagogy is similarly restricted.

As has been mentioned earlier in this section, the effect of the compulsory test at the end of the Key Stage has resulted in classroom practice being changed to include much preparation for the test itself. In my own observations, the teachers mentioned the test early on in the course (often at the start) and preparations would often be interspersed throughout with a major drive happening in the couple of weeks immediately prior to the test. The impact of the test can result in classroom practice being restricted and less varied.

QCA's survey of the 1998 Test revealed that "Over half the respondents considered that the key stage 3 tests had 'substantially influenced' their approach to teaching and learning" (QCA, 1998, p27). In the NATE/ATL/ATM survey, 90% of teachers reported that they were under pressure to teach to the test (Moss and Pope, 1998, p 9), and these findings are matched by similar ones in the Exeter report where teachers "talk about 'teaching to the test' because the work they find they have to concentrate on to prepare pupils is not the kind of work they would normally want to be doing with them" (University of Exeter, 1997, pp 97,98). Furthermore, the NATE/ATL/ATM survey finds that 79% of teachers reported that their teaching styles had changed and that some were teaching in ways inappropriate for their pupils. These teachers, according to the report, blamed the content of the test papers as not promoting good practice, and in research carried out by Andrew Stibbs, he found teachers saying that they felt "obliged to drive pupils word by word through the Key Stage 3 test scenes" (Stibbs, 1998, p 242) despite their wishing to teach it more actively and dramatically. The Exeter report indicated that the change in practice as

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a result of the test meant that whole class teaching and note taking "was replacing the dramaturgical approach favoured by the majority of English teachers" (University of Exeter, 1997, p98). Consequently, because teachers were being driven to teach in a way which did not match either the aims of the Programmes of Study for Reading nor the teachers' preferred methods for teaching Shakespeare, "teachers experience a loss of control over their professional practice" (University of Exeter, 1997, p99).

The purpose and validity of the test

The precise purpose of the written test for Shakespeare at the end of Key Stage 3 is not clear. Is it, as Anne Barnes suggests, "a curricular police check to make sure that Shakespeare really is studied in the Key Stage 3 classroom?" (Barnes, 1996, p I). Certainly there is evidence to suggest that ideologically, particularly for the last twenty five years, there have been increasing moves by government to exert central control upon the English curriculum with the introduction of the first statutory National Curriculum in English in 1990 (DES, 1990) and then its revised version (which mandated that Shakespeare had to be taught at Key Stage 3) in 1995 (DFEE, 1995). At the same time there was an equally powerful drive, based on an underlying mistrust of teachers' and exam boards' assessment practices, to make the assessment system more consistent across the country and between schools. This had many effects including the reduction and amalgamation of exam boards and the move away from coursework and teacher assessment to externally assessed examinations.

The purpose of the written test in Shakespeare could be considered as the need to assess reading, but that is already tested in Paper One at the end of Key Stage 3, where pupils are asked to read a previously unseen passage, and which assesses their understanding and response and their close reading. According to Terry Furlong (1995, p13) SCAA (now QCA) justified the Shakespeare test in that "unlike the 'unseen' reading materials in Paper One, the Shakespeare test is a test of pupils' pre-reading of a named text." One can only presume that the text has to be Shakespeare because Shakespeare is the only writer named for compulsory study at Key Stages 3 and 4. But to attempt to understand pupils' understanding of a Shakespeare text through written examination is to misunderstand the nature of the text, which demands active engagement by the 'reader' and, some would argue, an active response.

The point also needs to be reinforced that the prominence of the test in assessment terms at Key Stage 3 is grossly imbalanced and favours teachers and pupils who give

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more time and effort to the studying of Shakespeare above any other aspect of the English curriculum. The test papers are weighted so that there is almost 80% for AT2, Reading, and only slightly over 20% for AT3, Writing, and of course no testing of AT1, Speaking and Listening, at all. That Shakespeare itself should take up such a high proportion (almost 50%) of those Reading marks adds to the judging of the system for assessing English at Key Stage 3 as unbalanced and unfair, a point which is readily admitted in the Exeter report; "In neither the Programme of Study nor the level descriptions for Reading is there any indication that Shakespeare...should gain such a high priority" (University of Exeter, 1997, p 14).

Alternatives to the Shakespeare Test

If, as argued above, the Key Stage 3 Shakespeare Test is unbalanced and unfair in terms of its weighting and validity, what are the alternatives?

In my own research, teachers expressed a preference for Shakespeare to be assessed through coursework in class, where pupils could respond to their experiences of Shakespeare both inside and outside the classroom (for instance, a visit to see a performance of the chosen play at a local theatre), a point and recommendation which is also made in the Exeter report, "the transfer of the assessment of Shakespeare to teacher assessment, would allow for pupils to be assessed orally, and would permit the assessment to be more effectively placed in the context of teaching learning" (University of Exeter, 1997, p31). In the Exeter report, the NATE/ATM/ATL survey and the NUT and ATL surveys, all comment that the majority of teachers wanted the abandonment of the test. In the latter report, 30% of teachers preferred that the test should be replaced with a coursework assignment, whilst 60% preferred that Shakespeare should be assessed through statutory teacher assessment (University of Exeter 1997, p78). This replacement by teacher assessment is supported in all of the other surveys previously mentioned. In the NATE/ATM/ATL survey, the valid point is made that, "It is acceptable to use teacher assessment to test Shakespeare at Key Stage 4 and that clearly renders invalid any arguments that a standardised test is necessary at Key Stage 3 (Moss and Pope, 1998 p12). Furlong (1995, p12) argues that teacher assessment would give teachers increased flexibility for planning their Key Stage 3 schemes of work, and picking up on the recommendations in the ATL and NUT surveys, he suggests (1995, p12) that the money now spent on the administration, publication, dissemination and marking of the test could be transferred to supporting and standardising teacher assessment.

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It must be remembered that in the Exeter report, the NATE/ATM/ATL survey and the NUT and ATL surveys, all report that the majority of teachers wanted the abandonment of the test. To replace the test with another formal assessment which would continue to give undue priority to Shakespeare above the rest of the English curriculum, would still leave the purpose of such assessment unanswered and needing to be questioned.

To sum up this section, it would appear that there is powerful evidence that the testing of Shakespeare at the end of Key Stage 3 is having a remarkably restricting influence and impact upon the English curriculum, pupils' learning about and understanding of Shakespeare and the variety of teaching methods which teachers might choose and prefer to employ, and that the purpose and validity of the test must be in question as they do not match the aims of the POS for Reading and give undue weighting to a single element of the National Curriculum in English for Key Stage 3. The continuation of the Shakespeare paper in the test under such a barrage of critical evidence is untenable and it is likely that QCA will bow to pressure from its own research findings and English professional bodies and consider instead some of the alternatives suggested.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This research does, I believe, have implications for classroom practice for the teaching of Shakespeare, particularly at Key Stage 3, and they are as follows:

1   That teaching Shakespeare, despite some teachers' reluctance to teach Shakespeare to this age group, can motivate pupils and provide them with a challenging text which can stimulate their interest not only in Shakespeare but in language and contribute to the development of their school reading literacy.

2   That in the teaching of Shakespeare, teacher practice and pupil learning can be, and frequently is, inhibited and restricted by the presence and demands of the compulsory test in Shakespeare at the end of Key Stage 3.

3   That collaborative strategies for the way in which pupils work with their peers, their teacher and other adults need to be carefully considered and planned. This would include the composition and size of groups of pupils working on a task and when and how the teacher would use scaffolding, apprenticing and modelling.

4   That the choice of the edition of a Shakespeare play can help or hinder pupils' learning. For instance, an unannotated text provides no contextual or linguistic help for pupils and consequently places a heavy responsibility upon the teacher. On the other hand, there are other editions which provide attractive and accessible linguistic and contextual help for the pupils which will remove some of the responsibility from the teacher and can encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning.

5   That pupils' learning can benefit from activities and approaches which help to contextualise aspects of Shakespeare's text and would include those which bridge the gap and provide tangible parallels between Shakespeare's text and times and the pupils'; those (such as watching a performance of a play, a video version of a play, the teacher modelling a reading) which assist pupils' understanding of the characteristics of Shakespeare's plays, their visual and kinetic dimensions and to ways of reading such a text; and those (such as plot summary and recap) which help locate the smaller elements of the text (e.g. scene or speech) in the whole. In the majority of cases where, in this research, pupils were observed watching a video versions of a Shakespeare play, the pupils were placed in a passive and undirected role. If pupils are to take advantage of this visual representation of the Shakespeare script and to have their learning developed by such an experience, teachers would need to consider carefully how they prepare their pupils to adopt a more active and interrogative role when watching a video. The experience should be directed by the teacher to provide a focus or focuses for the pupils' viewing and to be as interactive as possible. For example, pupils could be asked beforehand to be ready to note such aspects as costume and setting, the use of camera shots and lighting to suggest character, mood and relationships, where a script had been cut etc. and to signal to the teacher to pause the video to make a particular point. Once a class is familiar with this interrogative method of viewing, the teacher can ask the pupils to generate questions and focuses before viewing.

6   That pupils' understanding of Shakespeare and of their own learning and literacy can be enhanced and reinforced through the use of metacognitive activities such as reading logs.

7   That pupils' enjoyment of and involvement in Shakespeare can be deepened
and extended if a substantial number of the activities are active (e.g. pupil
performance and direction) and involve the transformation of the text being studied
(e.g. re-writing and re-casting a scene as a film script). Transforming a scene into a
film script, a story board or a newspaper article involves pupils first of all in a careful
consideration of Shakespeare's language before actively transforming it into the
images or another written genre that the new medium demands. This
transformational method also helps pupils to seek the relevance between the play
and their own world and to embody the language and ideas of Shakespeare in more
contemporary, and therefore familiar, language.

If teachers are to treat the play as a script they would need to involve pupils in the
role of director as well as actor. The directorial role would need to be explored with
pupils so that they became aware that it was not a totally didactic and authoritarian
role, but one which involved discussion and negotiation with the actors about such
aspects as staging, character relationships and the physical interpretation of lines. If
the class is new to directing, it would be important for the teacher to model directorial
practise when working on a scene with either the whole class or a group. The next
stage could be for some pupils, working in small groups on a scene or part of a
scene, to take on the role of the director under the teacher's guidance who scaffolds
their learning. The final stage could be for the pupils to direct their fellow pupils
(again in small groups), allowing the teacher to adopt the role of assessor.

APPENDIX ONE

LETTERS TO SCHOOLS

«name»
«address»

9th February 1994

Dear «Dear»

I am currently researching into the teaching of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3 and would be grateful if you would grant me permission to contact your Head of English so that I may ask if s/he could fill out a short questionnaire on the subject. If you are happy for me to do this would you kindly complete the attached slip and return it in the enclosed s.a.e.

Yours sincerely

Rob Batho   (Senior Lecturer and Co-ordinator of Secondary PGCE Programme)

....

School...
.

I am willing/unwilling* for you to contact the school's Head of English, Ms/Mrs/Mr*..........
to invite them to fill out a questionnaire concerned with the teaching of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3.

Signed

Date

Dear

I am conducting a survey into the **teaching of Shakespeare in secondary schools** in West Sussex and Hampshire as part of some research I am doing towards an M.Phil./PhD. at Southampton University. My interest in the subject started when I began teaching English in schools twenty years ago and I have since followed the changes in the teaching of Shakespeare through such developments as O level Cambridge Plain Text , GCSE English Lit. and AEB 660 A level English. In the last two years in particular, you will be very well aware that with the introduction of KS3 testing and the introduction of Shakespeare as a compulsory element in the National Curriculum for English it has been one of the main focuses in the continuing debate about the teaching of English.

I would be most grateful if you and one of your colleagues in the English Department would be willing to contribute to the survey by completing a questionnaire that I have devised. I enclose two copies of the questionnaire together with two s.a.e.'s in which to return them to me. All responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Batho   PGCE English Co-ordinator

18 April 1994

Dear

In the middle of March this year I sent you two questionnaires on the teaching of Shakespeare in Schools for you and one of your colleagues to fill in and return to me. This is simply to thank you if you have done so, but to ask you, if you haven't, if you and your colleague would be kind enough to complete them and send to me at the college.

In anticipation of your co-operation, many thanks.

Yours sincerely

Rob Batho   (PGCE English Co-ordinator)

«Name»
«Address»

4th October 1994

Dear «Dear»

Earlier this year, you and a member of your English Department kindly completed a questionnaire that I sent you as part of my research into the teaching of Shakespeare in secondary schools. I have carried out an initial analysis of the questionnaire data (which I'd be happy to share with you when next we meet) and am now ready to start the second phase of my research that will concentrate on the teaching of Shakespeare at KS3. This phase will involve me in interviewing teachers who will be teaching Shakespeare to Y9 this academic year and observing a few of their Y9 Shakespeare lessons and interviewing some of the Y9 pupils who will be involved in those lessons. At a later stage I hope to publish an account of this research and you can be assured that, both in the handling of data and the arrangements for publication, the usual procedures for protecting anonymity and for giving credit for your co-operation will be followed.

If you and/or any of the members of your department (completion of the questionnaire is not necessary) would be willing to assist me in this phase of my research I'd be grateful if you would kindly return the reply slip in the enclosed SAE before Friday 18th November. Once I have received a reply I will get in touch with you to arrange the next steps. If, in the meantime you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

ROB BATHO

PTO

Please return to **Rob Batho.**

The following English teacher/s

from

School/College

is/are willing to help in the next phase of research into the teaching of Shakespeare at KS3.

APPENDIX TWO

THE QUESTIONNAIRE
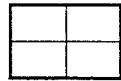
SECTION A

1. For the purpose of this questionnaire I would like you to consider this current teaching year (1993/4) and to have in mind **one** group from each year that you teach. Would you please indicate by placing a tick in one of the boxes below the general ability band of each group (add comments alongside if you wish).

		1	2	3	4
	Year group	Mixed ability	High ability	Middle ability	Low ability
1	**7**				
2	**8**				
3	**9**				
4	**10**				
5	**11**				
6	**12**				
7	**13**				

SECTION B

Consider each year group you teach in the current year and complete the following question.

2. How much time, approximately, will you spend teaching Shakespeare during the year? The expression **'teaching Shakespeare'** is used here and throughout as a convenient shorthand and should be taken to mean any activity with pupils involving the reading, discussion, acting, directing and writing about Shakespeare's works as well as related drama activities and the viewing, on stage or screen, of his plays.

		1	2	3	4	5
	Year group	More than one term	About one term	About half a term	About one/two weeks	Less than one week
1	**7**					
2	**8**					
3	**9**					
4	**10**					
5	**11**					
6	**12**					
7	**13**					

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SECTION C

This section asks you to consider the methods and approaches that you use to teach Shakespeare. Refer only to the current school year. Please use the blank space beneath each question to comment on or give reasons for your answers.

3. Do you read the entire play with the class?

		1	2	3	4	5
	Year group	Always/ nearly always	Often	Some- times	Rarely	Never
1	7					
2	8					
3	9					
4	10					
5	11					
6	12					
7	13					

4. Do you cast the play and read it aloud around the class?

		1	2	3	4	5
1	7					
2	8					
3	9					
4	10					
5	11					
6	12					
7	13					

5. Do you ask the pupils to read the play aloud in groups?

		1	2	3	4	5
1	7					
2	8					
3	9					
4	10					
5	11					
6	12					
7	13					

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6. Do you ask the pupils to read parts of the play on their own?

	Year group	1 Always/ nearly always	2 Often	3 Some-times	4 Rarely	5 Never
1	7					
2	8					
3	9					
4	10					
5	11					
6	12					
7	13					

7. Do you ask pupils to perform scenes from the play?

		1	2	3	4	5
1	7					
2	8					
3	9					
4	10					
5	11					
6	12					
7	13					

8. Do you ask pupils to memorise lines?

		1	2	3	4	5
1	7					
2	8					
3	9					
4	10					
5	11					
6	12					
7	13					

9. Do you involve pupils in Shakespeare related drama/workshop activities?

		1	2	3	4	5
1	7					
2	8					
3	9					
4	10					
5	11					
6	12					
7	13					

10. Do you offer the pupils the story/ a plot summary before reading the play?

	Year group	1 Always/ nearly always	2 Often	3 Some- times	4 Rarely	5 Never
1	7					
2	8					
3	9					
4	10					
5	11					
6	12					
7	13					

SECTION D

Consider the classes you teach in each year group and answer the following questions by placing a tick in the 'Yes' or 'No' column.

11. Will pupils in this year group have had the opportunity to see a live production of a Shakespeare play organised by the school?

	Year group	1 Yes	2 No
1	7		
2	8		
3	9		
4	10		
5	11		
6	12		
7	13		

12. Will pupils in this year group have had the opportunity to see a video/film of a Shakespeare play?

		1 Yes	2 No
1	7		
2	8		
3	9		
4	10		
5	11		
6	12		
7	13		

13. Will pupils in this year group have had the opportunity to hear an audio recording of a Shakespeare play?

		1	2
	Year group	Yes	No
1	**7**		
2	**8**		
3	**9**		
4	**10**		
5	**11**		
6	**12**		
7	**13**		

SECTION E

For the statements that follow please tick *one* box for each year group that you currently teach to show how strongly you disagree or agree with each statement. Please use the blank space to comment if you wish.

14. Most pupils in this year group like Shakespeare.

		1	2	3	4	5
	Year group	Dis-agree			Agree	Don't know
1	**7**					
2	**8**					
3	**9**					
4	**10**					
5	**11**					
6	**12**					
7	**13**					

15. Shakespeare is of more interest to boys than girls in this year group.

		1	2	3	4	5
1	**7**					
2	**8**					
3	**9**					
4	**10**					
5	**11**					
6	**12**					
7	**13**					

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16. Teaching Shakespeare to this year group is likely to put them off it.

Year group	1 Dis-agree	2	3	4 Agree	5 Don't know
1 7					
2 8					
3 9					
4 10					
5 11					
6 12					
7 13					

17. I enjoy teaching Shakespeare to this year group.

	1	2	3	4	5
1 7					
2 8					
3 9					
4 10					
5 11					
6 12					
7 13					

18. I do not feel as confident about teaching Shakespeare to this year group as I do about other aspects of English

	1	2	3	4	5
1 7					
2 8					
3 9					
4 10					
5 11					
6 12					
7 13					

19. Shakespeare should be compulsory for all pupils in this year group.

	1	2	3	4	5
1 7					
2 8					
3 9					
4 10					
5 11					
6 12					
7 13					

20. Written examination in Shakespeare is appropriate for all pupils in this year group.

	1	2	3	4	5
1 7					
2 8					
3 9					
4 10					
5 11					
6 12					
7 13					

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SECTION F

Basing your responses on your general experience of English teaching and teaching Shakespeare, for each of the statements below tick one box to show how strongly you agree or disagree.

	1 Dis-agree	2	3	4 Agree	5 Don't know
21. Pupils must read and discuss Shakespeare in lessons.					
22. Pupils must be involved actively (performance, role play etc.) with Shakespeare in lessons.					
23. Shakespeare is only for the more able pupil.					
24. Teaching Shakespeare is more important than other aspects of English.					
25. It is the language that is the biggest difficulty in teaching Shakespeare.					
26. Shakespeare should be taken out of the curriculum in Key Stage 3.					
27. Shakespeare is relevant to pupils from all cultures in our schools.					
28. Shakespeare's greatness is culturally determined.					
29. Shakespeare is not just our poet but the world's.					
30. Shakespeare's plays are a vital part of our national cultural heritage.					
31. Pupils should be encouraged to see Shakespeare's texts as the product of one particular time which are read in another.					
32. Shakespeare's message is the universal, the timeless one.					
33. We should look at Shakespeare as a construct of social formation.					
34. Shakespeare is a figure whose greatness transcends history.					
35. Shakespeare is the greatest of the English poets.					

SECTION G

This section concerns the resources you use to teach Shakespeare.

36. Please give the title/s of play/s you have used or intend to use this current year with each year group.

Year group	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	

37. Given the choice, which *one* play would you choose to teach with each year group?

Year group	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	

38. Which edition of the plays (e.g. Cambridge Schools, Arden), if any, do you prefer to use with each year group?

Year group	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	

39. Enter in the boxes below which of the following resources you use to teach Shakespeare to each year group; *video of the play, other related videos, audio tapes of the play, Shakespeare on CD-ROM, English department support material, published support material (e.g. The Shakespeare File), other.*

Year group	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	

40. Enter in the boxes below which of the following spaces you use to teach Shakespeare to each year group; *classroom, drama studio, hall, other (please specify).*

Year group	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	

SECTION H

Concerning your own background, please fill in the following:

41. Age

42. Sex

43. If you have a degree, please state whether it is a B.A. or B.Sc. and in which subject/s

44. If you have a Higher degree please state whether it is an M.A., PhD. etc

45. Do you have a PGCE in English?

46. Do you have a PGCE in another subject (if so, please state which)?

47. Do you have a PGCE with English as a second subject?

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48. Do you have a Certificate of Education with English as your main subject?

49. Do you have a Certificate of Education with another main subject?

50. Do you have a Certificate of Education with English as a second subject?

51. For approximately how many years have you been teaching English
(Please tick the appropriate box)?

1	2	3	4
0 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 20	Over 20

52. What is your current position within the English Department (e.g. Head of Department, Responsibility for KS3, Assistant Teacher etc.)?

53. Did you have any input on teaching Shakespeare in your Initial Teacher Training?

54. If you have attended any courses/INSET which addressed the teaching of Shakespeare please state what and when.

Thank you very much for your co-operation in filling in this questionnaire. All responses will be treated confidentially. Please return the completed questionnaire to me, Rob Batho, in the enclosed s.a.e. If you wish to add any other comments please do so below or on a separate sheet.

APPENDIX THREE

LESSON OBSERVATION SHEETS
AND
ANALYSIS CODES

LESSON OBSERVATION SHEETS
AND ANALYSIS CODES

This appendix offers examples of the *Shakespeare Lesson Observation Sheets* used in the classroom research, and the *Codes for Analysing Classroom Observation Data*. The first example (page 183) is of the blank observation recording sheet taken into each lesson. The second example (page 184) shows how the recording sheet will have been written on during the lesson (in this case the first lesson of the series in one school) and which contains at the top information concerning the school, the date, the teacher, the class, the venue etc., and then down the left-hand side notes as to what the teacher (T) or pupils (P) said or did, and on the right-hand side jottings of the researcher's thoughts and analysis as the lesson progressed. The final sheet displays the typed version (for ease of analysis) of the same lesson observation, with on the far left-hand side the codes[1] which had been developed for analysing the classroom observation data, together with, on the right-hand side other analytical comments which did not fit into the aforementioned codes but which at the time were thought to be of interest and importance.

1. Please read pages 102-104 for the rationale behind the coding and its analysis.

SHAKESPEARE LESSON OBSERVATION

DATE   TIME
SCHOOL   VENUE
TEACHER   CLASS
TEXT   SUBJECT

SHAKESPEARE LESSON OBSERVATION

DATE 6·2·95
SCHOOL Pelpham
TEACHER L. Ellis
TEXT MSND

TIME 9:20 — 10
VENUE Classroom
CLASS 9
SUBJECT Intro to MSND

T- asks p's what done before -
- a few given some work in Macbeth +
MSND - at Junior school.

T- copies of MSND

T- gives out paper → tells p's to make
a note of some of characters
Theseus - explains some of names long
+ unfamiliar

T asks p's "what is a Duke?"

T writes names on board of characters +
where they live

T- 'behaviour' on board + asks what it means.
T- 'says' on your 'engaged' instead" to say

— Resource= p's own version to annotate - from
CDRom — no notes/glossary — no character list

Modernising / relevant

Most p's twenty group of
+ only one group of
3 boys. 12 seperate
even boys+ 12
p/2 on all tables

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SHAKESPEARE LESSON OBSERVATION

DATE 6.2.95
SCHOOL F.
TEACHER LE
OBSERVATION NO.1

TIME 9:20 - 10:00
VENUE Classroom
CLASS 9.
TEXT & SUBJECT Intro to MSND

SET

T Asks Ps what done before concerning S.
Ps Some girls took part in Macbeth & MSND in junior school.

WAYS/T

T Copies of MSND.
- Gives out paper.
- Tells Ps to make a note of some of characters. Theseus - explains that some of the names are long & complicated.
- What is a Duke?

RES

STRAT/Q

- Writes names of characters on board & what they are.
- Writes 'betrothed' on board & asks what it means. You can put 'engaged' instead (to boy who asks).
- Finishes character at Lysander & Demetrius & then asks what do we know?

— Modern

MSN/P

Ps Two men love same woman.
- might be a fight.
- they are going to get married.

— P-prediction

STRAT/Q

T What is important when we're reading the play?
Ps What relation people are to each other.
- What the characters are like.
- What the story is about.

— Reading play.

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CODES FOR ANALYSING CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA

CODE	DEFINITION	DESCRIPTION
SET	Setting the context	Teaching space used. Time. P Grouping. Furniture arrangement.
PER/T PER/T	Perspectives	Teachers & Pupils ways of thinking about S and its being taught. Attitudes. Values. Levels of interest/involvement. Views on the Test.
WAYS/T WAYS/P	Ways of thinking about people	T's & P's views of & understandings of each other T's valuing of P's contributions. T's assumptions about P's learning.
PROC	Process	Sequence of events, flow, transition, turning points & changes over time.
ACT	Activities	Regularly occurring kinds of behaviour. E.g. registering, hwk diaries, book distribution.
EVN/T EVN/P	Events	Specific activities, espec. ones occurring infrequently. Incidences of P learning?
STR/T STR/P	Strategies	Ways of accomplishing things. People's tactics, methods & techniques for meeting their needs. E.g. Tasks, methods/styles of teaching & learning, differentiation, language use, acting, directing, writing, talking, T's dominant view of S.
RLT/T RLT/P	Relationships & Social Structure.	Unofficially defined patterns such as cliques, friendships enemies, girl/boy, all girl, all boy groupings.
RES	Resources	Resources used in the classroom. + Theatre
MTH	Methods	Observations on me & my methods.

UND/P   Understanding   Pupil understanding of S.

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APPENDIX FOUR

PUPIL AND TEACHER
INTERVIEW PROMPT SHEETS

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

SECTION A - THE COURSE

Think about the lessons you taught this year on (title of text).

1 From those lessons on (title of text) which elements or aspects did you enjoy?

     Can you say why?

2 Again from those lessons, were there any elements or aspects you disliked?

     Can you say why?

3 Were there any aspects that you found difficult or problematic?

     Can you say why?

4 Do you think that studying (title of play) was relevant in any ways to the lives of the pupils in the class?

5 What have you learnt through teaching the play this time?

6 In your teaching of Shakespeare to this class. were there any methods you employed which you feel have been more successful than others?

     If 'Yes', why do you think that was?

7 Similarly. were there any methods you feel have been far less successful than others?

     If 'Yes'. why do you think that was?

8 Do you have any thoughts as to the appeal of the work you did for either the girls or the boys in the class?

9 Similarly, do you have any thoughts as to the appeal of the work for the different abilities within the class?

SECTION B - THE TEST

I'd like you now to think about the Key Stage 3 Test that the pupils took in May.

1 What thoughts and feelings do you have about it now?

     How well do you think your pupils did?
     Did anything surprise you about it?

SECTION C - GENERAL

I'd now like to ask you some more general questions about teaching Shakespeare.

1 If there had been no test would you have taught this class differently?

2 Do you think you teach Shakespeare to this year in a different way from the way you teach them other plays and literature?

3 What do you think is the reason for teaching Shakespeare to this year group?

4 Can you think of any resources, facilities, opportunities or anything else that you think would improve the effectiveness of your teaching Shakespeare to this year group?

PUPIL INTERVIEWS

SECTION A - THE COURSE

Think back over the lessons you did this year on (title of S text).

1 From those lessons on (title of S text), what did you enjoy?

    Can you say why?

2 Again from those lessons, what did you dislike?

    Can you say why?

3 In trying to understand the play what, if anything, did you find difficult?

4 Were there times when studying the play when you were reminded of something, somebody in your own life?

    Do you think the play has relevance, connection with your life in the 1990s?

5 What would you say are the main things that you've learnt through your study of the play?

6 Do you think there were any differences between the way you were taught Shakespeare and the way you have been taught other books in English in the school?

SECTION B - THE TEST

I'd like you now to think of the Key Stage 3 Test you took in May.

1 What thoughts and feelings do you have about it?

    How well d'you think you did?
    Did anything surprise you about it?
    What did you write about?

SECTION C - GENERAL

I'd now like to ask you some more general questions about Shakespeare in schools.

1 Why do you think that all pupils of your age have to study Shakespeare?

2 What are your thoughts and feelings about Shakespeare now?

Do you think they've changed as a result of studying the play?

APPENDIX FIVE

SCHOOL, TEACHER AND PUPIL CODES

SCHOOL, TEACHER AND PUPIL CODES

SCHOOL A
- 13 - 18 rural, co-educational comprehensive with 790 pupils on roll.
- Teacher AA with pupils AAA to AAD.
- Teacher AB with pupils ABA to ABD.

SCHOOL B
- 11 - 16 urban, co-educational comprehensive with 830 on roll.
- Teacher BA with pupils BAA to BAD.
- Teacher BB with pupils BBA to BBD.

SCHOOL C
- 11 - 18 urban, co-educational comprehensive with 890 on roll.
- Teacher CA with pupils CAA to CAD.

SCHOOL D
- 11 - 18 urban, co-educational comprehensive with 1540 on roll.
- Teacher DA with pupils DAA to DAD.
- Teacher DB with pupils DBA to DBD.

SCHOOL E
- 11 - 16 inner-city, single-sex girls comprehensive with 1250 on roll.
- Teacher EA with pupils EAA to EAD.

APPENDIX SIX

TEACHERS' LOGS

Shakespeare Log

Dear Teacher,

Thank you for agreeing to help me with my research into the teaching of Shakespeare at KS3. I'd be grateful if you would keep a brief log of the Shakespeare lessons that you take with one particular Year 9 class.

In the log i'd like you, **at the end of each week** *of teaching Shakespeare with that class, to jot down your thoughts about one of the lessons (the one that sticks in your mind the most - whether good or bad in your opinion). You will see that there is a separate page for each lesson. Where at the top of each page it says* **Subject of lesson,** *simply mention which part of which play the lesson is concerned with (e.g. Romeo & Juliet Act I Scene i, or Midsummer Night's Dream - the Mechanicals), and where it says* **Nature of activity** *mention the type of lesson/teaching (e.g. reading play aloud and discussion, a workshop, watching video, etc.). Finally, feel free to make any response to the lesson but I'd be grateful if you could also try to respond to the three questions on each page. All your responses will be treated confidentially.*

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Batho

Shakespeare Log

Date

Venue

Subject of lesson

Nature of activity

♦ *What do you think this lesson helped the students to understand and learn?*

♦ *What were the most enjoyable parts of the lesson for;*

a. yourself

b. students

♦ *What, if anything, were the difficulties that you and/or the students experienced?*

♦ *Any other comments? (Continue on the other side if you wish)*

APPENDIX SEVEN

KS3 ENGLISH TEST
PAPER 2 - SHAKESPEARE

KEY STAGE 3 ENGLISH TEST, PAPER 2
SHAKESPEARE

In this appendix there are two examples of Key Stage 3 English Test Paper 2 Shakespeare tests from 1996 and 1999.

In the 1996 paper, to further the point made earlier in Chapter Six concerning the types of questions set, it will be seen that four of the questions (Tasks 2, 3, 5 and 6) are traditional 'O' level questions focusing on character, one (Task 1) is a traditional 'O' level question targeting scenic structure and dramatic intention, and only one question (Task 4) was non-traditional focusing on character empathy.

In the 1999 paper, there are notably fewer traditional 'O' level type questions (Tasks 2, 4 and 5), two which focus on character empathy (Tasks 3 and 6) and one (Task 1) which has a directorial focus. The move to less traditional questions could be seen to reflect more the practice in classrooms, but a closer inspection will reveal that the non-traditional questions do not in fact necessarily demand or encourage a less desk-bound approach in the classroom.

Task 1 is interesting in that it is the only example since the tests began in 1995 of a directorial task for *Julius Caesar (Julius Caesar* has been the least popular of the three set plays and in this geographical area has only been adopted by schools with all male pupils,and there seems to be an untested belief that the approach to English in these schools is more traditional and desk-bound). An additional interest point with this task lies with its implied conception of the role of a director. It asks the candidate, who is to imagine that she/he is "going to direct this scene for a class performance", to "Explain how you want the pupil acting the part of Mark Antony to show Antony's response to Caesar's death." It implies that the role of director is didactic, authoritarian and one-way, whereas my own experience of directing and being directed both in school settings and other, and of reading about directing in the theatre, is that the role and process is two-way with a dialogue and negotiation being developed between the director and the actors. This being so, this type of question does not reflect practices which I have witnessed in classrooms, and that in preparing pupils to tackle such a question, the teacher would have to put aside their usual practice where pupils are actively directing their peers and would instead set up desk-bound tasks for their pupils to be able meet the written demands of the question.

Similarly, all of the other types of question encourage a desk-bound approach (even the less traditional character empathy tasks do not require the pupil to enact the part of the character, but merely to reflect upon and to write about the character and his/her behaviour, feelings and thoughts) and do not encourage an active classroom approach to teaching Shakespeare.

ENGLISH

Levels 4-7

Paper 2
Shakespeare Play

Please read this page, but do not open the booklet until your teacher tells you to start.

Write your name and school on the front cover of your answer booklet. If you have

been given a pupil number, write that also. In Wales, write your date of birth instead of

a pupil number.

Remember

- The test is 1 hour 15 minutes long.

- You should do **one** task on **one** of the following plays:

  Julius Caesar – these tasks are on pages 2 and 3;
  A Midsummer Night's Dream – these tasks are on pages 4 and 5;
  Romeo and Juliet – these tasks are on pages 6 and 7.

- Your work will be assessed for your knowledge and understanding of the play and the way you express your ideas.

- Check your work carefully.

- Ask your teacher if you are not sure what to do.

Julius Caesar

Act 2 Scene 1, lines 1 - 228

TASK 1

In this scene the conspirators meet to plan the murder of Caesar.

Explain in detail how Shakespeare builds up a feeling of excitement and suspense for the audience in this scene.

Before you begin to write, think about how excitement and suspense are built up by the following:

- the time and the place for the conspirators' meeting;

- what Brutus says when he is on his own;

- the way the conspirators behave;

- the disagreements between Brutus and Cassius;

- the conspirators' worries about the next day.

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Julius Caesar

Act 3 Scene 2, lines 1 - 221

TASK 2

In this scene both Brutus and Antony want to win the support of the crowd.

Why do you think Antony is more successful than Brutus?

Before you begin to write you should think about:

- what Brutus says and the way he says it;

- what Antony says and the way he says it;

- the different actions of Brutus and Antony;

- how the crowd reacts to each of them;

- moments in the scene where you think Antony is particularly clever.

198

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Act 4 Scene 1, lines 43 - 211

TASK 3

Oberon and Theseus are important characters in this scene.

What do you think of Oberon and Theseus and the parts they play in the scene?

Before you begin to write you should think about:

- what Oberon does and the way he speaks;

- what Theseus does and the way he speaks;

- how their actions affect other people;

- how they are alike and how they are different.

199

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Act 5 Scene 1, lines 106 - 348

TASK 4

Peter Quince planned, directed and probably wrote the play 'Pyramus and Thisbe'. He felt responsible for it and wanted it to be successful.

You are Peter Quince. Write about how well you think your play went.

You could begin: The audience seemed to enjoy our play, although I was a bit surprised at times at how they responded...

Before you begin to write you should decide what Quince thought about:

- the rehearsals in the woods;

- the way the play 'Pyramus and Thisbe' was written and the lines he (Quince) liked best;

- what went well in the performance and what was disappointing;

- how the workmen played their parts;

- the way Theseus, Hippolyta and the lovers reacted to the play and the comments they made.

200

Romeo and Juliet

Act 3 Scene 3

TASK 5

In this scene Friar Lawrence tells Romeo that he is banished and tries to help him.

What do you think of the advice Friar Lawrence gives to Romeo in this scene?

Before you begin to write you should think about:

- the different ways the Friar reacts to Romeo's moods;

- the language the Friar uses;

- the plan Friar Lawrence suggests and whether he really knows what he is doing;

- your opinion of what the Friar says and does.

Romeo and Juliet

Act 4 Scenes 1 - 4

TASK 6

In these scenes Juliet is in a very difficult situation.

Explain the different ways Juliet behaves with Paris, the Friar, her parents and on her own.

Before you begin to write you should think about:

- the language Juliet uses when she speaks to different characters;

- the way she reacts to Paris;

- the way she persuades the Friar to help her;

- how she behaves with her parents;

- what you learn about her from her speech in Scene 3, lines 14 - 58 and your reaction to her.

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English test

Paper 2
Shakespeare play

Please read this page, but do not open the booklet until your teacher tells you to start. Write your name and school on the front cover of your answer booklet. If you have been given a pupil number, write that also.

Remember

- The test is 1 hour 15 minutes long.

- You should do **one** task on **one** of the following plays:

  Julius Caesar – do the task on page 2 **or** the task on page 3;
  Romeo and Juliet – do the task on page 4 **or** the task on page 5
  Twelfth Night – do the task on page 6 **or** the task on page 7.

- Your work will be assessed for your knowledge and understanding of the play and the way you express your ideas.

- Check your work carefully.

- Ask your teacher if you are not sure what to do.

*Choose **one** task.*

If you have studied 'Julius Caesar' do either Task 1 or Task 2.

EITHER

Julius Caesar

Act 3 Scene 1, lines 1 - 275

TASK 1

After the assassination of Caesar in this scene, Mark Antony comes to meet the conspirators and see Caesar's body.

Imagine you are going to direct this scene for a class performance.

Explain how you want the pupil acting the part of Mark Antony to show Antony's responses to Caesar's death.

Before you begin to write **you should decide what advice to give the pupil about:**

- how you want Antony to speak and to behave towards the conspirators;

- how you want Antony to behave when he is left alone with Caesar's body;

- how to use Antony's language to show his thoughts and feelings in this scene;

- how to show Antony's awareness of what the future holds.

Read the task again before you begin to write your answer.

Julius Caesar

Act 4 Scene 3, lines 1 - 238

TASK 2

In this scene Brutus and Cassius have serious disagreements.

What do you learn about the characters of Brutus and Cassius from their arguments in this scene?

Before you begin to write you should think about:

- what Brutus and Cassius think about each other's characters in this scene;

- how the ways they speak and behave show their differences in character;

- how the way they speak to each other changes during this scene;

- how the audience's view of Brutus and Cassius is changed by this scene.

Read the task again before you begin to write your answer.

Choose one task.

If you have studied 'Romeo and Juliet' do either Task 3 or Task 4.

EITHER

Romeo and Juliet

Act 2 Scene 4, line 82 to the end of Scene 5

TASK 3

In these scenes, the Nurse is the messenger between Romeo and Juliet.

Imagine you are the Nurse. Write your thoughts and feelings as you think about the day's events.

You could begin:

This afternoon my lady Juliet married her love, Romeo.
I am glad I have played my part in helping them ...

Before you begin to write you should think about the Nurse's views on:

- her part in the day's activities;

- the behaviour of Mercutio and Romeo;

- the different ways Mercutio, Romeo and Juliet speak to her in these scenes;

- her feelings for Juliet and her concerns about Juliet's future.

Remember to write as if you are the Nurse.

Read the task again before you begin to write your answer.

Romeo and Juliet

Act 3 Scene 5, line 37 to the end of the scene

TASK 4

In this scene Juliet's parents insist she must marry Paris.

What are the pressures Juliet is under and how does she react to them in this scene?

Before you begin to write you should think about:

- Juliet's thoughts and fears as she speaks to her mother;

- the way Juliet reacts to what her father says;

- the way Juliet reacts to the Nurse's behaviour and advice;

- the increasing pressure Juliet feels by the end of the scene.

Read the task again before you begin to write your answer.

*Choose **one** task.*

If you have studied 'Twelfth Night' do either Task 5 or Task 6.

EITHER •

Twelfth Night

Act 1 Scenes 1, 2 and 3

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TASK 5

Love is one of the main themes of *Twelfth Night*.

How does Shakespeare introduce different kinds of love to the audience in these opening scenes?

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Before you begin to write you should think about:

- what Orsino thinks and says about love;

- how different kinds of love are introduced in the scene with Viola;

- Sir Toby's attitudes to love and how he speaks about it;

- what the audience learns about Olivia's attitudes to love.

Read the task again before you begin to write your answer.

OR

Twelfth Night

Act 2 Scene 5

TASK 6

In this scene Sir Toby Belch and his friends watch Malvolio find a letter which he thinks is from Olivia.

Imagine you are Sir Toby Belch. Write down your thoughts and feelings as you leave the garden.

You could begin:

What a wonderful trick – and what a fool Malvolio is ...

Before you begin to write you should decide what Sir Toby thinks and feels about:

- the trick and the way it has worked;

- Malvolio and his position in Olivia's household;

- the way Malvolio reacted to the letter and its contents;

- Sir Andrew, Fabian and Maria and the effects of the trick in the future.

Remember to write as if you are Sir Toby Belch.

Read the task again before you begin to write your answer.

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