

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

THE ECOLOGY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION:
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE 'LIFE' OF A PHYSICAL
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND ITS IMPACT UPON THE IDENTITIES
AND OPPORTUNITIES OF PUPILS AND TEACHERS

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ERRATA

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ABSTRACT

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THE ECOLOGY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE 'LIFE' OF A PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND ITS IMPACT UPON THE IDENTITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF TEACHERS AND PUPILS.

by Kathleen Mary Armour

Within an ethnographic, case-study framework, this research uses observations, interviews and life-history reflections to investigate aspects of the 'life' of a physical education department in a secondary school. The central focus is upon the four physical education teachers, charting how they develop their personal understandings of the nature and purpose of physical education. These understandings are located in the broader context of the school and the conflicting perspectives of senior teachers, parents, governors and pupils.

Analysis of the data points to the complexity of the process by which teachers develop their personal 'scripts' for education and physical education. It is suggested that a principle of 'sufficient respect' for individuals' scripts may be a useful starting point for teachers, theorists and researchers as they seek to influence views or implement effective change. This can be viewed as an extension of the notion of the 'reflective practitioner'.

At a subject specific level, the research points to the invidious position in which some physical education teachers may be placed as their philosophies on the high status of theoretical knowledge ultimately trivialise much of their day-to-day, essentially practical activity. A plea is made for further consideration of the value of practical knowledge in education and physical education.

Finally, in analysing the fieldwork process, it is suggested that this form of research can be compared to the genre of the 'soap opera': an attempt is made to maximise the appeal of the research, particularly for teachers, by presenting interesting and accessible accounts of the key characters from Citylimits High School.

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INTRODUCTION

'Order as well as disorder is relative to viewpoint: to come to an orderly understanding of men (sic) and societies requires a set of viewpoints that are simple enough to make understanding possible, yet comprehensive enough to permit us to include in our views the range and depth of human variety. The struggle for such viewpoints is the first and continuing struggle of social science.' (C. Wright Mills, 1959, p.133)

Wright Mills' belief, that social science is 'properly about...human variety' (p.132), can be identified as a guiding principle for this research. In seeking to understand more about the 'life' of a physical education department, the study uses ethnographic techniques to focus upon four physical education teachers in a secondary school (named in this research as Citylimits High School) as they undertake the day-to-day activities of teaching. The central purpose of the research is to gain greater insight into the different ways in which the teachers understand themselves, each other, their roles, the nature and purpose of physical education, and the constraints and possibilities of the school context in which they operate. Within this broad research framework, competing ideologies on knowledge and, more specifically, on knowledge in physical education are identified, from the fieldwork, as key features impacting upon the 'life' of the department.

In attempting to represent something of 'the range and depth of human variety' in the context of this research problem, C. Wright Mills' concept of the 'sociological imagination' has been useful for its identification of the imperative to 'grasp history and biography and the relations between the two in society' (p6). Following Wright Mills, Evans and Davies (1988) suggest:

'This interest in the interplay of self, biography and social structure lies at the heart of the sociological enterprise. But, as yet, it has been little directed to the study of teachers and teaching.' (p.10)

Embedded in such a statement, is the daunting complexity of the 'interplay of self, biography and social structure'. Any one of these three elements would be difficult enough to represent and so the claims made for success in this study are properly modest. Accepting this limitation however, a key task of this research is to gain a greater understanding of the actions of physical education teachers as they both undertake and create their jobs at Citylimits High School. Thus, there is an emphasis upon the notion of 'agency', yet a respect for the broader imperative of 'interplay', as described above.

Within the context of the focus upon agency, the notion of 'difference' (Giroux, 1991) is central. The research attempts, therefore, to eschew a position of certainty; the

researcher's vision of what is 'right' for teachers, in favour of a mode of enquiry which seeks to understand how teachers come to consider themselves, their ideologies, and each other to be 'right' or 'wrong'. Thus, it is, for example, that I find much of value in Giroux's (1991) work on the concept of 'border pedagogy', and Gitlin's (1990) concept of 'educative research' (both of which are employed at points in this research), yet find it difficult to match the conviction that underpins their work - that vision of a 'better' world for schools, teachers and pupils. (See, also, Soltis 1990.)

Reference to an example from Giroux's (1991) work is illustrative. He describes the task of 'border pedagogy' as:

'Border pedagogy necessitates combining the modernist emphasis on the capacity of individuals to use critical reason to address the issue of public life with a post-modernist concern with how we might experience agency in a world constituted in differences unsupported by transcendent phenomena or metaphysical guarantees' (p.511)

At the same time:

'The discourse of border pedagogy also links the notions of schooling and education to a more substantive political struggle for a radical democratic society' (p.510)

and:

'educators can bring the concepts of culture, voice and difference together to create a borderland where multiple subjectivities and identities exist as part of a pedagogical practice that provides the potential to expand the politics of democratic community and solidarity.' (p.516)

Giroux would appear, therefore, to 'know' the positive outcomes of the adoption of 'border pedagogy' in schools. And yet, as Ellsworth (1989) points out later in this thesis, any attempt to celebrate 'difference' in social life is likely to result in much more unpredictable outcomes (see chapter 3). So, put simply, my research leads me to suspect that any notion of a 'better' world would be different for each individual; an inevitable result, perhaps, of a focus on 'difference'. Thus, it is, that I have found work such as that by Giroux to be both illuminating and restricting.

In the context of physical education, the suggestion of 'difference' from this research arises in the context of competing ideologies on knowledge in education and in physical education. In turn, these derive from an amalgum of teachers' personal life experiences, which then interact in the broader structures of the department and the school. As Bell (1986) points out:

'P.E. departments are an interesting example of the inter-relationship between a subject or discipline, albeit one which is essentially activity based, and the school structure.' (p.99)

However, in the conclusion to his research, Bell (1986) argues:

'It may be that it would be more accurate to view them [physical education departments] as semi-autonomous units within larger, relatively anarchic organisations which had no clear understanding of goals...or members,...but that is another story' (p.114)

In one sense, this research can be viewed as an attempt to tell that 'other story'. George and Kirk (1988) conclude (unsurprisingly perhaps) from their research in Australia, that teachers 'believe in the values they hold'. As a result:

'any attempt to incorporate teachers into the effort to use education as a socially transformative device must recognise that many teachers, are, in the first place, the most likely front-line defenders of orthodoxies'
(p.154)

Notwithstanding the criticisms made earlier of Giroux, which could equally be applied to George and Kirk, this research accepts that teachers are, just that; 'the front-line defenders of orthodoxies' and seeks to understand more about the ways in which teachers at Citylimits High School develop and sustain their own beliefs and can challenge those of significant others.

Organisation of the thesis

The research from Citylimits High School is presented in seven chapters. The first chapter, the methodology, is a lengthy description and analysis of the fieldwork process. This is organised in three sections to reflect three

'layers' of the research activity: a diary of events - including detail from the earliest stages of the research in order to demonstrate how the research problem was identified and progressively refined; an analysis of specific fieldwork methods - interviews, life history, observation and questionnaires; and, thirdly, an examination of ethnography as a research paradigm - reflecting upon such issues as validity and generalisability in the context of this study.

From the fieldwork at Citylimits High, conflicting and competing ideologies on knowledge in education and physical education were noted and this conflict was identified as having an impact upon the 'life' of the physical education department in numerous different ways. In chapters two and three, therefore, a literature-based analysis of knowledge is presented to highlight broader debates on some of the issues which arose. Chapter two focusses on an analysis of knowledge from a philosophical perspective, in response to findings about, for example, confusion in terminology used at Citylimits High and the prevalence of a dualist belief in the separation of mind and body. Chapter three examines knowledge from a sociological perspective to address issues such as the organisation of knowledge in schools, what counts as 'worthwhile' knowledge and the shared understanding, amongst many respondents, that physical education was centrally concerned with health and fitness.

In both chapters, aspects of the National Curriculum for Physical Education are analysed (see explanatory note at the end of this Introduction) although this was not a significant issue at the time of the fieldwork. In the final section of chapter three, a 'dual focus analysis' of physical education theory is illustrated, drawing upon both philosophical and sociological perspectives. Thus, an attempt is made to utilise each discipline, where appropriate, in response to the complexity which was found in the fieldwork. Clearly, such an approach has limitations, but it was found to be less limiting than the attempt to remain within one discipline. Furthermore, the data from the fieldwork rendered a 'mono' approach almost impossible.

In chapters 4, 5 and 6, the data from the fieldwork is presented. Chapter 4 includes contextual information on Citylimits High School and data from initial interviews with the four physical education teachers, interviews with the Senior Management Team and the pupils, questionnaires from parents, teachers and governors, and observations. It is from this (largely descriptive) data that the conflicting perspectives on knowledge and on physical education are identified and later analytical discussions are drawn. In chapters 5 and 6, the focus is upon the four physical education teachers in greater detail. Thus, information from life-history interviews points to the ways

in which the teachers develop their understandings of physical education and their roles as teachers. 'Doing the Job' at Citylimits High (chapter 6) is viewed as the culmination of experiences defining teachers' knowledge to that point, and it brings the discussion back to a consideration of 'agency' and 'structure' in the context of this research.

Finally, in chapter 7, the preceding chapters are drawn together in the framework of the 'drama' of physical education at Citylimits High. Thus, the interaction of individuals and their 'scripts' for education and physical education - the 'life' of the physical education department - is viewed as more dynamic and unpredictable than the original ecological metaphor could accommodate.

Note

The Education Reform Act of 1988 made provision for a legally binding National Curriculum in primary and secondary schools in England and Wales. Section 4(2) of the act places a duty on the Secretary of State to establish the National Curriculum by specifying by order appropriate attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements for each of the foundation documents. 'Physical Education in the National Curriculum' was published in April 1992 including the attainment target and programmes of study for the four key stages of a pupil's compulsory schooling.

CHAPTER ONE

METHODOLOGY

Phillips and Pugh (1990) suggest that the methodology section of a thesis may be the most logical starting point for the writing up process. After all, 'you know what you did, and how you did it..' (p.62). However, my experience has been rather different. Only now, having spent over two years in the intimate company of my fieldnotes, interview transcripts, on-going research diary and relevant authoritative sources, do I feel confident that I 'know' what I did and can write the section in the depth it warrants. Furthermore, as I wrote earlier sections of the thesis, the significance of methodological decisions made at different stages of the research became much clearer. Hence, this is written in the later stages of the writing-up process.

The chapter is organised into three sections to reflect what I identify as the three **layers** of methodological activity. In section one, I present the chronological details of the research process: in effect a diary of stages and events. This includes information on initial thoughts on the research topic, refinements, registration

for the PH.D, choosing a school, gaining access and details on the conduct of the fieldwork. The writing-up process is summarised, and supervisory tutorials and a seminar are presented in the context of the developing research process. The central aim of this section is to give a methodical account of the timetable of events which inform this thesis. In general, the discussion of broader issues arising is postponed until later sections of the chapter, in the interests of clarity in the description of a lengthy and complex sequence of events.

In section two, specific research methods are analysed in the context of the fieldwork at Citylimits High School. Within the broad framework of ethnography, the techniques of interviewing, life history, observation and, to a lesser extent, questionnaire, were employed and are critically examined.

The third 'layer' of the research process is the identification of more general issues which arise as a result of reflection upon 'ethnography' as the selected research paradigm. Thus, following Hammersley (1992), Delamont (1992), Atkinson (1990), Gitlin (1990) and Eisner & Peshkin (1990), this section addresses key issues such as validity, researcher/researched relationships, research and practice, the development of theory and generalisability. Importantly, the academic debate on ethnography has

broadened and intensified since the fieldwork at Citylimits High was undertaken; thus the central purpose of this section is a re-examination of the principles upon which the research was originally designed.

It is quite clear that this chapter could be presented in other ways. However, the selected format represents an attempt to clarify the complex elements of the research process. At times, the distinctions between sections are somewhat arbitrary, and discussions are curtailed in one section, only to be continued in another. However, the intention is that the chapter be read as a whole, and that the sections serve only as a convenient way of organising thoughts into 'layers' of specificity.

SECTION ONE: THE DIARY OF EVENTS

Much of the information for this section is drawn from a research diary which was started at the very beginning of the Ph.D. process. The diary was used to record factual details and events - such as tutorials, key names and addresses, references and some notes from books and papers in the early stages. More interestingly, perhaps, it was used as a collection point for ideas, as a catalogue of developing thoughts and emerging theories, and as a record of my 'feelings' through the progress of the research (much as advocated by Delamont, 1992). In many ways, it took on the qualities of a 'friend'; there to be talked to (at!) in times of need.

1. Identifying the research problem

The first entry in the diary is April 1987. Having decided to embark upon a Ph.D, and having identified the broad area of physical education as the focus, I spent the period between April and July seeking to clarify the research problem. In many ways this was something of a circular exercise. I identified the concept of 'ecology' at an early stage, but felt unable to clarify a problem and so moved away into other potential research areas. Finally, after consulting texts such as Nash (1973), Ball (1981), Burgess (1983, 1984, 1985) Salmon and Claire (1984), and Cohen and

Manion (1981, 1985), I began to refine my original notion of 'ecology' in the context of qualitative research. I had encountered little research of this nature in physical education and felt that my research problem was just this; a need to know more about physical education as it operates at a day to day level, in a school. Thus, I took the dictionary definition of 'ecology':

'study of organisms in relation to one another and their surroundings' (Pocket Oxford Dictionary, 1984)

and the related concepts of survival, adaptation and relationships to organise my thoughts. From this point, I was able to begin to target my reading and to construct a research design around a set of emerging but tentative questions: How does the physical education department operate within the school? How do physical education teachers adapt to changing circumstances? How do pupils come to understand physical education? How can physical education teachers be seen to achieve, given the multiple understandings of the nature and purpose of physical education? There was still much confusion, but I felt I had a way forward. Importantly, these could only be viewed as tentative questions. I was clear that, in the course of the fieldwork, any of these, or any other questions/issues could be identified as having more or less significance; particularly as I was most interested in pursuing issues which were important to the physical education staff. Thus,

it is, that questions related to the nature and purpose of physical education came to be viewed as central and that in chapter 7, I move beyond the ecological metaphor in the final analysis of the fieldwork.

Further reading on the proposed methodology was the next stage in the process. The collection of articles in Burgess (1984) was particularly helpful, specifically the papers by Delamont, Hammersley, Ball, and King. For example, Ball pointed to the dilemma which I already faced - I needed to read about ethnographic methods, yet I needed to 'do' them at the same time. Hammersley alerted me to a problem which I was to encounter throughout the research - but which was manageable because it had already been identified:

'One of the key problems in ethnographic analysis is finding an overall theme, model or argument which organises the data in a coherent and forceful way'
(in Burgess 1984 p.60)

Both King and Ball stressed the importance (and pointed to the difficulty) of preserving anonymity for the respondents in the research. Issues such as these must be faced before entry into the field - it may be too late once the fieldwork has begun. Finally, from Burgess (1984) I noted the advice that researchers should keep a detailed diary (p.267) and I felt reassured that I was proceeding in an approved manner.

Similar methodological insights were gained from in-depth study of the papers in Burgess (1985a) and Burgess (1985b). I also looked into the possibility of employing Personal Construct Theory in my research. Taking this, in conjunction with earlier reading, I felt ready to attempt to formulate a preliminary paper and to seek a supervisor.

It is, perhaps, significant, that I had not yet discussed my thoughts with anyone who might be a potential supervisor - or with anyone at all. I seemed to feel that I must know everything about the proposed research, in depth, before I could expose myself to others. Fear of appearing 'stupid' was at the root of this reluctance. However, it was becoming clear that I needed external in-put. I circulated a preliminary 'thoughts' paper to several individuals asking for comment. I made it clear that this was not to be viewed as a research proposal, but merely the basis for initial discussion. The response, in several cases, was to 'attack' the paper as if it were a full blown research proposal, so I eliminated those individuals from my list. Some helpful comments were made by others, but there was very little enthusiasm evident for the qualitative research I was proposing. At this stage, luck played its part, and a colleague from another institution recommended that I approach his supervisor. Without a personal introduction I would not have taken this course of action simply because the supervisor was well known, had published widely, and I

would not have had the required confidence.

Having received some encouragement for my embryonic ideas from the recommended supervisor, and some further references from several of those who had read the 'thoughts' paper, I embarked upon the process of compiling a research proposal for registration. Essential reading included: Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), Simon H (1980), Ball (1987) and, in the area of physical education, the collection of papers by Evans (1986). In addition, I sought information on the requirements of various institutions for Ph.D research, and for a registration document. The first tutorial with my supervisor took place in November 1987.

The period from November 1987 to March 1988 was spent in preparing the registration document for Southampton University. An extensive range of reading was undertaken during that period. Of particular note was Ball and Goodman (1985), Hammersley (1986), Shipman (1973), Barton and Walker (1981), Hargreaves and Woods (1984) and Woods (1979). Registration for a Ph.D was accepted in March 1988.
(Document presented in Appendix A)

2. 'Starting the PH.D'

The title above is a quote from my diary, and that is how it felt at the time. There appeared to be a huge leap to be made from preparing for registration, and then beginning

the 'real' work. Clearly, however, the work was already well underway. A frightening range of reading was recommended at a tutorial in May 1988 and immersion in this, further texts which evolved from this reading, and the process of selecting and gaining access to a school, took much of the next eight months.

At this stage, I appeared to need to read **everything**, and all in scrupulous depth. Thus, I made very extensive notes on each text in my research diary. (The ability to scan texts for appropriate information came much later in the project when I had some idea of what I was seeking!) Of particular significance were:

-Hammersley (1986). The paper by Lutz raised some questions about the nature of ethnography and cautioned against description without theory building. This was echoed in the specific case of physical education in an important paper by Sparkes (1986). A. Hargreaves pointed to the macro-micro debate and suggested 'linked micro studies' as a potential solution. In addition, papers by Delamont and Hamilton, Sharp and Walker were invaluable in introducing an inexperienced researcher to the current debates in methodology.

-Ball's (1987) proposal for research in schools at the 'meso level' seemed to resonate with my thoughts and concerns as I prepared for the fieldwork.

-Ball and Goodson (1985) provided much insight into a

research focus on teachers, and this undoubtedly shaped some of the later fieldwork. From the papers by Sikes and Beynon, the notion of 'life-history' research became of increasing interest. Cole's reference to the significance of teacher training prompted thought on the experience of physical education teachers, and resulted in this forming an avenue of enquiry in my teacher interviews.

In addition, I felt a need to re-examine some basic general texts in sociology, before tackling some of the contemporary work on critical theory (and later, postmodernism). Writers from a critical stance were evident in all the potential spheres of the research and were becoming increasingly numerous in physical education; for example, Evans (1986), Sparkes (1987) and, from Australia, George and Kirk (1988).

In the next phase of reading, Ozga (1988), Westoby (1988) and Connell (1985) were helpful. Connell can be recognised as a leading influence on the style of my work. In the methodology, Carr and Kemmis (1986) was of major interest. I was beginning to feel more than ready to 'experiment' with some fieldwork. Meanwhile, the process of selecting the research school was underway.

3. The Research School: Selection, Access and Acceptance

Excerpts from the research diary tell the early stages of

the story most effectively:

6 June 1988: consulted lists of school in the area - within striking distance but not so close to the Institute that anonymity for the school would be at risk. Made several attempts to contact the advisor for the selected area.

7 June: beginning to realise (possibly for the first time) that a search for a 'typical comp' is fruitless. All schools seem to be 'special' in one way or another - so how can they remotely be construed as 'typical'.

23 June: meeting set-up with Physical Education Advisor for Weds 29 June at 2.00 pm. NB. No point in getting hung up on this issue (the selection of a school)- see Simon (1980) and a critique by Atkinson and Delamont in Hammersley (1986). Most schools, by definition, would be perfectly O.K. Mitchell (1983) reinforces the point - 'There is absolutely no advantage in going to a great deal of trouble to find a 'typical' case: concern with this issue reflects a confusion of enumerative and analytic modes of induction'. (p.204.)

29 June: very productive meeting - many potential schools - advisor very helpful and, in effect, he will pick the school. My criteria: it should be a school which falls somewhere in the mid-range in terms of general indicators such as status, popularity, examination results, sporting profile, etc. Only the most exceptional at either end of the scale ('good'/'bad') should be eliminated. (Hammersley's (1992) point about ethnographers choosing settings which are 'not atypical' is quite apt in this instance. J.W. Scofield (1990) further points to the importance of selecting schools with typicality as a consideration, without attempting to take it to extremes.)

The advisor emphasised that the head and the physical education department must feel comfortable with visitors and that he would like to avoid those schools with significant difficulties - such as having several new members in the physical education department. He also stressed that I, as a researcher, should be prepared to share feedback with the physical education department wherever useful, and that I should consider 'helping out' if I had subject specific expertise to contribute. He suggested that he should approach the Heads of likely schools and then discuss the final choice with me. I am indebted to him.

15 Oct: NB. note gap from last entry!!! Things move slowly. Contacted advisor today as he had not contacted

me. Was surprised to find that the school was chosen and set-up. Fortunate that I phoned! The school was expecting contact from me.

16 Oct: Letter sent to school to request visit to see head and head of Physical Education.

21 Oct: Meeting agreed for Weds 2 Nov. They seem keen to be involved - but I don't think they understand the extent of their commitment yet.

2 Nov: FIRST VISIT. Preparation - need to make clear the following:

- Time commitment. 3 familiarisation days before Christmas, further day visits in January/February, a short block of 2-3 weeks in March, and a longer block for much of the summer term.
- Access commitment. Open access to all facets of school life
- My commitment to preserve the anonymity of the school and individuals
- A resume of the research methods to be used
- Explain my position as a researcher - not looking for dramatic action or attempting to judge. Rather I will be a sort of 'odd-bod' seeking to understand more about physical education and physical education teachers at the day to day level of work.

I am feeling very apprehensive about the meeting. Must exude a serious and professional manner, to set the tone for all further visits. (This, of course, is an interesting perception given the points raised in section three of this chapter about researcher/researched relationships.)

From this point, information is drawn from fieldnotes.

2 Nov contd. At the school, met Head of Department, then Head Teacher. Had a broad ranging discussion with the Head of department - Jane. Initially, we talked about students on teaching practice - safe ground - the school was rarely used by my Institution and wanted more students. Clearly, I was seen as a useful contact.

The discussion about the research centred on the

justification for using just one school. This fascinated Jane and was to be one of the main discussion points with the whole department.

The Head was, from my first impressions, 'expansive, interested, busy'. He seemed enthusiastic and saw access as no problem - although he seemed to become more cautious as I listed all the possible points of access. He had no difficulty with the fact that I would be 'around' for more than two terms. He suddenly remembered that he ought to inform the newly constituted Governing Body.

Actions from the first visit: provide a paper giving details of the research, in the form of a short summary paper, for the Head, the Physical Education Department and the staff noticeboard. (Appendix B) On the basis of this information, Physical Education staff would decide whether they wished to meet me, to hear more.

Feelings from the visit: 'I tried to be chatty and sociable without being too accommodating in the matter of teaching in-put to the department. Did I succeed? I have the feeling they want me as a spare set of hands. Help! How do I keep these fieldnotes?'

5 Nov. Papers sent to the School. (See appendix B)

18 Nov. Telephone Conversation with Jane. 3 members of the Physical Education Department were agreed that they would like to hear more about the research. The fourth member, Pete, was set firmly against it. He sent back the information to Jane with the following message: 'Not involved. Too much to do.' Jane was fairly sure that he hadn't read the paper. All other staff seemed happy, although one deputy head was keen to know 'what's in it for us'. A fair point, and one that I must consider in more detail. (See, also, discussion in section 3 of this chapter.)

Jane then volunteered, what proved to be, invaluable background information on Pete. The extract from fieldnotes reads as follows:

Pete is a womaniser, chauvinist, is awkward, difficult to motivate but can get very motivated. Don't push him, he'll make a big issue out of it. He has many outside interests - makes lots of money - has an old people's home (did I hear correctly?). He is not happy with a female H.O.D. Jane suggests 'feminine charm' might work best in my case - and making it a non-issue. She kept pointing out that I should never pass this on. Good reminder of this point - I must not trade confidences, even when the allure of rich data is beckoning.

(18 Nov 1988)

Even at this early stage in the fieldwork process, I was aware just how dependant I was upon the goodwill and the co-operation of the physical education (and other) staff. I was pleased, therefore, that Jane was sufficiently interested in the research to offer support in this way.

Her comments on Pete are particularly interesting in the light of data presented in chapters 4 and 5. (Detailed information on the school and physical education staff is presented in chapter 4.) Clearly, my status as a female researcher would be significant to Pete and I needed to be aware of this as I attempted to build a positive research relationship.

Dec 14. Meeting the department. I had prepared to provide information on the nature of the research and, specifically, what **they** might hope to gain from my presence in the school. I gave some examples of what I was able/willing to offer. For example, I felt I could offer to act as source of up-to-date information/material; I was willing to become involved in an element of the G.C.S.E. theory programme which they were having difficulty covering; I would, hopefully, provide the department with some interesting feedback about Physical Education in their school, particularly the (anonymous) views of pupils, parents and colleagues. In general, I thought it best to attempt to specify my involvement in teaching as early as possible. I also intended to make it clear that I could, of course, be used as 'back-up' in an emergency.

In the event, the meeting went quite well. I was introduced to the infamous Pete in the staffroom prior to the meeting, and he appeared friendly and **very** curious. Taking Jane's

advice, I did nothing to encourage his involvement. I was polite and warm, but suggested that it was no problem if, after hearing more, he wished to remain outside the research. (Of course, this was not strictly true!) During the meeting, Pete made it clear that he had read the document, and he proceeded to ask searching questions. In general, none of the teachers were completely clear about my intentions and some questions were repeated several times: 'What's it for? Are you trying to change P.E.? Surely one school is a bit narrow?'

The issue of using several schools seemed to centre on a 'safety in numbers' philosophy as, quite understandably, the teachers felt somewhat 'exposed' in such a small group. However, it soon became clear that both women (Jane and Diane) and Pete were broadly supportive, with the proviso from Pete: 'As long as you're willing to help out'. The other male in the department (Arnold) was more sceptical, although not resistant. Upon reflection, it may have been unfortunate that the rapport with Pete had developed so well. It is quite possible that this had the effect of alienating Arnold. (See, also, comments in chapter 5 on Pete's life-history reflections and his views on 'strong' women.)

I felt exhausted at the end of the meeting. In the early stages, the atmosphere was quite 'sticky' and I was

concerned that the proposal would be rejected. However, as soon as I talked about myself and gave an honest insight into my fears about undertaking this task, the whole flavour of the meeting changed and the teachers became much more enthusiastic. I even noted some pride in their status as 'the chosen ones'.

20 Dec. A phone call from Jane confirms that I have been accepted into the school and the department. I suggest that I attend the next 'Baker Day' on 4 Jan 1989 as this will give me an opportunity to meet staff outside of the pressure of a normal teaching day. The Head agrees to introduce me to all staff at the initial staff meeting. The short paper explaining the research is to remain on the staff noticeboard until the fieldwork is complete.

4. Undertaking the fieldwork

The programme of fieldwork proceeded much as planned, although I had completely over-estimated the length of time I could profitably spend in the school in one block. Like countless researchers before me, I found I needed to intersperse days in the field with time to complete notes and organise them. It was quite impossible, for example, to complete notes in the evenings and at weekends. Reflection upon the data was continuous, time-consuming and absolutely essential if I was to make any sense of what I was seeing

and hearing (reinforced in Delamont 1992). Reflection also helped me to keep a 'sensitive hand' on the direction of the research.

The final programme was as follows:

Autumn 1988 - preliminary visits to gain access, as detailed above.

Spring Term 1989 - 5 single days in January and February; 6 days spread across a 10 day block in March.

Summer Term 1989 - from April 27 to July 21 the format was usually 2 days in the school followed by one day completing notes. Sometimes this was varied to a pattern of a series of short days spent on data collection with the remaining time spent on notes and reflection. In reality, most of the days were unique in some way; eg., sometimes I stayed in the evening for matches, practices, meetings and the occasional social event. On other occasions, particularly as the fieldwork progressed, I would have periods where there seemed to be little to do. This probably indicated fatigue on my part and was a signal to take time out of the field to reflect.

Specific details on the conduct of the fieldwork follow in the second section of this chapter. A summary is as follows:

Spring term - general observation, initial interviews with and observation of each member of the physical education department, pupil interviews with 5th form pupils before they disappeared for the examination period, pilot of questionnaires.

Summer term - further observation with each teacher, life

history interviews, interviews with the Head, the Deputies and other members of the Senior Management Team, observation at two governors meetings, pupil interviews in groups, distribution of open ended questionnaires to a sample of parents, to all members of the governing body and to staff.

5. Redefining...and redefining the research problem

Having completed the single-day orientation visits, and the short block of visits in the spring term, I felt I needed to reflect on all the data I had collected, and seek a sharper focus for the summer term. In preparation for a tutorial with my supervisor, I identified a number of issues which had arisen from initial interviews with each member of the physical education department, and from general observation. I was certainly experiencing difficulties in organising data, as promised by Hammersley in my earlier reading (in Burgess 1984). However, the process of identifying themes was an essential stage in the research process leading, as it undoubtedly did, to the development of some of the most interesting issues from the research.

Three examples are illustrative. The clash in philosophies between the physical education teachers was a central problem for the department. This was not unexpected, nor was it unusual. But when developed into questions about the

nature of excellence, and about competing perspectives upon success and achievement for pupils and teachers, the research took on a new dimension. (See, particularly, data presented in chapters 4 and 7.) Secondly, the notion of physical education as being centrally concerned with 'health' and a 'healthy life' was a rare point of agreement in the department. However, the rationale for physical education as health education was not clear; rather it was expressed as a form of 'wishful thinking'. As a result, I followed this issue through all subsequent stages of the research, pursuing it when it was raised in interviews, and setting it in the context of 'defining success' as highlighted above. Thirdly, I had noted that Pete and his 'pals' in the staffroom were often loud, offensive and sexist. I labelled them 'them good old boys' after a particularly raucous bout of singing. However, the issue was complex - Pete's sexism was completely overt and usually designed to provoke. Perhaps this was why female staff appeared to take little offence - maybe because he was a known quantity who had no power in the school. In fact, he was well liked by many staff - both male and female. Furthermore, he had excellent working relationships with some female staff, although he seemed to set particularly high standards for women. This led me to investigate the nature of Pete's sexism in the life history interview.

A further stage in the development of the research was the presentation of a paper to fellow research students early in the summer term of the fieldwork. In this, I charted the progress of the careers of each member of the department and compared it with their philosophies for physical education. I identified the tensions in a school which places much emphasis upon its reputation and its rising examination profile, and yet seeks to define a 'sporting achievement-oriented' approach in physical education as 'elitist' (see interviews with the Head and other members of the Senior Management Team). Thus, Pete, who was identified closely with competitive sport, had the least promising career prospects. Arnold, on the other hand, had moved away from his sporting roots and had adopted an 'educationist perspective' similar to that described by Sparkes in his study at Branstow School (Sparkes 1987). There was a general perception in the school that Arnold could, eventually, join the ranks of the Senior Management team.

At that time, I presented a proposed format for writing up the data. I based it on the model used by Connell (1985) in his book 'Teachers Work': firstly, detailed stories about each member of the department and, secondly, a discussion of more general issues such as - knowledge and physical education, definitions of success for teachers and pupils, and an examination of the structure/agency debate in the

specific context of physical education at Citylimits High. In the event, findings from the remainder of the fieldwork necessitated further revisions in the choice of organising themes.

Having completed the fieldwork, I faced a crisis in the research. I certainly had a wealth of data, and much of it was very interesting. It seemed impossible, however, to organise it into any coherent format and I was unhappy with my earlier attempts. My supervisor had suggested that I should start to write **something**, yet I found it impossible to write in a vacuum. I had to have a relatively clear idea of the overall framework of the thesis. An entry in the research diary summarises that time:

July 1989. Have just spent nearly two weeks agonising over how to organise data, my ideas on it and the reading. Had a brainstorm on Friday and was so excited that I phoned [my supervisor] immediately. The idea is so SIMPLE and it was there all the time. The relief is amazing. I think I can do this Ph.D now.

And it was simple. Essentially, I saw four major strands to the research, centreing around the key concept of knowledge and based upon the (unsurprising) finding that respondents at Citylimits High had differing and competing notions of the purpose and content of physical education. This led me, firstly, to examine the underpinning concept of 'knowledge' from the theoretical perspectives of philosophy and sociology, and then to develop this into, what I later

termed, a theoretical 'dual-focus analysis' of knowledge and physical education. The second strand of the research was a detailed account of the competing perspectives on physical education at Citylimits High. This was to include data from interviews, observation and questionnaires from a wide variety of respondents. Thirdly, the task was to focus on the physical education teachers in greater depth, attempting to understand, from life-history interviews, how they had developed their personal perspectives on physical education. Finally, the fourth strand of the research was to place the development of teachers' knowledge in the context of 'Doing the Job' of teaching physical education at Citylimits High. Thus, structural influences could be considered and the structure/agency debate exemplified.

In drawing together the strands of the research, including issues raised later in this methodology chapter, analysis of 'the life' of the physical education department appeared to require a range of concepts which were beyond the scope of the original ecological metaphor. Thus, it is, that the final chapter is entitled 'the drama' of physical education.

It should be made clear that, although the strands are clearly articulated now, this was not the case at the time they were identified. Rather, the central idea for each strand formed the basis of the writing-up process and is

best viewed as a 'way in' to the data. As writing, reading, analysis and reflection proceeded, the strands were clarified into the form in which they are written here. My experience would seem to endorse Delamont's (1992) comment:

'For most researchers, writing is the way that fieldwork is assimilated and made sense of.' (p. 146)

6. Writing The Thesis

Phillips and Pugh (1990) cite the work of Lowenthal and Watson in identifying two distinct categories of writers - 'serialists' and 'holists'. The former are described as those who 'see writing as a sequential process in which the words are corrected as they are written and who plan their writing in detail before beginning to write'. Holists, however, can 'only think as they write and compose a succession of complete drafts' (p.58). I would suggest that I am a 'serialist' with occasional 'holist' tendencies. As was indicated earlier, I found it impossible to write anything until I had ascertained the shape of the thesis and the context in which each section of writing would fit. As a result, the thesis has been written in the form I wish to present it from the outset. (This is not to suggest that corrections and rewrites have not been required.) However, at times, it has been necessary to write sections in 'holist' mode as the only way forward.

The most prominent influence on my style of writing was C. Wright Mills (1959). I encountered 'The Sociological Imagination' at an early stage in reading and found it to be inspirational in many areas of the research. In terms of writing style, it was the clarity of Wright Mills' work which was enlightening; his 'translation' of Talcott Parsons (p.29) was both amusing and reassuring. I resolved to aim for such clarity in my own work.

In looking at the timescales, the sheer inconvenience and the lack of continuity in part-time research are highlighted. In addition, as the timescales are extended, it is ever more likely that other life factors will intrude - moving house, changing jobs and, in my case, having a baby (with a second now 'on the way'). The thesis has, therefore, been written in 'chunks' to accommodate home and job imperatives:.

August 1989 - July 1990 (including almost three months official study leave): first strand, and part of the second strand written up and submitted for comment.

October 1990 - September 1991: maternity leave from work for six months. Registration suspended for one year.

October 1991: additions to the first strand and completion of the second.

January 1992: completion of third strand

April 1992: completion of fourth strand

September 1992: completion of methodology

October 1992 - March 1993: continuing with rewrites of

earlier strands. Final chapter (7). Preparation for submission.

Finally on this issue, my experience tells me that the advice from Atkinson and Delamont is sound:

- '1. Write early and write often.
- 2. Don't get it right, get it written.'

(Delamont 1992 p.182)

In particular, I can see that perfectionists should take heed of point 2!

SECTION TWO: ANALYSIS OF FIELDWORK RESEARCH METHODS

Within the broad framework of ethnography, the fieldwork consisted of a number of specific qualitative fieldwork methods. This is consistent with most ethnographic studies. In what has become a classic quote, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) describe ethnography as follows:

'The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned.' (p.2)

More recently, Hammersley ⁽¹⁹⁸⁷⁾ simplifies this:

'...I use the term ethnography in a general sense that is equivalent to 'qualitative method'.' (p.8)

As was stated in my original research proposal, (see appendix A) this type of research was lacking in physical education. Evans (1986), for example, pointed out that:

'Our knowledge of children within the physical education context is largely confined to the findings of large scale surveys of participation' (p. 12)

Since the inception of the project, qualitative research has become more widely used in physical education and sport. Bain (1990) noted a 'wave of qualitative research studies' (p.7) in America, resulting in the publication of

a seminal article by Locke (1989) in the essentially quantitative journal - 'Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport'. In this country, authors such as Evans and Sparkes are pushing physical education research into the vanguard of qualitative research, and they are used extensively in this work.

As was indicated in the introduction to this chapter, at the time of undertaking the fieldwork, (1988/9) the debate on ethnography as a method was quite narrow in comparison to the literature which is available now. The key text by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) 'Ethnography: Principles in Practice' was essentially a 'how to do it' handbook, although the paradigm was not viewed unproblematically; the concept of 'reflexivity' being central. Delamont and Atkinson (1980) had earlier noted the growing interest in ethnography in education, and had exhorted the disciplines of sociology and anthropology to become more aware of joint concerns. A series of books edited by R.G. Burgess, and referred to earlier in this chapter, sought to share the experiences of researchers who had engaged in qualitative research. In general, however, the central concern at the time was the generation of theory from ethnography. Sparkes (1986) had already raised the issue in the context of physical education; but the debate continued to rage in journals - for example, between Hammersley and Woods in the British Educational Research Journal (Vol 13, No 3, 1987).

In addition, a major criticism of ethnography was its concentration on micro cultures at the expense of understanding the broader cultural context. Hence Lutz advocated 'macro studies' and A. Hargreaves suggested the use of 'linked micro studies' (both in Hammersley 1986) In this study, the concentration is certainly upon a micro culture, but the focus upon teachers' life-histories represents an attempt to link the specific micro culture with wider contexts. (See, also, comments on generalisability in the final section of this chapter.)

Recently, there has been a proliferation of books and articles which raises a further range of questions; for example, Hammersley (1992) 'What's wrong with Ethnography?', Atkinson (1990) 'The Ethnographic Imagination', and Gitlin (1990) on the need for, what he terms, 'Educative Research' in the interests of emancipatory ideals. This is not to suggest that the earlier issues have been resolved; rather it is probably a reflection of the increasing maturity of the qualitative paradigm. Furthermore, the increasing complexity of the debate, and the 'self doubt' inherent in many accounts of ethnographic research, may be a reflection of the influence of 'postmodernism', described by Best and Kellner (1991) as being: 'in favour of multiplicity, plurality, fragmentation and indeterminacy.' (p.4), and by Giddens (1992) as 'decentred;...a profusion of style and orientation' (p.21).

However, at this stage, these debates are postponed until the next section of the chapter where they are addressed in the light of the fieldwork undertaken at Citylimits High School. Hence, the decision to clarify those specific methodological processes first.

As was detailed earlier in the chapter, the fieldwork occurred over two terms and involved the use of interviews and life-history interviews, observation and questionnaires. Each method is discussed individually, in order of priority for the eventual research outcomes.

1. Interviews

There is no doubt that interviews formed the core of the fieldwork. They took many different forms, ranging from short, individual interviews with older pupils, group interviews with younger pupils (as recommended by Woods, 1986), interviews lasting, on average, one and a half hours (a double lesson timeslot!) with senior teachers and physical education staff, and longer, life-history interviews with the latter.

The settings for the interviews ranged across changing rooms, playing fields, smart offices, corners of the staffroom, and a local pub. All were taped on a small, highly effective dictation machine. It is not intended to

provide examples of interviews in this chapter, as they are quoted extensively from chapter 4 onwards. Details pertaining to individual respondents are also provided with the accounts. It is the purpose of this chapter to provide general information on the process of interviewing at Citylimits High.

In total, the interviews conducted were as follows:

-two 'formal, scheduled' interviews with each physical education teacher; one general and one life-history. In addition, informal discussions took place extensively throughout the fieldwork

-each member of the senior management team was interviewed once (7, in total)

-54 pupils were selected, at random, from the mixed physical education lessons. 42 pupils were from the 4th/5th year (22 girls and 20 boys aged 14-16). In addition, 12 third year pupils were interviewed in two lively mixed groups of three boys and three girls. In general, older pupils were chosen for their more extensive experience of physical education at Citylimits High. The fifth form pupils were interviewed individually; after several pilot interviews, it became clear that most were sufficiently confident to converse 'freely' in this situation. Taking Woods' (1986) advice, however, I elected to interview all other pupils in small groups. (This had the added advantage of saving some time.) In addition, numerous informal

discussions took place with pupils at every stage of the fieldwork.

Without exception, the interviews were an enjoyable and fascinating experience for me, the researcher. In some cases, although not all, respondents made it clear that they, too, had enjoyed the process - particularly where a stimulating discussion had evolved. Paradoxically, interviews with teachers took persistence to arrange...and then persistence to terminate! I felt quite comfortable with the process of interviewing, a technique I had used extensively in a recently completed Master's project (Howarth 1986). In effect, this served as a useful apprenticeship. In Cohen and Manion's (1986) terms, the interviews could be classified as informal and focussed. On all occasions, a loose interview schedule was constructed prior to the interview. In my Master's project, I had found this to be an essential 'prop' in the case of a stilted interview - embarrassed silences could effectively terminate an interview. In the event, my greater experience on this occasion allowed me to stimulate discussion more naturally.

In terms of my interview style, I found it essential to be prepared to share personal experiences and views with respondents, in the same way as I was expecting them to do with me. Although Powney and Watts (1987) make the firm

point that: '..an interview is the place for active listening, not debate.' (p.133), I would suggest that an exchange of ideas is most helpful in establishing rapport and, as I had found earlier in my first discussions with the physical education department, a frank admittance of interviewer fears and uncertainties can be very reassuring for respondents. (In some cases, of course, this could be less appropriate from the perspective of the respondent; the Head Teacher, for example.) Hammersley and Atkinson's (1983) comments on ethnographic interviews encapsulate the uniqueness of each situation:

'Ethnographers do not decide beforehand the questions they want to ask, though they may enter the interview with a list of issues to be covered. Nor do ethnographers restrict themselves to a single mode of questioning. On different occasions, or at different points in the same interview, the approach may be non-directive or directive, depending on the function that the questioning is intended to serve.' (p. 113)

On a more personal level, Young and Tardif (1992) give an account of involvement in the interviewing process from the point of view of both interviewer and interviewee. Young, the interviewer, seems to reinforce my earlier point about the value of sharing confidences:

'I opted for a cautiously open approach. I started by disclosing some of my uncertainties regarding the project and some of the concepts that interested me. Once Claudette had begun her story, I also began making a few disclosures about myself by intentionally linking aspects of my background to hers. Claudette responded to my openness with stories about her own research and life, so I was rewarded immediately and continually with better material and with a growing

sense of collaboration.' (p.141)

Tardif's story, the respondent, testifies to the success of Young's approach:

'From the very first interview, I felt at ease with Beth...I felt that her perception and evaluation of the situations I was referring to was accurate and that she could relate to my interpretation of a given situation ...There was a comfortableness in the interviews' (p.139)

Indeed, I would suggest that if the concept of reflexivity means anything, it must embrace this form of collaboration. I certainly did not achieve the same high level of rapport with some of my individual pupil respondents, and I can now see that the quality of data obtained in those instances was little better than that I could have achieved from a simple questionnaire. Nonetheless, Wolcott's (1990) concern that researchers 'talk too much and hear too little. They become their own worst enemy by becoming their own best informant' (p.128) is well taken and serves as a useful reminder about maintaining a researcher perspective.

Most telling of all perhaps, was Tardif's comment: '..we managed to laugh a great deal' (p.138). Undoubtedly, the ability to laugh together - and, similarly, to commiserate together, was a major factor influencing the success of interviews. This, of course, was easier to do with some staff than others. With physical education staff, I was able to share many experiences and to add anecdotes of my

own in response to their tales of, for example, first teaching experiences and college life. With the diverse range of senior teachers, the links were sometimes less obvious, although I shared my broader knowledge of other schools and, importantly it seemed, could appear knowledgeable about current legislation and broad educational issues. In conjunction, these factors seemed to establish my worthiness and reassure respondents that they were talking to someone who knew sufficient to empathise and, perhaps even more importantly, to challenge. Any less insight, and I could have appeared patronising. At the same time, there were occasions when it was prudent to 'present myself as a bit dense' (Wolcott 1990).

Pupil interviews posed different problems. I had several engaging individual interviews with confident and articulate 5th form pupils. These were pupils who were continuing with education, and who appeared to be quite happy to talk about their physical education experiences. Other interviews, from the same pupil group, were monosyllabic. I was unable to convince these pupils of the point of the exercise - and they responded accordingly. With slightly younger pupils, the most flowing conversations took place, in small groups, outside on the playing field. The weather was hot and sunny, and the pupils were relaxed and chatty. Perhaps the most interesting features of these interviews were the debates

which developed between pupils. My role here was rather different. I could not really empathise, and therefore did not attempt to. Rather, I 'acted dumb' encouraging them to explain their comments. Small group interviews were transcribed to identify comments from the individual pupils.

Interviews with physical education staff were transcribed in full, and copies were given back to respondents for comment (few were made - one respondent admitted to getting bored long before he had reached the end of the transcript!). All other interviews were partially transcribed, omitting passages which I judged to be entirely superfluous to the needs of the research. Respondents were offered access to copies of the tapes, as I was aware that I would not have the opportunity to transcribe them until after (perhaps long after) completion of the fieldwork. In the event, only one member of staff requested a tape and he returned it professing to be 'happy' with the contents. Pupils were not offered interview transcripts or tapes.

In all interviews, attention was paid to the conventions as detailed in texts such as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983). Thus, dress was chosen to be unremarkable in each context, and interview sites were selected, where possible, to facilitate uninterrupted conversation. The purpose of the

interview was explained, at the outset, to all respondents.

2. Life history interviews

My personal technique in the life history interviews was the same as that employed in earlier interviews. I decided to schedule these interviews towards the end of the fieldwork, so that I could be as familiar with the teachers as possible and would already have some insight into their lives and personalities. Having completed the task, I labelled the conversations 'life-history reflections' to indicate that the outcome was not a complete picture of each individual, but a partial account based on certain features key to this research.

Atkinson (1990) describes the life-story as a 'potent' portrayal of individuals. If teachers were the 'great unknowns' of education for Lawn and Barton in 1981 (p.243), then it is still the case that physical education teachers are something of a mystery, if a stereotyped mystery, in 1992. It would appear, therefore, that 'potent' pictures of these individuals is exactly what is required, and it is to this end that life history data was collected and presented, as far as possible, in long excerpts, using the teachers' own words.

In one sense, this is a move towards allowing physical

education teachers to have a 'voice' in the presentation of their views and concerns. Elbaz (1991) advocates the use of 'story' as the most effective way of giving teachers a voice, and the life-history reflections draw upon this tradition. Elbaz suggests that story

'allows us to see connections between the practice of teaching and the virtues and knowledge proper to it; the institutions of education and their traditions; and the stories of individual teachers through which we see their knowledge enacted' (p.3)

And, importantly:

'The sense of a community of teachers and researchers, working together, listening to one another, is especially important at a time when the work of both groups is becoming increasingly bureaucratized.' (p.3)

In a sense, it is this sharing and listening to one another which has appeared to be lacking in physical education research. We have too few 'heroes' (Atkinson 1990) with which to identify, compare and share a common framework for discussion. Sparkes' 'Alex' and 'Monica' at Branstwon School are notable exceptions (Sparkes 1987). ('Jessica' may be another, forthcoming, from Sparkes.) In order to extend - and perhaps challenge - the knowledge we have gained from Sparkes' teachers, we need access to other comparable characters. In this way, we may begin to develop a knowledge of physical education teachers, written in the form of stories wherever possible, which is accessible to the broader community of teachers and, importantly, is applicable to them, in the manner described by Terkel:

'Each of the subjects is, I feel, uniquely himself. Whether he is an archetypal American figure, reflecting thought and condition over and beyond himself, is for the reader to judge, calling upon his own experience, observations, and an occasional look in the mirror'
(Terkel 1968 in Lawn & Barton 1981 p.245)

Alexander et al (1992) recognise that individuals' stories of a personal nature cannot have universal meaning, but they make a similar point to Terkel when they suggest that 'components of such stories may be shared by others.'

(p.62).

Further issues of generalisability are addressed in the next section of this chapter. (See, in particular, comparisons made with the 'soap opera' genre.)

Goodson (1991) makes a strong plea for the use of data on teachers' lives in educational research. He suggests that life experiences are 'key ingredients of the person that we are, of our sense of self.' Thus it is 'the degree that we invest our 'self' in our teaching - experience and background shape our practice.' (p.40). In fact, Goodson is convinced that a focus on teachers' lives would alter, dramatically, our conceptions of research into teaching and schools addressing, as it does, evidence which teachers themselves identify as important. In many ways, Goodson is tending towards the same direction as Elbaz, in his desire to give teachers a voice. Of significance for this research

is his assertion that teachers' backgrounds and life experiences are 'idiosyncratic and unique and must be explored, therefore, in their full complexity.' (p.41). Certainly that has been true of teachers, and this research, at Citylimits High.

In terms of the areas explored in life history interviews, I took a fairly traditional route following life events in chronological order. Thus, I explored family and background, primary and secondary school experiences, the decision to teach/enter higher education, teacher training and career pathways, personal life issues and some general reflections on experiences in teaching and as a teacher. Pollard (1982) highlights the importance of such biographical details:

'Specific biographical experiences should also be analysed. Regarding the teacher, two obvious specific aspects are the influence of teacher training courses and professional socialisation and also the influence of family life or other concerns outside the sphere of school. Similarly, the age and sex of the teacher, their phase in the life cycle and their position in the career structure may be important.'

(Pollard 1982 p.34)

In summary, perhaps it is worth drawing, again, upon the wisdom of C. Wright Mills. His work is based on the premise that an understanding of biography and history must underpin social research. He describes the 'sociological imagination' as

'the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self - and to see the relations between the

two.' (1959 p.7)

Furthermore, and in line with the much current thought in qualitative research, (eg Atkinson 1990, Clandinin & Connelly 1990) Mills points to the value of narrative in the form of novels, as embodying 'the most widespread definition of human reality'. In 1959, he identified this as a gap that sociologists had not addressed. This would appear to be one of many examples, found throughout this research, of the foresight of C. Wright Mills. The development of a 'sociological imagination' would still seem to be a worthy aim for qualitative researchers.

3. Observations

Observation provides, for the researcher, the matrix within which other data can make sense. In the absence of pre-determined checklists, however, it is difficult to define exactly what observation entails. At Citylimits High, I drew upon my generic skills as a teacher and, perhaps even more usefully, as a teacher educator. In fact, this latter role provided me with much valuable pre-fieldwork practice (although it also had drawbacks which are discussed later). And yet, what did I actually do?

Delamont (1992) provides the most useful account of

observation that I have yet encountered. Basically, it is described in its simplest terms as 'watching and listening'. The activity is then broken down into four aspects: 'what to look at; how to look; where and when to look and listen; and finally what to record.' (p.112).

what to look at. Clearly, Delamont's response - 'it depends' is the correct one. However, in the first stages of the research, it is this answer that is the most frustrating. The research problem underwent a series of refinements. Towards the end of the fieldwork, it was relatively easy to focus on the research topic. At the outset, however, the purpose of the observation was to define that research topic so there was, in a sense, nothing specific to look at. Delamont (1992) suggests that it matters little what the observer looks at 'as long as the gaze is focused on some person, object or location in a thoughtful, principled way.' (p.113). I hope I have made the case that my observation was 'thoughtful and principled' in my lengthy analysis of the way in which the research problem was 'redefined...and redefined', presented in the first section of this chapter.

How to observe. Delamont draws upon the work of Wolcott (1981) to address this question:

'Wolcott proposes four strategies for deciding what to

look at and how to look. He suggests:

1. Observations by broad sweep
2. Observation of nothing in particular
3. Searching for paradoxes
4. Searching for the problem(s) facing the group'

(p.114)

At various points in the fieldwork at Citylimits High, all four strategies were adopted - although I tended to shift from one to the other in a much more fluid way than is suggested by Wolcott. Yet again, however, the point is made that when beginning to observe selectively, if the process is 'reflexive' and the details recorded, 'good ethnography will follow' (p.114). Whereas I can only make a tentative claim that this project represents 'good ethnography' I can, with certainty, claim that reflexivity directed the selection process. Again, the detail presented in the first section of this chapter is relevant.

Where and when to look. Logically, my observations moved around the school according to the focus at the time. Some strategic decisions were made, however, about observing physical education lessons. Initially, I had planned a fairly organised rota of lesson observation with each physical education teacher. However, it soon became clear that my role as a teacher educator was unhelpful in this respect. Goodson (1991) summarises the difficulty:

'We must, I think, constantly remind ourselves how deeply uncertain and anxious most of us are about our work as teachers...These are often the arenas of greatest anxiety and insecurity - as well as

occasionally, achievement.' (p.38)

All of the above is heightened in the case of a teacher educator doing the observing - memories of teaching practice supervision are enduring, it would seem.

Initially, I planned to see each teacher for the equivalent of one week's lessons, spread throughout the fieldwork as necessary. I found, however, that the physical education teachers constantly apologised for their lessons/pupils and were deeply uncomfortable with my planned visits. Each teacher reacted differently to my presence: Jane was very brisk and efficient, Arnold became withdrawn, Diane 'froze' and Pete produced a kind of 'lesson theatre'; dramatic and, often, very amusing show lessons. I felt quite certain that I was seeing something of their normal style, but with some features highly exaggerated. This was confirmed when I observed lunchtime clubs, where teachers were more relaxed and, I deduced, 'normal'. (Pupils in both lessons and clubs were generally well behaved and motivated, so the difference could not be attributed to this factor.)

In order to overcome these difficulties, I changed my observation plans. Firstly, I spent as much time as I could, in a two week period, observing clubs and recreational periods for older pupils. In these situations, it was easier for me to become semi-involved and thus to ease the burden of observation for the teacher as they got

used to 'having me around'. After that, I drifted between lessons in a much more random fashion, ensuring that, overall, I saw an equal amount of each teacher; a total of 6 complete double lessons with each teacher. Sometimes, I would observe from a short distance away - and this seemed to have the effect, for the teacher, of removing my presence altogether. I always offered to discuss the lesson with the teacher afterwards, detailing issues which I had found interesting, if requested. Importantly, I reached a point with both Pete and Jane where we would have lengthy discussions about their 'big' issues - mixed gender teaching, health/fitness and mixed ability groups. They seemed to find it helpful when I raised different questions on these areas. One of Pete's lessons provides an example:

Pete asked for feedback on the mixed volleyball lesson observed earlier. I made the general comment that it appeared to be 'good', in that the pupils were active and involved. He wanted more than that, so I mentioned the final game, which I thought was far too large. This he accepted, and invited still further comment. I asked him who he considered to be the best player and, after some thought, he named a much favoured, cheeky and athletic boy. I pointed out that one girl in particular was far more skilful and controlled, and I suggested, from my perspective, that he expected far too little of the girls in the class - was not really prepared to challenge them in the way he challenged the boys. He felt that this was possible and, in trying to work out why this was so, he put it down to (a) not knowing the girls and (b) being conscious of sexism, so perhaps over-compensating in the 'wrong' way. He was very thoughtful on this issue and he confirmed what I had already noted in the lesson - that he had no difficulty in identifying the needs of the less able girls, but had little idea how to deal with the stronger girls.

(Fieldnotes 15 June 1989)

My style of response here is typical of the way I operated throughout the fieldwork. I was always prepared to share my views - but never did so unless requested - and I tried to remain sensitive to the depth of feedback which was actually wanted.

4. What to record In addition to lesson and club/match observations, I spent a large amount of time observing and, more often than not chatting, to physical education teachers in a variety of other situations - staff meetings, physical education meetings, school events, lunch duties, sports day and trials, corridors, etc. The physical education staff meeting was one of my earliest introductions to the reality of the tensions in the department, and to the difficulties that some of these situations presented for recording observations, as this excerpt shows:

Pete is challenging the head of department at every step - and he is testing me! He recalls [a tutor from college] who had warned that P.E. might become recreation. Pete felt this had already happened - too many sports covered - not enough depth - no skills taught - so the pupils floundering. Argument ensued - Pete/Jane clash (a continuation of similar clashes apparently). Jane accused Pete of saying something - which he, in fact, had not. Pete put me 'on the spot' to adjudicate. I managed to wriggle out of it by offering some support for both parties and changing the subject. Tricky.

(Fieldnotes Jan 4th 1989)

However, at the time of the meeting I was able to record only one-line memory triggers, realising that I had to be

alert to the flow of conversation and be ready to join in or respond as required. The notes were written, in full, that evening.

Although Delamont's (1992) clarification of the processes involved in observation is helpful now, at the time of the fieldwork the most useful texts were those referred to in the first section of the chapter: the texts edited by R.G. Burgess (1984, 1985 (a) and 1985 (b)). These texts were invaluable for their rich data from researchers who had completed fieldwork, including observations, in a wide range of settings. The authors' frank admissions of the difficulties involved in such fieldwork provided both experience and reference points for an inexperienced researcher.

Coding and indexing data. Clearly the fieldnotes had to be coded in some way and, upon reflection, I wish I had investigated the use of an appropriate computer programme. I shall certainly do this before embarking upon further qualitative research. In the event, I coded manually, noting at the top of each day's data the key topics contained therein. I then transferred these headings to index cards.

4. Questionnaires

The questionnaires were the least useful source of data in this research. The reason for this is clear - they were planned badly. The original intention was to interview a sample of parents, members of the governing body and staff outside the physical education department. As it became clear that this was impossible, both logistically and in the time available, I decided to opt for an open-ended questionnaire for those groups. Thus, I hoped to obtain 'rich' data in a shorter time frame. Having made this decision, I then attempted to cover all eventualities and to obtain as much information as possible. The final focus of the research was still emerging as I extended the range of people interviewed and settings observed. However, I designed the questionnaires prematurely and had, therefore, to try to anticipate the data required. As a result, much of the data obtained was entirely superfluous to the project as it developed.

As I reflect on the process now, I think the mistake was borne of a kind of 'data panic'. I seemed to need to gain data from everywhere, about everything. At that stage, I thought I needed more and more data, as I felt I had very little of consequence. In the event, I have made very limited use of the data, although some relevant parts of it are included where they add a legitimate dimension to the interview/observation data. In summary, this is not to say that the exercise was futile, rather that its potential was

severely limited by my timing and lack of direction.

The mechanical details were as follows:

Parents. Questionnaires were distributed to a random sample of parents ($n = 187$). 94 were returned (50.26%). Data from 3 questions is included in the thesis, and the open-ended responses analysed using a simple 'frequency of mention' format.

Other members of staff. 42 questionnaires were distributed. However, the response rate was poor (14, ie 33%) as I distributed them too late in the term. It emerged, for example, that up to a quarter of the staff were unavailable due to trips or other commitments. Data from 2 questions is used.

Governing Body. 10 governors received questionnaires; 5 responded. Again, the data from 2 questions is used.

All the questionnaires were anonymous and those for each group were similar, but worded differently. In general, the analysis of selected parts is as brief and simplistic as possible ('frequency of mention' in broad categories) as I do not feel confident that the design produced data worthy of detailed analysis. A copy of each questionnaire is included at Appendix C.

SECTION THREE: ETHNOGRAPHY AT CITYLIMITS HIGH SCHOOL

The current debate on ethnography as a research paradigm is exemplified in two major texts: 'What's Wrong With Ethnography?' by Martyn Hammersley (1992) and 'Qualitative Inquiry in Education. The Continuing Debate' edited by E.W. Eisner & A. Peshkin (1990). Of the two, the latter is of particular interest pointing, as it does, to the range of the debate from the perspective of a number of different writers. (In many ways, the variety of viewpoints is reassuring.) Eisner and Peshkin's concluding statements make an apt starting point for this discussion:

'From our perspective, such contrasts contribute to the intellectual vitality that a growing form of research needs. What would be unfortunate is a premature codification of 'the right way' to do qualitative work ...We believe that all forms of inquiry, but particularly qualitative inquiry, necessitates openness to make its practice viable, that is to say, to make it capable of growth' (p.365).

In examining the research at Citylimits High School, and in placing it in the context of the broader debate on the validity of qualitative research, I feel tempted simply to follow Becker's (1990) combative style in asserting that the endless questioning about qualitative research is misplaced, that it has a tradition stretching back over 50 years; 'And the tradition thrives' (p.233), and that there is little cause for concern in the charge that qualitative

research is 'unscientific':

'We, who are researchers have to deal with that, but we don't have to believe that it poses deep epistemological problems' (p.235).

Certainly, in examining features of the research, I start, like Becker, from a position of firm belief in the worthiness of the research and the qualitative paradigm within which it falls. I feel little inclined to 'defend' it against charges that it is not something else; ie, quantitative. Rather, the research is, as it was designed to be; qualitative. Importantly, I could have undertaken research of a quantitative nature if my aim had been to ask different questions and to obtain different kinds of data. I can, for example, see much value in following-up some of the data in a second project, using a large scale questionnaire. Equally, I perceive a need for further life-history research. Essentially, I follow the maxim of 'horses for courses'.

This is not to presume that a case for the **validity** of this particular piece of research has been so easily made. To be worthy of serious concern, I must make a case for the validity of this research in the framework of its intentions and its conduct. Thus, I take the concept of validity as the foundation for the discussion which ensues. Other issues seem to follow logically from this starting point: validity in qualitative research must encompass

questions about the role of the researcher in the field - and the relationship between researcher and researched; ethical questions must be asked, particularly in the context of the purpose of the research and its audience and, finally, the issue of generalisability can be addressed if the original research can be shown to be 'valid'.

1. Validity

Hammersley (1992 a) describes validity as:

'the accuracy with which a description of particular events (or a set of such descriptions) represents the theoretical category that it is intended to represent and captures the relevant features of these events.' (p.67)

The related concept of reliability is described as:

'the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions.' (p.67)

In attempting to relate these to my own research, there are some immediate difficulties. As I was the sole researcher, the claim that my description of events is 'true' must largely be taken on trust, perhaps employing various degrees of Hammersley's further criteria of plausibility and credibility. The reader can judge the mechanical details of the conduct of the research from this chapter, and can listen to the words of the respondents in the form of lengthy interview quotes in other chapters. In addition,

a comparison can be made with Wolcott's (1990) nine points describing 'what I do, try to do or think I do to satisfy the implicit challenge of validity' (p.127). These points are:

1. Talk little, listen a lot (discussed earlier in the section on interviews)
2. Record accurately
3. Begin writing early
4. Let readers 'see' for themselves
5. Report fully
6. Be candid
7. Seek feedback
8. Try to achieve balance
9. Write accurately

Based on Wolcott's descriptions of these processes, I would suggest that I have gone some way towards achieving points 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; I have differed a little in my style on point 1 (although I accept the basic point) and I have failed to achieve point 3: writing early drafts soon after the fieldwork began. I did, however, record early impressions of the central characters of the research and used these, as suggested by Wolcott, as a 'baseline' from which to proceed. Crucially, Wolcott points out that :

'Objectivity is not my criterion as much as what might be termed rigorous subjectivity...It is I who must be satisfied now with elusive criteria like balance, fairness, completeness, sensitivity' (p. 133)

and he describes the whole process as 'Seeking Validity, Or Not Getting It all Wrong' (p.126). (Perhaps I can assert, with some certainty, that I didn't get it 'all wrong'!

See, also, the 'Conclusion' to the thesis.) Important in this context, however, is Delamont's (1992) earlier suggestion that elements of the research must be conducted in a 'principled' way. This, of course, is no different from any other type of research. The manipulation of numbers in statistical research must be just as easy as the manipulation of data in qualitative research. In both cases, as in all research, the reader must, ultimately, make some judgement about the integrity of the researcher. In a succinct summary of this whole process, Eisner and Peshkin (1990) reaffirm the point that in assessing qualitative research (although as I have asserted earlier, this applies to all research): 'that most exquisite of human capacities must come into play: judgement.' (p.12)

Wolcott's (1990) contribution to the debate on validity becomes much more intriguing, however, when he suggests that although the above are answers to the question of validity, this may not be the correct question. Drawing upon an account of personal tragedy, he concludes:

'What I seek is something else, a quality that points more to identifying critical elements and wringing plausible interpretations of them, something one can pursue without becoming obsessed with finding the right or ultimate answer, the correct version, the Truth...For the present, understanding seems to encapsulate the idea as well as any other everyday term' (p.146)

'Understanding', in this context, is described as 'a more ambitious activity' than merely 'knowing', involving the

ability to 'interpret and explain' (p.146). Wolcott makes it clear that he is not dismissing 'validity', rather he is attempting to place it in a broader perspective.

Although I am unsure of the nature of this 'broader perspective', Wolcott's notion of 'understanding' resonates strongly with the purposes of the research at Citylimits High School. I felt, as was detailed in the first section of this chapter, that there was a dearth of information on physical education teachers as they operate, at a day to day level, in a school. As I suggested in the second section of this chapter, the physical education profession is awash with mythical stereotypes, (is the teacher in 'Kes' the most enduring?) but lacks a shared bank of 'heroes' (Atkinson 1990), defined through the process of detailed qualitative research (Sparkes' work is an exception as was discussed earlier).

As the focus shifts towards 'understanding', questions about the purpose of the research become pressing. Clearly, the research can only be viewed as valid in the context in which it seeks to be valid. Of immediate interest, therefore, is the intention of the researcher. Hammersley, (1992 b) states, unequivocally:

'My starting point is an acceptance from realism of the correspondence theory of truth, the idea that one goal of ethnographic (and other forms of) research is to produce accurate representations of phenomena that largely are independent of the researcher and the

research process.' (p.198)

Hammersley thus rejects relativism as 'self-refuting' and, furthermore, he questions the ethnographic practice of: 'bringing the researcher into close contact with the phenomenon to be understood'. He asserts that 'Validity is not a function of the closeness of researcher and researched' (p.198) labelling it an 'impression view' of research. Contrast that position with Eisner and Peshkin (1990) who suggest that 'Empathy may be every bit as important for cognition as detachment.' (p.12) (See, also, later comments on representation.)

The relationship, or 'closeness' between researcher and researched is again dependent upon the purposes of the research. Gitlin (1990) advocates 'educative research' as a response to, what he describes as; 'the alienating relationship between the researcher and those studied' (p.443). He suggests that traditional research, including ethnographic research, 'strengthens the assumption that researchers are the producers of knowledge' (p.444) and thus research is 'done' to teachers. Importantly, teachers in traditional research do not have the opportunity to formulate the research questions, so their concerns are silenced in favour of those prioritised by the researcher:

'If research is going to help develop practitioners' voices, as opposed to silencing them, researchers must engage in dialogue with practitioners at both the level

of question-posing and the interpretation of the findings' (p.446)

Thus validity (or 'truthfulness') is understood as a 'mutual process between researcher and subject'. In this context, (and like the work of Elbaz (1991)) reliability centers on 'attempts to satisfy the underlying principle of voice' (p.447).

If Gitlin's concept of 'dialogue' is accepted, and in understanding the specific meaning he attaches to voice: 'voice is a form of political action that is both an articulation of one's critical opinions and a protest' (p.459), it makes little sense to attempt to apply Hammersley's notion of researcher/researched distance. The purpose of Gitlin's research simply cannot accommodate such a concept, nor, perhaps, should it have to. The same would be true of Goodson's (1991) vision of 'collaboration between teachers as researchers and external researchers' (p.44).

Whether, in fact, Gitlin is true to his purpose or, indeed, whether his activities can still be classified as 'research' is another matter. For example, Gitlin recounts his 'disappointment' at the choice of a research problem by one of his teachers: 'This project, I remember thinking, isn't going to challenge anything...' (p.457). And yet, if Gitlin is basing his work on the need to give teachers a

'voice', how can he be disappointed when they use it. What he really seems to imply is that teachers must share concerns of a type which he has identified as worthy. As he later points out in reflecting on the teacher in the case above, Gitlin's position was difficult because: 'forcing a change in her research focus would impose a new but still official ideology on her' (p.457). An ethical question from Soltis (1990), about critical research as a genre, summarises my concern:

'The presumption of knowing the evil is as important a guiding principle in critique as is knowing the good in evaluation and intervention. How you come to know either is the basic moral question that must be asked by critical researchers, who often assume a morally superior stance toward other researchers.' (p.225)

And yet, raising questions about Gitlin's research in this way, leads directly onto a further set of questions about the validity of both researchers' perceptions and respondents' views. Hammersley (1992 b) makes the important point that there is no single valid description available to researchers:

'Descriptions do not capture reality; at best they simply represent those aspects of it that are relevant to purposes motivating the inquiry. Multiple valid descriptions and explanations of the same phenomenon are always available. To this extent, I agree with the relativists, but I must stress that I do not accept that there can be multiple, contradictory, yet valid accounts of the same phenomenon.' (p.199)

While it has already been accepted that the research at

Citylimits High represents only a partial view, Hammersley is raising the further issue that respondents' views can be, quite simply, wrong. Wilson (1972) gives a characteristically graphic example of this issue in a philosophical question about teachers' aims:

'The point is rather that teachers' aims may not be the right aims. ...For instance, (1) if a teacher said that his aim in teaching English was to develop pupils' scientific abilities, or to save their souls, we should (at least) need to be convinced that this had something to do with English...and if he said that his aim was to produce patriotic Englishmen who would immediately kill all Pakistanis, we might think that although this was his aim, it was not the (right) aim.' (p.125)

This seems to bring the discussion back to a point made earlier by Eisner and Peshkin (1990): the centrality of judgement - 'that most exquisite of human capacities' in assessing (and perhaps I should add, in conducting) qualitative research. Later points on generalisability, and the potential for 'teacher-friendly' data from qualitative research are also relevant in this context.

At this point, it seems necessary to place the theoretical discussion in the context of Citylimits High School. There is a sense in which my research reflects elements of many of the viewpoints expressed so far. I question Hammersley's general position on researcher/researched distance, yet I make no claim to have achieved the level of collaboration advocated by Goodson and Gitlin. Indeed, at times, I was distanced from the events being observed, much as described

by Hammersley, and I certainly could not claim that my presence in the school was so all-embracing that I had an impact on all situations. At times, the momentum of events was such that the concerns of the 'insiders', as a group, were all-consuming and I was left with no choice but to be the outside observer. A description of one specific incident at Citylimits High School provides an example where I was expected to remain an outsider:

*Staffroom 11.45am. Staffroom buzzing with talk of the incident. 3 girls were suspended for 'assaulting' a 'timid' boy - ie., they cornered him, pulled his trousers down and photographed him. The Governors have just reinstated the girls. Staff are furious and Pete is organising a union meeting. Staff may refuse to teach the girls - and all the boys are, apparently, 'up in arms'. Many are asking the question; 'what would have happened if 3 boys had done it to a girl? A pointed notice appears on the noticeboard soon after lunch:

London Borough of Sociologydon
G.C.S.E. Paper 1

WHAT IS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES?

Underline the answer which you think most appropriate:

- .A grammatical error
- .Showing a keen interest will gain you promotion in today's Educational scene
- .An obsession with certain senior people
- .Women get State Pensions at 60; men have to wait until 65
- .Three girls assault one boy = suspension from school; if three boys assaulted one girl = expulsion + criminal charges*

(Extract from fieldnotes 2 March 1989)

As the staff became more incensed, and as calls for action became more and more extravagant, my presence became of little note. There was one suggestion that I might be a

'spy' for the senior management, others thought I might have some useful factual information on equal opportunities or the powers of governors. In general, however, the staff drew closer together and, in order to be tolerated, I had to maintain a very low profile. Importantly, I was, for much of that time, a clear outsider. I had only one role open to me - that of detached observer. I felt that I was gaining valuable insight into some of the frustrations of the staff, perhaps, even, an aspect of school life which reflected 'its basic foundational values' (Goodman 1992 p. 127). Certainly, I was seeing a rare public expression of hostility to aspects of equal opportunities policies, and a dramatic response to teachers' perceived lack of control over decision making processes. Thus, I respected teachers' wishes and remained on the periphery in order to maintain my position as a researcher.

Perhaps it is most accurate to say that I shifted, constantly and fluidly, between the range of outsider-insider relations described by Elliot (1988):

- the outsider as an expert and detached researcher into educational practices. The insider as the practitioner of the activities the outsider researches
- the outsider as participant observer. The insider as reliable informant
- the outsider as 'neutral-broker'. The insider as a contributor of personal perceptions and judgements
- the outsider as critical theorist. The insider as a self-reflective practitioner

-the outsider as reflective teacher-educator. The insider as reflective teacher

I do not perceive this as a problem, rather I think it must be the case in most qualitative research. The necessity to respond sensitively to such situations, and to respect the wishes of the teachers in the school, must lead to a range of roles for the researcher. Perhaps the key to developing successful field relations is to know what is most appropriate in any given situation. Given the volatile nature of social life, this requires considerable skill.

(See, also, points made in chapter 7.)

Returning to Gitlin's (1990) point about teachers' 'voice', I make no claim that this research achieved the status of 'educative research'. However, I had some similar aims: It was my stated intention to allow the research at Citylimits High to develop from the voiced concerns of teachers, and I conducted early interviews and became involved in innumerable informal conversations to determine the nature of these. In addition, there is no doubt that teachers enjoyed discussing issues with me (such as the problems with the G.C.S.E.) and that I was sometimes able to facilitate discussion between members of the department. Furthermore, the head of department claimed that, in talking to me, she clarified her own position and it strengthened her resolve to change jobs (she has since done so). In this respect, it would be impossible to claim that

I was merely 'producing accurate representations of phenomena that largely are independent of the researcher' (Hammersley 1992 b). Rather, I might, in that instance, have come closer to the emancipatory aims of critical researchers. In general, however, I eschewed such a position. I find myself much less certain of the 'moral highground' than most critical researchers. For example, Sultana (1992), in describing the frustration he felt as a researcher, states:

'..it was gratifying to see teachers acknowledge the damaging effects of structures, curricula, and pedagogies that they promoted unproblematically in schools and to engage with them in an attempt to come up with alternative, more transformative modes of practice. However, four years following that research, I really wonder whether it has made any real difference in the structures and practices of those schools.....There is of course great skill in the ethnographer's depiction of 'life'. The point of this paper has been that the real genius of the radical researcher will be to transform that 'life' to come closer to a democratic vision.' (p.25/26)

For Sultana, teachers had 'acknowledged' what, presumably, he could see all along. Thus it was 'gratifying'. And yet, is this certainty about the 'better world' no less positivist in its outcome than traditional research forms? It implies that the problems are 'out there' waiting to be identified and that a critical researcher can help teachers to do this. Furthermore, Sultana's 'democratic vision' guides his research and, again, appears to be almost immutable. I had the same difficulty, earlier, with Gitlin's 'disappointment' with some of the topics that

teachers identified for investigation. While not disagreeing with the points made by Wilson (1972), that teachers' views can be 'wrong', I still find it impossible to go as far as most critical researchers in their assertion that they know what is 'right' for teachers. I have to state, quite categorically, that I do not have a clear vision of a 'better' or a 'more emancipatory' or even a 'more democratic' system of education. I have a suspicion that it would be different for each individual, and the four central characters in this research would seem to bear this out.

'Relevance'

So, while it is clear that I embarked upon the research with the intention of allowing teachers to identify the central themes, in the final event, the choice of topics for in-depth discussion in this thesis, was mine. What I have not made clear is how I chose those topics, and I find Hammersley's (1992 b) concept of 'relevance' is most helpful in this respect. In describing his understanding of the term, Hammersey eschews the instrumentalist model:

'The view that the relevance of research should be judged in terms of its effectiveness in bringing about desirable outcomes implies too direct and automatic a relationship between knowledge and practical result.'
(p.201)

(Sultana (1992), quoted above, may find the reason for his disappointing research in this comment.) Hammersley's

preferred criterion of relevance is different:

'In my view, research should be aimed at producing knowledge that contributes to the problem-solving capacities of some group of people, perhaps even of everyone'. (p. 201)

He admits that may be viewed as a 'weak criterion'. In particular, it reaffirms his view that:

'..the contribution that inquiry of any kind can make to practice is usually quite small. I do not believe that research is a key ingredient that can transform practice in such a way as to bring about some radical improvement in human life.' (p.201)

I have not sought to transform practice, for the reasons outlined earlier. I can, however, claim to have helped physical education teachers at Citylimits High to ask questions about the nature of physical education, how it is perceived and received, and whether their aims are realistic or self-defeating. Other teachers, and particularly senior managers, were alerted to some questions about views they hold - rarely expressed or consciously identified - which may have a negative impact upon the way they perceive physical education and physical education teachers. (The most obvious example is seen in their responses to questions about definitions of 'success' for physical education - see chapter 4. See, also, the discussion in chapter 7 on the development of teachers' 'scripts' for education and physical education.) There is no doubt that I could have achieved further on this

criterion of relevance and, with hindsight, this would have made the research more helpful to the teachers involved. I think it would be accurate to say that I may have been too tentative in this respect. What I did achieve, however, was a set of detailed cases and a catalogue of rich, analysed data on the four physical education teachers and, to a lesser extent, other teachers. Importantly, all of that data was contextualised in Citylimits High School.

Generating theory

A further question about this research leads directly from my last point. There is no doubt that I had the notion of 'thick description' (Geertz 1975 p.27) in mind as I wrote accounts of incidents and teachers. However, there is more than this. I would claim that I have generated **theory** throughout the research. Hammersley (1992 a) raises a central question in this respect: 'on what basis can ethnographers reasonably make a link between data and theory?' (p.18). Essentially, Hammersley questions the claims that have been made for theory generation on the distinction between 'theory' and 'description':

'On the one hand, descriptions cannot be theories since they represent objects and events in particular space-time locations; whereas theories are about types of phenomena wherever their instances occur. On the other hand, all descriptions are theoretical in the sense that they involve concepts and are structured by theoretical assumptions.' (p.27/29)

However, my analysis of Hammersley's position seems to

point to queries about the language used by ethnographers in their attempts to identify a distinctive 'brand' of theory, rather than a fundamental concern with the ability of ethnography to generate theory. At the risk of sounding complacent, I would rather claim that I have generated, simply, theory, rather than attempt to make it special to this type of research. I see very little difference between the process of theory generation from my data, and that process in the context of quantitative research. In both cases, a set of data is collected and is discussed in the context of appropriate literature, other research projects and, importantly, in the light of the concerns of that particular project. It matters little whether these concerns are identified by the researcher or the respondents. What is clear is that, in either case, the judgement of the author on the criterion of relevance is of paramount importance: If that were not the case, then there would be no logical grounds upon which to delimit any discussion. Delamont (1992) has a pragmatic view of this stage of the research process:

'There is no need to be frightened of analysis, it only needs systematic attention to the data, the wide reading already going on, and a bit of self-confidence.'

(p.162)

This is not to suggest that the theories thus generated are automatically 'good' or correct. As with all forms of research, the theories from qualitative research can be

'wrong', incomplete or just inappropriate. They will be verified or expanded by other researchers conducting similar or follow-up projects, or by other practitioners as they read them. In several places in this project, for example, I have claimed that my findings have endorsed some of Sparkes' (1987) theories, and have questioned the appropriateness of others.

Perhaps Wolcott's (1990) concept of 'understanding' should be revisited in concluding this section of the discussion. It was my intention to understand more about physical education, both as a subject operating within a school structure and as a body of knowledge developing through the lives and careers of four physical education teachers. The theories I have developed through this research must, therefore, be judged on that criterion. That they are 'theories' should not be in doubt. Whether they are good theories, will be borne out by others as they read the cases and attempt to apply them to their own situations. (The quote by Terkel (in Lawn and Barton 1981), which has been used on several occasions in this research, provides a useful summary of this position.) The particular value of the accounts from qualitative research, particularly the interview data from teachers, is that it is accessible and interesting to other teachers. In one sense, the data from Citylimits School, and other research projects of the same genre, have the morbid fascination of 'soap operas'; real

enough, yet removed. (It is from this understanding of ethnography that I develop my analysis of 'the drama' of physical education in chapter 7.)

2. Generalisability

The issue of generalisability is closely related to the last point about theory development. A central criticism of the validity of much qualitative research is: to what extent can the findings of a single case study be applicable to a broader population? Yet, as with all other areas in this discussion, there is a range of conflicting views. In a key paper, J.C. Mitchell (1983) asserts that:

'..case studies, of whatever form are a reliable and respectable procedure of social analysis and that much criticism of their reliability and validity has been based on a misconception of the basis upon which the analyst may justifiably extrapolate from an individual case study to the social process in general. A good deal of the confusion has arisen because of a failure to appreciate that the rationale of extrapolation from a statistical sample to a parent universe involves two very different and even unconnected inferential processes - that of statistical inference which makes a statement about the confidence we may have that the surface relationships observed in our sample will in fact occur in the parent population, and that of logical or scientific inference which makes a statement about the confidence we may have that the theoretically necessary or logical connection among the features observed in the sample pertain also to the parent population. In case studies, statistical inference is not invoked at all. Instead, the inferential process turns exclusively on the theoretically necessary linkages among the features in the case study. The validity of the extrapolation depends not only on the typicality or representativeness of the case but upon the cogency of the theoretical reasoning.' (p.207).

Hammersley (1992 a), on the other hand, identifies 'empirical generalisation' as achievable, particularly if the case chosen is typical in 'relevant respects' and the population to which generalisation is to be made is appropriate. He is more sceptical, however, of 'theoretical inference' because of its deterministic assumption that universal laws exist and can be explained by such theories. Donmoyer (1990) rejects traditional notions of generalisability in the context of ethnographic research. He suggests that we need, instead, to 'expand' our way of thinking about phenomenon. Thus the traditional views of cause/effect and predictability are dated, particularly if we accept that human action and interaction is impossibly complex: 'a hall of mirrors that extends to infinity' (p.178). Donmoyer employs schema theory to conclude:

'..the purpose of research is simply to expand the range of interpretations available to the research consumer'
(p.194)

This view can, once again, be related to the key quote from Terkel.

Other researchers have, like Donmoyer, attempted to redefine the concept of generalisability to make it more applicable to qualitative research. Schofield (1990) suggests that qualitative researchers are not really seeking to replicate the results of others, and should

query instead the internal validity of their work, and that of others. She argues that fieldnotes should be open to others to read, such that the author's interpretation can be verified. Becker (1990), like Hammersley (1992a) suggests researchers should ask the fundamental questions: whom are we generalising for, and what are we generalising about?

Perhaps the work by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is one of the best known in this context. They replace the concept of generalisability with that of 'transferability'. Related to this is the notion of 'fittingness': 'The degree of transferability is a direct function of the similarity between the two contexts, what we shall call 'fittingness'' (p.124). Thus if two contexts are 'sufficiently congruent' then working theories may be applied from one to the other. Importantly, in this view, the case for transferability must be made afresh each time a case for transfer is proposed. However, Donmoyer (1990) criticises Lincoln and Guba's position on the grounds that it is unnecessarily narrow:

'Although the notion of transferability accommodates the problem of complexity, it still assumes that findings from one setting are only generalisable to another setting if both settings are very similar. My intuition suggests this need not necessarily be the case.'

(p.185)

oyer's use of the term 'intuition' is interesting in

this context. In one sense, having conducted the research at Citylimits High, and having paid due attention to the conventions of ethnographic research as they were available to me at that time, my judgement as to the value of elements of the research must, at one level, be based on intuition. That intuition is derived from experience, and the research process itself. The concept has, however, further implications. In reflecting on the project and its findings, I suspect that the questions of generalisability, and even transferability are completely out of my hands. Rather, others in the physical education profession will employ - or disregard - my cases and my theories based on their perceptions (intuitions?) of the credibility of the research and the researcher. Some individuals may find that elements of the stories and experiences of the four physical education teachers at Citylimits High are relevant to their own lives. Some may understand themselves, or others, more completely as a result. Some may find the contrasts with themselves or others illuminating. It might be most accurate to describe this process as 'teacher controlled generalisability' rather than the more traditional researcher directed process. Here again, the links to the genre of drama and the 'soap opera' are suggested.

To conclude this chapter, therefore, it seems that this methodology discussion can only be said to be complete once

the research is disseminated to the profession. Thus, I, the researcher, have an obligation (moral?) to disseminate in the most widely accessible format. The research can be judged as 'theoretically valid' from the information presented in this chapter. Its 'practical validity' will be determined by the physical education profession and, importantly, by individual teachers, as they study and then draw upon the research. Importantly, the ways - if any - that this may impact upon practice are beyond my control.

As Giroux (1991) notes:

'Central to a democratic notion of difference is the recognition that there are many reading publics, and that diverse audiences read differently' (p.507)

Therefore, the final assessment of this project is in the hands of interested readers.

CHAPTER TWO

KNOWLEDGE AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION:

A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

'Philosophy...is, above all, concerned with classification of the concepts and propositions through which our experiences and activities are intelligible. It is interested in answering questions about the meaning of terms and expressions, about the logical relations and the presuppositions these terms and expressions involve.' (Hirst 1974 p.1)

Hirst's description of philosophical analysis gives an insight into the relevance of a philosophical approach to a discussion of knowledge and physical education. It is not my intention to reprint texts on epistemology, nor to write a thesis (or several theses) on the debates within this field. Rather I intend, in this chapter to introduce key concepts as they relate to this study, and to point to the potential value of raising (and re-raising) philosophical questions about physical education. In particular, questions about the terminology used within physical education and about the knowledge base of the subject are central to this theoretical discussion. Implicit in the latter question are issues of value and the nature of the

physically educated pupil.

The analysis in this chapter was undertaken at an early stage in the writing-up process. Although, in the final analysis, the philosophical perspective is viewed as less illuminating than, for example, sociological perspectives presented in chapters three, five and six, some of the questions which arose from the fieldwork appeared to warrant a discussion of knowledge in Hirst's (1974) terms (above). In many ways, therefore, this chapter is best viewed as a developmental stage in the process towards the later discussions on physical education at Citylimits High School. That the tone is more 'evaluative' than in later chapters is, perhaps, inevitable, given the implication that, from a philosophical perspective, particular knowledge claims can be defined through logical analysis. The important point to be made is that, for the purposes of this research, the philosophical perspective addresses some issues which were raised by respondents at Citylimits High (hence its place is justified in the context of ethnographic research) and, further, raises a number of questions which are then traced through later stages of the thesis.

I TERMINOLOGY

The starting point for this discussion is, fittingly, an

offering from the physical education profession itself; an extract from a job advertisement which was circulated nationally in 1989. This is not meant to be representative, merely illustrative of terminology which can be found in physical education.

Curriculum

The curriculum is predominantly health based being centred on the needs of pupils rather than specific activities. Health related fitness courses run throughout years 1 - 4. In the lower school, courses in invasion games and problem solving are off-set against Gymnastics and Dance in the winter terms and in the summer over-net and fielding games run concurrently with Athletics. These courses include games-making and 'game centred games' and a problem solving approach is adopted throughout their duration.

It would seem logical to assume that this department has identified the physically educated pupil as a health conscious problem-solver who can make-up games. Yet the final section of the advertisement describes the upper school programme (the culmination of the curriculum?) as 'given to more traditional games'. Furthermore, the health related fitness courses end at year four, suggesting that either the department's view of the older physically educated pupil is different, or that they feel their work is largely finished by this stage. Possibly none of these assumptions is correct, but the advertisement does hint at some ambiguities in the messages which emanate from the profession. More importantly, however, is the way in which contemporary 'approval' concepts have been used to indicate

that this is a forward thinking department, eg; 'problem solving' and 'the needs of pupils rather than specific activities'. At a superficial level, such terminology can be passed over as educational jargon. A problem arises, however, in that parents, pupils and professional colleagues seem to have considerable difficulty in grasping the essential nature of physical education (see Procter 1984) and, I would suggest, current (and traditional) use of language merely clouds the issue further. It may be that, in an attempt to gain status and validity in the school community, physical educationists latch onto educational approval slogans and then apply them indiscriminately across the whole curriculum. To refer to the advertisement, can it really be the case that problem-solving is appropriate for all games teaching? It would be very odd if there were not many occasions where problem solving was wholly inappropriate for a particular stage of learning or for a particular pupil.

The most serious consequence of such indiscriminate use of language is not just an enduring ambiguity within physical education, but hidden within the obscure language is an **unrecognised confusion**, and it is this, I would suggest, which inhibits the development of the subject and prolongs the circular nature of the debate over its central purpose in education. As Procter (1984) notes, Taylor's comments from 1973 are still applicable:

'There may be some disquiet amongst physical educationists, about what it is they are engaged in and why.' (cited in Procter 1984 p.9)

At a more specific level, the confusion seems to begin at the beginning....with the title 'Physical Education'. Pratt (1978) identifies the uniqueness of language as one of the essential elements of being human. It would seem to be foolhardy, therefore, to ignore the impact of inappropriate or imprecise use of language. Pring (1976) suggests that language

'offers richness and complexity. It gives the individual not only a detached understanding of the world, but some purpose on it, and a capacity to bend it to his (sic) purposes.' (p.15)

Hirst (1974) accepts as 'obvious' the centrality of language in the development of understanding:

'Language is an instrument which we have developed and do develop, by which we, amongst other things, understand the world.' (p.75)

Hirst also points to the importance of recognising not just denotation but also connotation in attempts to interpret meaning. So, what of the term physical education?

Perhaps the first consideration is one of breadth. 'Physical Education' is as broad, and as vague, as would be

the logically comparable term 'Mind Education'. As such it gives little practical guidance upon which to build a curriculum: it is as unwieldy as 'mind education' would be and the comparison highlights an inherent problem. Choosing a different title for the subject is, of course, fraught with problems as Lawson (1984) points out in his summary of the development of physical education in America. The second, and perhaps more important issue is that of dualism. Use of the title 'physical education' reinforces just that Cartesian dualistic approach to education that has long bedevilled physical education, devaluing its educational worth. Thus, the body is seen as physical matter, the mind as non-physical matter, and physical education fits neatly with the former.

Yet in a classic rebuttal of dualism, Ryle (1949) dismisses the theory as a myth: 'the dogma of the ghost in the machine' (p.33). Instead, he suggests that 'intelligent' can't be defined in terms of 'intellectual' and the notion of needing to have a prior intellectual operation steering every action leads to infinite regress. Ryle proposes an alternative theory: 'When I do something intelligently, ie, thinking what I am doing, I am doing one thing not two' (p.32). He also summarises, very accurately, the consequences of dualism for physical education: 'Since doing is often an overt muscular affair it is written off as a merely physical process. On the assumption of the antithesis between 'physical' and 'mental', it follows that muscular doing cannot itself be a mental operation.' (p33)

It is interesting to note that the validity of the term 'physical education'

was questioned specifically on these grounds in official documentation nearly forty years ago:

'We are increasingly aware of the wholeness and of the interdependence of those processes that we have been accustomed to describe as physiological and psychological. It may not be long before we realise that the term 'physical' in relation to humanity has a very limited meaning.' (D.E.S. 1952 p.51)

It is clear that despite the existence of logical arguments to the contrary, Cartesian dualism holds a persistent

attraction. Whitehead (1988) points to our tendency to refer to 'the body' and 'its' strengths and weaknesses:

'..that is, we habitually give this dimension of ourself the status of a noun' and she makes a plea to physical education to work in a 'monist context' rather than 'seeing the body as a separate entity and then have to argue for the relationship and value of our work to the person as a whole' (p.4).

Popper (1972) rejects monism on its fundamental notion of 'the physical completeness of all living organisms' and supports dualism but with an interesting qualification:

although he retains the Cartesian belief in the separateness of mind and body, he sees them as two states rather than two substances and, importantly, as 'two kinds

of interacting states...physio-chemical and mental ones' (p.252). Thus he seems to place a greater emphasis upon the effect of mind and body upon each other.(Popper (1972) also points to the existence of other kinds of states, suggesting that we may need to be pluralists rather than dualists in our views.)

The attraction of a monist viewpoint in the context of physical education is obvious. Where intelligence is defined primarily as 'the ability to theorise' (Ryle 1949), a subject which deals ostensibly with purely physical actions is likely to be of doubtful status. Although Ryle refutes this narrow definition of intelligence, dubbing it 'the intellectualist legend', it is clear that dualism does pervade education and implies a hierarchy of knowledge. Specifically, a belief in Cartesian dualism not only reinforces the distinction between two types of knowledge; 'knowledge how' and 'knowledge that', it allows for higher educational significance to be attached to the latter. (This aspect of knowledge is discussed in more depth in section II of this chapter.) Such a belief is, of course, essentially damaging to a subject entitled 'physical education'. Popper's version of dualism may be more fruitful for a practical subject and is, I would suggest, more closely related to the commonsense version of dualism which characterises the views of pupils, parents and teachers, as evidenced by the responses from Citylimits

High School. (See chapter 4.)

Evans (ii) (1990) summarises this discussion in a recent article. He would appear to support my contention that physical education is bedevilled by poor conceptual clarity, and he attributes this to a failure to identify the primary focus of the subject:

'The field of physical education has always been plagued by a sense of confusion about what precisely constitutes our subject area...Perhaps the most sensitive issue has been with the term 'physical'. It provoked a mind-body dichotomy which was hard to live down.' (p.12)

Evans admits to being unsure of the appropriateness of the title 'physical education' but suggests that it is at least more holistic than its predecessor:

'P.T.'

It is not only at school level that use of language in physical education is unhelpful. Confusion in terminology is compounded by the use of the titles 'Human Movement' and 'Sports Studies/Science' in higher education centres and in some examination syllabii. Lawson (1984) highlights similar discrepancies in America, where a range of titles is given to essentially similar courses: 'human movement studies'; 'physical activity sciences'; 'sport pedagogy' and, more recently; 'kinesiology'. 'Human Movement' had found favour in this country, particularly with some leading physical

educationists: 'Physical Education, or what I prefer to call movement...' (Arnold 1985). Yet if these two terms can be used interchangeably, or if the knowledge base of physical education is really 'human movement' (or, even more ambiguously, 'movement'), then the implications for the physical education curriculum need consideration.

Surely 'Human Movement' implies a curriculum based upon a thorough biomechanical/physiological/aesthetic analysis of movement. Posture, motor skills of all types (even writing), co-ordination, corrective physical activity: these would form the subject matter of lessons. A Human Movement specialist would, quite logically, work across the whole school curriculum ensuring efficient and appropriate movement in every situation. The appreciation of human movement would seem to be a necessary feature of such a curriculum. Would it even include transport, travel and population movements? Of course games, ball skills, gymnastics etc., would form part of such a curriculum - but only a part. Aspin (1983) refers to Aristotle and the original term **kinesis** for clarification of Human Movement Studies. Kinesis is a much broader term than movement and is defined as: 'coming-to-be and passing away, increase, decrease, change of state, change of position.' (p.4) Thus, Aspin argues, 'change' is as appropriate a translation as is 'movement'. Therefore, an area of study entitled Human Movement Studies should concentrate on the whole spectrum of change processes in the life of a human being:

'For me, then, Human Movement Studies will comprise a range of subjects: philosophy; the natural sciences; the human sciences and history. And since Human Movement necessarily takes place and has to be studied in a context, and for certain purposes of an interpersonal (that is to say, social) kind, in accordance with certain standards and kinds of value, I believe that to this list of constituent subjects we may, with some justification, add economics, politics, ethics and aesthetics.' (p.4)

If Aspin's definition of Human Movement Studies is accepted, then it is also logical to accept his hypothesis that personal participation in Human Movement activities is unnecessary - except to note that he displays some confusion in his argument at this point. Personal participation or 'active engagement' in many 'change processes' as described by Aspin is not voluntary. One engages in many of them merely by being human. Perhaps, though, Aspin is referring to the narrower range of activities which make up much of the physical education curriculum. Certainly it would be unnecessary to be competent in such specific activities to engage in a comprehensive study of Human Movement. But whether this has any relevance for physical education as it actually exists in schools is debateable.

Human Movement Studies (on Aspin's definition at least), and physical education would seem to be two entirely different areas of study. If they are not different, and if the term Human Movement is employed in academia only as a means of raising status, then I would suggest that much

harm has been done to the development of the subject 'physical education' at school level, divorced, as it seems to be (and unlike most other subjects) from higher levels of learning and research. 'Physical Education' is effectively trivialised as appropriate for school level study only. (See also Curl 1990.) If, on the other hand, the two areas of study are very different, then surely questions must be raised about the suitability of a degree in Human Movement Studies as a preparation for teaching physical education. Whichever of these two positions (or any other) is the case, the point of the argument is to illustrate yet another source of confusion at the heart of the terminology employed in physical education.

This particular issue is more complex still, however. 'Sports Studies' is an established field of study at degree level. The fact that the content of such courses is remarkably similar to courses elsewhere which are entitled Human Movement Studies (or even, occasionally, Physical Education) is misleading in itself. The polarisation between academic proponents of the two similar but differently named courses is unhelpful to say the least. The division presumably centres, historically, on the well worn debate between physical education and sport - yet the intricacies of this debate are of little interest to parents, pupils and, indeed, many physical education teachers. So we are left with argument by meaningless

slogan: 'Physical education is not sport' or 'Physical education is more than sport' (see, for example, Beck 1990). In this never-ending saga, the sports lobby hurls the challenge of sporting excellence at the schools, and the education lobby responds with vague notions of 'being responsible for the whole child' or 'caring for the social and moral development of each individual child' (see later discussion).

To obscure the matter further, physical education in its manifestation on the school curriculum is sport, or at least it looks very much like it. '5th form soccer' or '3rd form netball' as timetable headings, would seem to indicate that sport is taking place. If, however, the pupils are not taking part in a sport, and are not learning how to play that sport more competently or are, in fact, doing much more than this, then one is left with some enduring questions. I would suggest that the physical education profession has never adequately answered those questions. Like Carr (1983 b), I would argue that physical education has failed to make a persuasive case for its educational value and significance which takes either the general public or the education establishment beyond a fairly crude notion of the worth of the subject. Furthermore, in seeking to justify itself in almost ethereal terms, physical education simply reinforces the notion that practical work is of low status: yet it will always be an essentially

practical subject! (See, also, later comments on the National Curriculum.)

Evans (ii)(1990) claims that in his experience in Australia, it would be almost impossible to distinguish between what is understood as 'sport' in schools and what is taught under the label 'physical education'. He points to moves by Seidentop to address this issue by changing the name of the subject to 'sport education', describing physical education as 'unexciting', 'unimportant' and lacking in direction. In particular, Seidentop suggests that in embracing progressive philosophies of education, physical education has lost all sense of accountability:

'In physical education, however, it has become fashionable to largely eschew evaluation. It is thought to be unfair to compare children with different talents. And when educational goals are so fuzzy, it becomes very difficult to hold students accountable for anything other than attendance, dress and minimal participation.'
(Seidentop 1986 cited in Evans 1990 p.13)

Thus physical education is lacking in meaning and is, for Seidentop, essentially 'trivial'. Evans sees little to be gained by a change of name, although he accepts that the current position is confusing and unhelpful. Yet his case for retaining physical education is less than illuminating. He suggests that we leave 'sport' to outside agencies in the community, and concentrate instead on such areas as dance, gymnastics and aquatics. One can only wonder at the logic of this narrow definition of physical education.

Perhaps it is inevitable that those who argue for a definition of physical education which eschews competition will, in the end, have to argue for the exclusion of traditional games. It is not, I would suspect, an argument which would find much favour with the majority of teachers or pupils.

Whilst not accepting Siedentop's claims that physical education is 'trivial', I would argue that it is trivialised by justificatory arguments which undermine its practical nature. For example, claims for the primacy of the social and moral benefits of physical education lessons (see P.E.A. 1987 p.34) are counter-productive on two counts; firstly, they seek to justify the subject in terms which devalue the physical element. Secondly, they fail to recognise that such social and moral development is an integral part of all school curricular and other activities. In itself, it is not the justification for any one subject, although it may be a justification for the total experience that is school. Peters (1966) states that subjects must be justified by reference to their own worth rather than 'being justified for other, extrinsic reasons' and Arnold (1985), categorises a range of possible outcomes from physical education (such as health and socialisation) as 'beneficial outcomes' or 'spin-offs'. The important point, surely, is that each subject area contributes something unique to the development of pupils, and it is

that uniqueness which must define a subject and which must define physical education. As Wilson (1972) points out:

'It may be, for instance, that by or in the course of learning English a pupil also makes friends...and so on; but no-one in his (sic) senses would describe these as aims of English-teaching.' (p.126)

This latter issue is explored further in the 'knowledge' section of this discussion.

Returning to a point raised earlier, the familiar statement 'Physical Education is not sport' merits brief mention in its own right. It is a source of confusion to many because, as was stated earlier, physical education often is sport in its broadest sense. I would suggest that to make the statement in the first place is to make a standard 'category mistake' (Ryle 1949) of the type clearly illustrated by comparison with the similar and equally inappropriate statement: 'Athletics is not running'. Perhaps this is why the statement has always seemed puzzling to onlookers and why explanatory responses from the physical education profession have often been tautological.

If terminology is generally unhelpful, it is unsurprising to find statements of justification in a similar state of disarray. Barrow (1981) suggests that much of physical

education is supported by a 'confused and hazy body of argument' and, in a classic snub, White (1973) went so far as to suggest that claims made for the subject were 'disreputable'. Without entering into the sphere of claims and counter claims at this stage, suffice to make the point that it is difficult to see how a subject can be successfully justified when it deals in obscure and contradictory language such as that illustrated in this section - nor is this an exhaustive account! An additional constraint, however, is the language of education itself - the framework within which physical education attempts to develop and it is here, I would suggest, that some of the 'disreputable' (White 1973) claims originate.

Once again, I refer to the job advertisement which opened this discussion as it raises several relevant issues. For example, the first sentence from the extract provides the reader with immediate reassurance that the department in question is 'child-centred' in its outlook:

'The curriculum is predominantly health-based being centred on the needs of pupils rather than specific activities.'

'Child-centredness' is generally accepted as a self-evident good, and there are few teachers today who would claim to dispute its place as the foundation for their thinking and planning. Yet some serious questions have been raised about this theory, not least of which is the charge that it is,

in practice, unworkable. (See, also, evidence from Citylimits High School in chapter 7.) Pring (1976) points to the works of W.H. Kilpatrick as an extreme example of child-centred philosophy, and comments:

'Despite popular talk about basing the curriculum upon the interests of the pupil, this rarely happens in practice.' (p.48)

Pring suggests, instead, that teachers teach what they want to teach – but use the interests of the pupils to facilitate understanding and, by so doing, they trivialise the material by implying that it has nothing in itself to offer. He also points to a tension inherent in a child-centred approach:

'The mind will be expanded, enlightened and extended only so far as the current interests and curiosities of the child will permit. And these are provincial indeed.' (p.50)

The tension is, for Pring, between subject matter to be mastered and the interests of the child as paramount. He accepts fully the importance of pupils as individuals, yet recognises also the significance of public knowledge even though it may not have immediate relevance to the pupil. Appleyard (1991), in a scathing attack, suggests that child centredness and the accompanying notion of cultural relativism are the results of 'inadequately understood and misapplied theory'. He describes much of the work in

education today as nothing more than 'caring blandness' with teachers cast in the role of 'social engineers'. In his view, this scenario can only result in a 'swelling, disaffected, subliterate underclass' (p.12).

Carr (1988) also raises questions about many of the assumptions upon which child-centred theories are based. In the context of this discussion, his comments on Deweyan progressivism are particularly relevant. Carr summarises Dewey's perspective as follows:

'(i) the pragmatist conception of knowledge and learning as essentially a matter of active engagement in practical problems rather than passive reception of academic facts, and (ii) a certain view of motivation towards school learning in which an important part is played by a particular conception of experience as the proper starting point for knowledge-aquisition.' (p.153)

On questioning the first of these positions, Carr suggests that the redefinition of knowledge as 'behavioural dispositions' and in terms of practical skills (problem solving etc.), is 'educationally debilitating' in that it focuses on the practical utility of knowledge rather than upon its intrinsic worth. He stresses that education is essentially concerned with 'individual emancipation in the light of a wider understanding than small individuals normally bring to school with them' (p.154) and he defends esoteric studies which are outside the immediate experience of pupils on those grounds. In questioning the second

position, Carr views as 'suspect' the emphasis on 'practical and familiar elements of experience as a starting point for educational development' (p.155). He points to the tendency for young children to be captivated by fantasy and wonder and, while not dismissing the power of 'immediate practical concerns' as a source of motivation, Carr stresses the corresponding power of the imagination:

'it is to argue...that irrespective of individual inclination all children are entitled to some educational acquaintance with aspects of knowledge and understanding that may not be readily available in a school curriculum which is too literally based on a certain pragmatist construction on 'experience'' (p.156)

It is worth noting, at this point, the findings of a study into pupils' transition from primary to secondary school and their experiences of physical education. Howarth and Head (1988) conducted a small scale study in which pupils were observed in physical education lessons in the last term of primary school and the first term of secondary school. One of the recurring findings was that pupils were thoroughly appreciative of physical education in the secondary school precisely because it was new, and outside of anything they had experienced previously.

The practical difficulties of basing a physical education curriculum on the needs of individual pupils are obvious

(and are common to all subject areas). For example, such a curriculum should not, by definition, be prescribed in advance of each pupil's arrival at a school. In the case of the school cited in the advertisement, it is evident that the physical education curriculum is based on the needs of pupils as perceived by the staff of the department. Hirst (1974) suggests that this is always likely to be the true position where we claim to base a curriculum on children's needs:

'Saying what children need is only a cloaked way of saying what we judge they ought to have' (p.16)

This is not a criticism of the content of the curriculum as specified by any department. The focus on health, for example, may be admirable and most suitable for some or all pupils. (See discussion on this specific issue in chapter 7.) Questions can be raised, however, about the terms used to justify the choice of content and the apparent lack of understanding of their implications for practice. Certainly at Citylimits High School, as at most others I suspect, teachers had decided upon most content and operational details of the curriculum prior to the start of the school year. They had, in effect, made all the decisions about pupils' 'needs'. Could such a curriculum be more accurately described as 'teacher centred' (or, as I describe it in the context of teachers' 'scripts' for education in chapter 7; self-centred?) even where such 'needs' had been identified

from experience with other pupils? And is this necessarily better or worse than a 'child centred' or a 'subject centred' curriculum? More cynically perhaps; is it likely to be any **different** in practice? (See, also, later discussion on the National Curriculum.)

As another example, and to re-iterate a point made earlier, the emphasis upon 'problem-solving' which, it is claimed, is adopted throughout the entire curriculum, must surely be diametrically opposed to a curriculum based on pupils' needs. The method of teaching could never be prescribed in a child centred approach - unless, that is, all pupils were presumed to be identical in their needs. Perhaps this is, however, evidence of another confused theory which needs some investigation. Wilson and Cowell (1982) suggest that much of the confusion here originates from a misunderstanding of the relationship between method and content. To discuss method on its own is, they state:

'false and dangerous...False because the arguments are really disguised arguments about content; and dangerous because unless they are recognised as such we shall not handle them in the right way.' (p.38)

The first consideration, according to Wilson and Cowell should be 'what content we consider **valuable**' with appropriate methods subordinate to this. They also point to the absurdity of trying to generalise on the methods:

'Some pupils like visual aids; others find them not aids but impediments. Some like to anchor themselves in formal definitions of new concepts before exploring them so as to gain practical understanding; others prefer to start from the other end.....Some find one aspect of a subject 'motivating', others another...' (p.40)

The list is, of course, endless. The underlying issue is lack of clarity in use of language and, in this section, I have illustrated some of the problems facing physical education in this respect (recalling that the impetus for the discussion, came from the conceptual confusion found at Citylimits High School.) Although other subject areas face similar problems, the difficulties for physical education are compounded by enduring questions of educational status and, viewed from a philosophical perspective, it can be suggested, at this stage, that one solution may be for physical education to attempt to proceed from a clear understanding (and statement) of its own worth on the curriculum. It is to this, therefore, that the discussion now turns. (At later stages in the thesis, however, many aspects of this approach are viewed as problematic)

II KNOWLEDGE

Meakin (1983) gives as his minimalist definition of education: 'the development of knowledge that is in some way worthwhile or valuable' (p12). His definition warrants

analysis at two levels: what is meant by 'knowledge' and how is knowledge to be deemed 'worthwhile' or otherwise. For the purposes of this discussion, the former issue is the initial concern although it is inevitably linked to the latter. The notion of 'value' in this context arises as a persistent theme in the fieldwork (particularly in relation to the teachers' personal philosophies) and spans philosophical and sociological accounts of knowledge.

Pears (1971) suggests that a persistent difficulty in any analysis of knowledge is its sheer vastness as a concept: 'perhaps the most striking feature of knowing is the variety of things that can be known' (P.5). I would argue that a standard response to an entity of such proportions, is to classify it in some way. The classification of knowledge into 'types' is relevant to this discussion because those types of knowledge are accorded different levels of worth in the context of education.

At a general level, Pears (1971) describes Russell's classic division of knowledge into three 'species': knowledge of facts, acquaintance, and knowledge how to do things. In particular, the distinction between knowledge 'that' (of facts) and knowledge 'how' (practical knowledge) is important as has already been indicated earlier in this chapter. Much of the school curriculum is concerned almost exclusively with 'knowing that', as it is this category of

knowing which is seen to be most closely attuned to the development of the mind – the central focus of education for many influential theorists. (See White 1973; Peters 1966; Phenix 1964; Hirst 1974.) Thus, physical activities, essentially seen as exemplifying 'know how', are accorded a lower level of worth in the curriculum. However, this narrow view of education has been challenged and sound arguments have been put forward in the defence of practical knowledge. Ryle (1949), as part of his rebuttal of Cartesian dualism, attempts to give a positive account of knowing how:

'We learn how by practice, schooled indeed by criticism and example, but often quite unaided by any lesson in the theory.' (p.41)

Ryle also dismisses the suggestion that know how may be equated with mere habit:

'It is of the essence of merely habitual practices that one performance is a replica of its predecessors. It is of the essence of intelligent practices that one performance is modified by its predecessors. The agent is still learning.' (p.42)

Pring (1976) sees education as 'the development of such mental qualities which contribute to the life of the mind' (p.8), yet he refutes the narrow conception of knowledge commonly held. Thus, for Pring, education is concerned with the development of knowledge as long as 'a sufficiently generous analysis of knowledge is accepted' (p.9). He

further claims that we tend to ignore 'know how' only because 'know that' is easier to examine, and he makes a clear case for the importance of know how:

'To learn how to do something is an achievement that involves an adequate conceptualisation of the problem certainly, but also coming up to scratch in one's performance' (p.18)

It could be adduced from the above that Pring is suggesting that 'know how' places greater demands upon the individual, an issue which is referred to again later in this section.

Hirst (1974) is often criticised for his insistence upon the primacy of cognitive development and the lower value he places upon practical activities. However, there is some contradiction in his work on this issue, and his thesis rests on the assumption that practical activities cannot bring about cognitive development in any meaningful way. He does acknowledge the complexities of such activities - he simply sees their particular demands to be of secondary importance in education:

'...(practical activities) may in fact always involve knowledge of both the first two kinds, but it clearly picks out certain capacities over and above cognitive understanding and mastery of which a person is capable'
(p.57)

There are two responses to such a view. The first is that

exemplified by Pring (1976) in his critique of Hirst. Pring disagrees with Hirst's analysis of knowledge, preferring a more generous interpretation to include Know how:

'Important though it is to know that certain statements are true, knowing how to do things (to play a piece of music, to enjoy a concert, to make a sketch, to appreciate a poem, to climb skilfully) is equally a cognitive achievement, a development of the mind, which is not reducible to 'knowing that' or to the kinds of knowledge that can be stated in propositions.' (p39)

In this view, achievements in physical education would be viewed as cognitive achievements on the same level as achievements in any other subject or area. The second response is seen in the following statement by Kirk (1988):

'It is important to point out...that physical activity does not lead to cognitive development, but rather it demands conceptual awareness, knowledge and understanding as a necessary (though not sufficient) part of successful engagement and participation.' (p.79)

Thus, physical activities would draw upon cognitive skills although the claim is not made that, in themselves, physical activities lead to cognitive development. (A critique of this view, however, would surely question whether it is feasible to draw upon and use such cognitive skills and yet exclude the possibility of cognitive development resulting directly from their employment.)

Whichever of these two views is commonly held by physical educationists, (and see chapter 4 for the views of physical education teachers on knowledge at Citylimits High School) it is certainly the case, (as was discussed earlier) that they have experienced some difficulty in making an agreed case for the educational benefits of their subject. Much of this failure may be rooted in a reluctance within the profession to return to some of the most eminent theorists and to develop a case based on, for example, epistemology. More damaging, perhaps, is a lingering anti-intellectualism (George and Kirk, 1988) which allows distinguished works in the field itself to go largely unheeded. A recent conference supported by representatives from all sectors of the physical education profession concluded that 'lack of thorough and vigorous 'in-house' debate' was a major problem facing the subject (Crutchley, 1988). It may even be the case that many educationists continue to regard physical education with some amusement; as providing not more than 'relief' from the 'really hard work' of the academic disciplines (Aspin (1976). Procter (1894) suggests that some in the education establishment question the need for qualified teachers of physical education at all. Perhaps all of this is evidence of the enduring influence of theoreticians such as Peters (1966) and Dearden (1968). If Barrow's (1981) charge, that justifications for physical education are 'pretty embarrassing' finds any remaining support, then the physical education profession can be

alerted to one of their enduring status difficulties.

So what can be determined about knowledge and physical education from within the physical education profession? Of particular interest in this section is a brief analysis of some published works.

Pring (1976) rejects a reductionist view of knowledge and suggests a way forward which may prove fruitful for physical education. Instead of trying to reduce knowledge to basic categories (a task, incidentally, which has proved to be notoriously difficult in the case of physical education), Pring suggests an approach which recognises the diversity and value of the many activities already in a curriculum. In the case of physical education, the implications are clear. As Meakin (1983) points out:

'Physical education, in its present form, is devoid of any strict logical unity, by which I mean that there is no feature, or set of features, both common and peculiar to all the activities currently falling under its name.'

(p.11)

Meakin therefore presents a stark account of what is understood by physical education:

'By physical education, I shall mean the attempt to educate pupils (or at least contribute to their education) by seriously engaging them in the following kinds of activity;

- (i)competitive games and athletic events, plus those physical activities which, while not competitive in themselves are practised in a competitive way;
- (ii)educational and formal gymnastics;
- (iii)dance and dance like activities;
- (iv)non-competitive outdoor pursuits;
- (v)swimming.'

(p.10/11)

Meakin can identify features which are common to the above activities but he stresses that it is the differences between physical education activities which is of most interest. In recent history however, and certainly up to the advent of the National Curriculum (see later discussion and explanatory note in the Introduction to the thesis) the profession has tended to avoid this simple content based approach and has tried either to summarise the knowledge of physical education in terms of aims/objectives, or to present short 'catch-all' statements of definition. An example of the former approach can be seen in a recent H.M.I. document: 'Physical Education From 5 to 16' (1989). A brief introductory section makes it clear that although for many people physical education is 'synonomous with physical recreation'; undertaking such activities as team games and athletics in the school curriculum-

'takes place in the context of teaching and learning. In physical education general and specific skills are acquired, knowledge and understanding developed, and positive attitudes and personal and social attributes

encouraged' (p.1)

In this document, the aims of physical education are presented in terms such as to 'develop a range of psycho-motor skills'; and to 'develop understanding and appreciation of the purposes, forms and conventions of a selection of physical activities' (p.1). Experience in physical activities is said to require 'thought as well as effort' and it leads to 'improved performance, personal achievement, understanding and increased knowledge' (p.1)

Leaving aside some glaring questions about the assumptions made in the development of 'positive attitudes', and the wisdom of justifying the subject in largely extrinsic terms, there are some more pertinent questions about the theory of knowledge upon which these statements rest. It would appear, for example, that knowledge is defined in fairly narrow terms rather than in Pring's preferred 'sufficiently generous analysis'. Knowledge is, for example, presented as something apart from 'skills'; and 'personal and social attributes' are similarly awarded a different status. Learning in physical education is said to occur 'through action, sensation and observation', again implying that the activities themselves are only valuable as a means to something else. 'Performance' and 'personal achievement' are differentiated from 'understanding and increased knowledge'. A fairly rigid version of dualism is

implied - and is then reinforced in a list of aims which splits neatly into bodily tasks and those more traditionally perceived as cognitive tasks or achievements.

In their objectives, the authors eschew all reference to specific activities preferring to couch their thoughts in more general terms:

'express simple ideas and feelings clearly using a range of gestures and actions'
'anticipate cause and effect, for example, flight of a ball, movement of others' (p4/5)

And yet, what meaning could these objectives have outside of the activities which require them? What would be the point of anticipating the flight of a ball, if this did not form part of a game; it would seem to be a peculiarly useless attribute unless one intended to put it into context. Could it not be the case that far from legitimising physical education in educational terms, an approach such as this merely serves to confuse, or perhaps to confirm the subject in its insecurity?

A second method of describing the meaning of physical education is by way of all-embracing statement. Again, a recent example can be employed: the Interim Working Group (I.W.G.) set-up under the auspices of the British Council of Physical Education to report on physical education in

the National Curriculum. This group appears to take a philosophical perspective, of the type advocated by Wilson (1972) when it suggests that, although difficult, it is essential that the subject of physical education is 'crystallised' into one sentence:

'We are discussing at this time the following AIM:
To provide access to the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes necessary to promote the optimisation of capabilities central to participation in culturally valued physical activities.' (cited in Curl 1990 p.1)

Again, it is interesting to comment on implied theories of knowledge (what is the knowledge claim of physical education apart from understanding and skills?); and on the clear implication that the responsibility of the physical educator stops short of ensuring that learning actually takes place. The suggestion that it is only necessary to provide access to the subject would find little favour with writers such as Holt (1982):

'It was my job and my chosen task to help children to learn things and if they did not learn what I taught them, it was my job and task to find other ways of teaching them until I found ways that worked' (p.5)

Curl (1990) makes a similar point and he labels the access approach as 'a door-keeping exercise - ...with little or no commitment beyond that of admitting someone' (p.2). In

addition, Curl questions the notion that 'learning to learn' should take priority. Rather, he suggests that such areas are the province of research rather than the proper concerns of a national curriculum.

However, the statement makes a useful point about the value of physical education and, as was suggested at the beginning of this section, questions of value are inherently bound up with questions about knowledge in relation to any subject. In this case, a cultural theory of value is embedded in the aim, following in the tradition of writers such as Lawton (1975). Thompson (1980) identifies 'the culture of the physical' and suggests that many people participate in sport, take it seriously and find their lives enriched as a result; hence the justification for physical education on the curriculum and the guide to choice of appropriate activities.

There are, of course, many other criterion of value. Carr (1983b) considers that sports and games must be seen as 'expressions of important human aims, purposes and interests of a social, cultural, and individual nature' (P.8); Meakin (1983) points to the worthwhile knowledge 'chiefly practical' which can be developed in physical education and makes the case that education would be unsatisfactory without it; Hirst (1974) recognises the value of physical education if it is:

'pursued in accordance with a rational appraisal of the place and value of physical activities in human life which we wish the pupil to acquire, that the activities themselves are viewed as those of a rational being, not merely an animal, and that they therefore constitute part of the life of a rational person.' (p.22)

For Reddiford (1983), the key criterion is more straightforward: 'that physical activities are important to and for our lives, when a part of our lives is the history of our bodily activities' (p.20). He also points to the importance of an underpinning concept of 'person', and Aspin (1976) makes a strong case (based on the work of Arnaud Reid (1961) and Strawson (1959)) for the 'logically primitive' concept of the person:

'The idea of the person is the touchstone of all our appraisals of the world...The idea of 'person' precedes the idea of mind and body: a person is both, for both these ideas are subsumed in that of the person which is prior' (p.112)

Aspin relates this to the understanding that knowledge is not 'neutral' or 'out there' and so, he suggests we may be better served to consider 'knowing' in its broadest sense. Consideration of this issue seems to carry the discussion both backwards; to questions about the concept of knowledge, and forwards, in its suggestion that : 'A piece of knowledge never breaks entirely loose from the person who produced it' (Pears 1971 P.7)

III THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

As was stated in the introduction, the National Curriculum for Physical Education barely featured as an issue in the fieldwork stage of this research. However, by the concluding stages of the writing-up process, the final document has been published, and it is interesting to examine it in the light of the preceding discussion.

In the final document, the similarity between the list of activities proposed by Meakin (1983) (see earlier) and the Physical Education National Curriculum, is striking. For example:

'The attainment target for physical education is the sum total of all the end of key stage statements. In meeting the attainment target pupils should be able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding involved in areas of activity encompassing athletic activities, dance, games, gymnastic activities, outdoor and adventurous activities and swimming.'

(D.E.S. 1992 p.2)

Although originally proposing that three attainment targets would cover physical education: planning, performing and evaluating, the final version incorporates all three into one 'continuous process'. Pressure during the consultation process, particularly from central government, has ensured that practical performance is viewed as central to the physical education curriculum: '...I should be grateful if

you could ensure that the active element is predominant'
(Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke 1991).

At one level, it appears somewhat strange that it should be those outside the physical education profession who press for the value of physical activity and practical performance. (It is not suggested, however, that the Government's view is 'monist' in the sense implied by Whitehead 1988.) In the light of the preceeding discussion, however, perhaps the motives of the Physical Education Working Group can be more easily understood as a response to the perceived low status of 'know how', and the consequent marginality of physical education (Eg; see Bell, 1986). Possibly the most important issue of 'value', however, for many in the profession, is that physical education has featured at all as a foundation subject. This is not to presume, however, that its position is immutable!

The physical education/sport relationship exercised the minds of the working group, and a lengthy explanation formed part of the interim report. In the final document, however, this item is to be found in section H1 of the Non-Statutory Guidance:

'1.1 In physical education the emphasis is on learning in a mainly physical context. The purpose of the learning is to develop specific knowledge, skills and understanding and to promote physical development and competence. The learning promotes participation in sport.'

1.2 Sport is the term applied to a range of physical activities where emphasis is on participation and competition. Different sporting activities can and do contribute to learning.'

It would appear, therefore, that the document is attempting to make a distinction along the lines of 'physical education is more than sport', as was discussed earlier. And yet, the distinction remains unclear for this reader (even more so, perhaps, having read the above) just as it was unclear for many different respondents at the time of the fieldwork at Citylimits High (see chapters 4 and 7).

The aims of physical education, as detailed in the Non-Statutory Guidance, make it clear that physical education is still to be viewed as a subject with much to offer beyond the 'mere' physical. Whitehead's (1988) plea, cited earlier, for physical education to work in a 'monist context' has gone unheeded. Thus, the aims are presented in three sections; the first concentrating on 'the physical' - doing activity, valuing participation and appreciating movement; the second charting the contribution physical education can make to problem-solving, self esteem and inter-personal skills; and the third, which clearly separates mind and body:

'1.3 Physical activity is combined with the thinking involved in making decisions and selecting, refining, judging and adapting movements. Through these activities pupils should be encouraged to develop the personal qualities of commitment, fairness and enthusiasm.'
(p.B1)

Statements such as these can be viewed as reinforcing the notion that the practical nature of the activities themselves somehow needs 'supplementing' to make them educationally worthwhile. And yet, the Physical Education National Curriculum is to focus largely upon practical activity.

Perhaps the most important point to be made is that the National Curriculum document represents a focus for the profession (although, it must be stressed that, at the time of the fieldwork, it was not a major issue for the physical education teachers at Citylimits High School). It has generated discussion and debate, and it can be viewed as a starting point for the subject - along with all the other National Curriculum subject documents. It seems more than likely that it will undergo revision as it is implemented; revision at both an 'official' and, perhaps more interestingly, at an 'unofficial' level. It is this latter point which brings the discussion back to points made earlier about 'knowing' (Aspin 1976) and the need to consider knowledge in the context of the 'person' Pears (1971). Moreover, one of the central concerns of this research is the individual nature of teachers' responses to a range of circumstances. (See the discussion on Ball and Bowe's (1992) work in chapter 7.)

Thus, we come to the second major part of this theoretical discussion – as the limitations of the philosophical perspective on knowledge and physical education are exposed. It is to sociology that we must turn for a more detailed analysis of knowledge in the context of 'personhood'.

The purpose of the discussion, to this point, has been twofold. Firstly, it has been my intention to highlight the opaque nature of terminology in physical education and to propose that this not only results in great confusion for those outside the profession but, more importantly, it may serve to obscure much internal confusion. Language and terminology at both school and higher education stages have been analysed, as has related terminology from the wider world of education. Secondly, the discussion has focussed on some key concepts from epistemology, in the belief that it is from this perspective that many damaging educational viewpoints about the hierarchical nature of knowledge have originated. I have proposed several ways in which such views can be countered and a case for the validity of practical knowledge has been presented. (See, also, chapter 7 and the conclusions to this research.) The notion of 'value' has been discussed in the context of justificatory statements for physical education, supported by a range of viewpoints. It is at this point that the notion of knowledge and 'the knower' has arisen and this has prompted

a different perspective on knowledge and physical education, implying a range of different questions. The focus on 'the knower' also highlights the tensions between the theoretical approaches adopted in these two chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

KNOWLEDGE AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION: A VIEW FROM SOCIOLOGY

In accordance with the format of chapter two, it is my intention, in this chapter, to focus on concepts and explanations from sociology as they relate to this particular study. As was indicated in the introduction, the choice of issues for discussion throughout this study has been determined by the fieldwork and its findings (see, for example, chapter 4). A further feature of this study is the attempt to use the disciplines of sociology and philosophy to contribute jointly to an understanding of issues which arose in the fieldwork. Although tensions between the two disciplines are recognised, I have attempted to highlight the positive nature of their interaction in the development of a rigorous analysis, rather than a negative and rather narrow conception of each discipline in competition with the other. This seemed the only way towards an acceptable

understanding of physical education at Citylimits High School: just as the last chapter sought to understand the 'unity' of knowledge claims, so this chapter highlights the 'untidiness' surrounding those claims. The paradox is a direct reflection of that found in the fieldwork, and it emerges as a central feature in the research.

FROM THE NEW SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE TO CRITICAL THEORY AND BEYOND

I. THE NEW SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

The early 1970s saw the emergence of a new direction in the sociology of education and, with it, a new perspective on the sociology of knowledge. This approach is characterised by the work of Michael Young and the publication of the set of papers entitled 'Knowledge and Control' (1971). Pring (1976) offers a quote from Gorbutt which encapsulates the new paradigm:

'Man (sic) constantly makes his world in that he is continually faced with the problem of constructing his social reality, of making sense of the world.'
(cited in Pring 1976 p.67)

Thus knowledge is 'relativised'; 'redefined'; 'socially constructed' and is to be understood as a 'perspective'. Young (1971) points to the inescapable conclusion that 'it

is not just people but knowledge in educational institutions that is 'processed'...' and suggests that the focus for a sociological analysis of knowledge must be '...the methods of assessment, selection, and organisation of knowledge and the principles underlying them...' (p.25). An analysis of knowledge in this paradigm is, therefore, essentially an analysis of those who have the power to legitimate their own version of what constitutes knowledge: the process of developing knowledge thus becomes significant.

The importance of this approach to an understanding of knowledge and physical education is illustrated by the fieldwork data from Citylimits High School. Teachers in the study had clear - and differing - views about the content and value of the subject; the senior management team were looking to physical education for completely different outcomes; and parents, from their standpoint, justified the subject in a number of different ways (chapter 4 includes a lengthy discussion of these issues).

From such evidence, it would seem that an attempt to identify the knowledge of any subject area is fraught with difficulty and this a criticism which sociology would level at philosophers such as Hirst, and his 'Forms of Knowledge' thesis. However, issues raised at Citylimits High transcend disciplinary barriers, hence each discipline is utilised in

the analysis where it seems most appropriate.

At a theoretical level, therefore, three central and closely related features of the 'new' sociology of knowledge are relevant for this study: the relationship between knowledge and social control; the rejection of the traditional division of knowledge into defined subject areas; and the suggestion that teachers and learners 'construct' their own knowledge.

KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

'How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control.'
(Bernstein 1971 p.47)

In his now classic statement, Bernstein summarises the 'new' sociological perspective on knowledge. Implicit in such a view is the notion that **change** is likely to be of major interest in a sociological analysis, reflecting, as it does, shifts in power and in our understanding of what is **worthwhile**. Young (1971) points to the ability of those in power to define what counts as knowledge, who has access to it and 'what are the accepted relationships between different knowledge areas and between those who have access to them and make them available' (p.32).

These ideas can be seen to have their foundations in classical sociology; for example, Marx spoke of the disinterested nature of knowledge and suggested that 'the construction of a corpus of knowledge is inextricably linked to those who produce it' (Blum 1971 p. 118). In this view, any critique of knowledge is, in reality, a critique of the producers of that knowledge - a suggestion which offers an explanation for the endurance of traditional knowledge divisions. In the context of physical education, the conflict between educational and sporting perspectives, as discussed in chapter two, may provide a ready example of a struggle to legitimate views of the knowledge of the subject from different positions of power in society. What counts as physical education becomes dependant upon an individual's perspective and his/her ability to influence others to accept that view. As Young (1971) comments, with reference to the subject of science:

'What 'does' and 'does not' count as 'science' depends on the social meaning given to science, which will vary not only historically and cross-culturally but within societies and situationally.' (p. 21)

This relativist view of knowledge is not unchallenged (see Pring 1976), but it does suggest, as a possibility, a framework for the analysis of the fieldwork and a set of questions which might otherwise have been missed - ie; how

is the knowledge of physical education legitimated in this school; and whose view has the greater influence and why?

THE DIFFERENTIATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Young (1971) sees the differentiation of knowledge into distinct subject areas, as a logical progression in the establishment of control:

'Increasing differentiation is a necessary condition for some groups to 'legitimise their knowledge' as superior or of high value.' (p.33)

Young goes further than this and cites stratification as 'the most explicit relation between the dominant institutional order and the organisation of knowledge' reinforcing, as it does, assumptions that knowledge should become 'specialised and with minimum emphasis on the relations between the subjects specialised in and between the specialist teachers involved' (ibid. p.34) Ball (1987) describes the resulting relationships between subject departments as 'baronial politics' (p.221).

Bernstein (in Young '71) defined an educational 'knowledge code' within which he identified two types of curriculum: 'collection' and 'integrated'. The term 'collection' is used to describe a curriculum where the contents are

clearly separated, whereas 'integrated' refers to curricula where the boundaries between contents are less rigid. Like Young, Bernstein sees the former code as endorsing the existing forms of control, particularly in the legitimation of existing forms of knowledge:

'Subject loyalty is then systematically developed in pupils and finally students, with each increase in the educational life and then transmitted by them as teachers...The system is self perpetuating through this form of socialisation.' (p.55)

Bernstein identifies the concept of 'framing' to represent the relative degree of control teachers and pupils have over the learning process, and this leads to the notion that a collection code, combined with a strong frame, has the effect of increasing the teacher's power over what is taught and how it is taught. Thus, legitimate knowledge is defined by the teacher, and the pupil is seen as 'ignorant, with little status and few rights' (p.58). In addition, knowledge in education becomes 'uncommonsense knowledge':

'Such framing also makes education knowledge something not mundane, but something esoteric which gives special significance to those who possess it.' (p.58)

It is interesting to note that, through examinations at G.C.S.E. and A' Level, physical education seems to be attempting to make its curriculum content more esoteric in

nature; moving away from the readily understood arena of popular sports and into the various fields of sports science.

Bernstein confirms that a weakening of the 'frame', under an integrated code, is a necessary condition for any shift in power, especially if the control of the learning process is to shift towards the pupil and away from the teacher. This shift would seem impossible under the strongly framed collection code.

In a more recent empirically based study, Connell (1985) supports Bernstein's theoretical perspective. Connell uses the term 'competitive academic curriculum' to describe the traditional differentiated subject based arrangement which he found in his research schools. Such an organisation of knowledge and learning is labelled 'hegemonic' and it has the characteristics of separating what is learned from the 'personal and social experiences' of the learner; of a hierarchical organisation of knowledge; of setting pupils in competition with each other and of regular testing to differentiate between pupils. In a format such as this, some knowledge is subordinated - and physical education is cited as a case in point.

Connell (1985) describes the 'competitive academic curriculum' as a 'barrier between the teacher and the

class' (p.89). However, progress towards a more integrated curriculum has been slow and the advent of the subject-based National Curriculum seems to suggest that, in this country at least, Bernstein's ideal is as unattainable as ever. Furthermore, questions have been raised about the logic of the case for integration.

For example, Bernstein (1971) suggests that an integrated curriculum, based on 'integrating ideas', would make greater demands on teachers: 'greater powers of synthesis and analogy....ability to tolerate and enjoy ambiguity' (p.65). If this is the case, it seems likely that schools will continue to reject wholesale integration given the propensity of most of us to divide and order difficult ideas, fields, etc., into manageable 'chunks'. More important, I would suggest, is the inevitable end result of an integrated curriculum based on 'themes' or 'integrating ideas'. A new hierarchy would form, with a bureaucratic structure to support it and the resulting crystallisation of 'themes' into distinct areas. Furthermore, it is naive to presume that the different 'themes' could ever be regarded as having equal status.

Wilson (1985) analyses the concept of social inequality and makes the essential point that although we can change the form of it, we cannot change the amount of social inequality: 'however many factors we equalise we are still

left with an infinite number of unequalised ones..' (p.60). I would suggest that this can be applied to subject areas or themes or any other arrangement for organising knowledge in the curriculum. The hierarchical order of knowledge may be different but it will not disappear: 'Belief in the superiority of certain activities and experiences over others is too deep within our ways of thinking to be dismissed lightly' (Pring 1976 p.55). Carr (1988) makes the additional point that although the integration of knowledge may be a purpose of education, the case for particular 'themes' has yet to be made:

'Why should the fragmentation of a student's educational experience, in the sense of his being initiated into a number of separately taught disciplines of English Literature science, mathematics, geography, history and so on, be any great cause for concern? There would seem on the face of it, no a priori reason why learning about the reproductive cycle of the frog in biology alongside the Napoleonic wars in History should be an educationally deprivational experience, so long as the curriculum at large is broad and rich enough to permit initiation into all the celebrated forms of knowledge and good teachers are on hand to make good sense of tadpoles and Austerlitz.' (p.161)

Whilst not wishing to suggest that the initiation view of education is wholly correct, the questions raised by Carr are relevant. 'Themes' or 'integrating ideas' may not necessarily represent a better approach or even a route to 'equality'.

For physical education, integration with other

(particularly science) areas may appear to hold the promise of higher status for the subject - a tautological assumption given the underpinning rationale for integration in the first place. From the fieldwork at Citylimits High, it was evident that the school operated along fairly traditional lines in that departments and subjects were easily identifiable along the lines of Bernstein's 'collection code'. Physical education teachers sought higher status for their subject - but this was largely through subject specific activities (the G.C.S.E. for Jane and sporting success for Pete). Questions to be asked, therefore, are those about the micro-political processes (Ball 1987) which maintain these boundaries, and teachers' belief in them.

TEACHERS, LEARNERS, AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

This is one of the central and organising perspectives of the new sociology of knowledge. Esland (1971) sees it as a shift from

'how man (sic) absorbs knowledge so that he can replicate it to how the individual creatively synthesises and generates knowledge, and what are its social origins and consequences.' (p.77)

Keddie (1971) suggests that in discussing the organisation

of knowledge, we are ignoring prior questions about exactly what we mean by 'knowledge' or 'subject'. Her advice, therefore, is important for this study:

'We can only learn what they are by learning what teachers and pupils who are involved in defining that knowledge claim to be doing: subjects are what practitioners do with them.' (p.44)

This can be seen to relate to Young's statement quoted earlier - that knowledge is 'processed' in institutions, and it implies a concern with pedagogy and its relation to subject knowledge. Esland (1971) makes the case for pedagogy as an area of study with a different 'intellectual heritage' from subjects:

'..as subjects are reconstituted and transmitted through the social organisation of educational institutions, they are diametrically related to pedagogical practices' (p. 84)

Thus Esland can conclude that subjects are not given, but are 'what a teacher thinks a subject is' (p.98).

Clearly this perspective has direct relevance for a school based study which is attempting to shed some light on questions which arose about knowledge in the context of physical education. It is not an unchallenged theory, however, and a summary of Pring's criticism will suffice to

raise some questions.

Whilst accepting that a philosophical analysis of knowledge claims is insufficient for an understanding of the development of knowledge, (a view which seems to support the dual approach taken in this study) Pring (1976) makes the important point that relativism is also inadequate. In particular, he notes the existence of 'areas of agreement' and 'common ground' (in an infinite variety of circumstances and areas) which serve to invalidate a fully relativist position. In addition, distinctions between, for example, objects, are made and are commonly understood:

'The conventional nature of the way in which we have come to describe and to define reality does not warrant the conclusion that anything goes - that any conception of reality...is as good as another and that the classroom is essentially a market place where meanings are negotiated.' (p.76)

What is denied in the relativist position is the existence of 'public knowledge' which, from the fieldwork at Citylimits High School is hard to accept in the case of physical education. For example, although physical education teachers interpreted their roles differently, the content of lessons was remarkably similar. Naturally, variations in pace, style, teacher/pupil relationship and level of teacher commitment were evident yet, in spite of all that, the content material was comparable across

lessons and the teachers were able to share subject knowledge to a high level of technical complexity. It would seem possible, therefore, to identify a core to knowledge in physical education; a set of shared understandings, (shared intra and inter schools and across national boundaries) if not to prescribe the practice of individual teachers, departments and schools.

II. BEYOND THE 'NEW' SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Halpin (1990) points to the 'remarkable impact' of the new approach to the sociology of education which formed the central focus of the collection of papers entitled 'Knowledge and Control':

'It is difficult, at this distance of time, to appreciate fully the book's significance given that, today, many of its central questions about the relationship between the social organisation of knowledge and schooling are taken so much for granted in teacher education curricula and curriculum discourse generally.' (p.22)

The book is described as 'a landmark', and it is for this reason that I have dealt with its central issues in some depth in this chapter. It is also an intended feature of this study to return to such classic texts wherever they seem relevant and illuminating. However, the 'new directions' approach has been criticised from within sociology and these criticisms, plus the more recent

developments in the sociology of education, form the focus of this section.

Whitty (1985) outlines the historical context in which 'Knowledge and Control' evolved. From a focus, in the 1950s and '60s, on increasing access to education (viewed as a self evident good), sociologists turned their attentions to the concept of social class and the deficit model of the working class home and child. Studies by Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) shifted the focus of research towards the school, seeing it as a site of interaction between home and school cultures. It was not until the publication of Young's collection of papers, however, that sociologists of education began to question, seriously, the nature of the school and the curriculum.

Some of the criticisms of the new approach are documented in the previous section (ie Pring 1976 and Wilson 1985). However, at a more general level, Whitty (1974) charged the new sociology with failing to appreciate the difficulties involved in stimulating change, particularly where it was divorced from the broader context of political change. Halpin (1990) goes one step further than Whitty in identifying a major practical weakness in the approach:

'..while the 'new directions' had made clear that certain assumptions about the nature of knowledge frequently went unexamined in discussions of curriculum priorities, it remained largely ambivalent on the subject of the detail of curriculum planning

alternatives.' (p.23)

This is a criticism which Halpin levels at the sociology of education in general, including some of Whitty's work. He feels that whereas curriculum studies specialists have documented their views in the form of curriculum prescriptions, which can be tried and evaluated (see Lawton 1983 and Skilbeck 1984 as examples), sociologists have tended to avoid discussions of the specific content of a reformed curriculum:

'For too long the discipline has avoided direct engagement with curriculum policy advocacy, preferring to hover around on the margins of such work, occasionally taking snipes at those who make the effort...' (p.29)

Halpin also criticises curriculum specialists, for failing to theorise their work with adequate reference to sociologists and, in agreement with Whitty (1985), he suggests that philosophers have failed to take seriously the work emanating from the sociology of education.

There would appear to be some support, therefore, for the 'dual focus analysis' which characterises the approach taken in this thesis. Certainly, in the following section of this chapter, the failure to articulate more specific curriculum policy is a criticism which could be levelled at, what I have termed, 'the new sociology of physical education'.

Further critiques of the 'new' sociology are outlined by Giroux (1981). His analysis focusses on the centrality of a dialectical concept of knowledge; of knowledge as the basis of social action:

'A dialectical notion of knowledge represents a transition from a contemplative analysis of constructed meanings to the transformation of socio-economic structures which narrowly define and legitimise such meanings.' (p81)

Giroux's impatient, dynamic viewpoint seems to endorse much of the essence of Young's work whilst challenging it to go further. He is not content with unmasking an ideology - rather it is important to see how that ideology reproduces itself:

'A more adequate methodology would have to link the notion of interpretation with a critique of ideology; as such it would have to develop as a form of historical and political critique.' (p.104)

In developing his principles for action, Giroux points to the importance of locating ideas for change in real teaching situations, starting with a focus on the contradictions within which members of a school work. (This focus has certainly informed my analysis of fieldwork at Citylimits High.) In addition, Giroux points to structural restraints in schools - 'underlying features which link them to each other and to wider societal forces' (p.106), and he refers to the work of Giddens (1979) on 'the duality

of structures'. The dialectic of structure/action and the notion of agency form key elements of this research and the discussion draws upon this debate in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

From 'Knowledge and Control' and its aftermath, the sociology of education split itself into two distinct approaches: a focus on macro issues, using a largely theoretical, neo-marxist approach; and a focus on micro issues, in particular in the development of classroom ethnographies. Within these two broad categories, a 'bewildering array of theoretical approaches' can be found (Evans and Davies, 1986). Whitty (1985) views the macro/micro split as damaging, yet enduring. His criticism of marxist approaches centre on their:

'over-emphasis on the notion of reality as 'socially constructed' leading to 'the neglect of any consideration of how and why particular constructions of reality seemed to have the power to resist the power of subversion' (Whitty 1974 cited in Whitty 1985 p22)

Phenomenological and ethnomethodological studies, on the other hand, are criticised for endlessly illustrating classroom life at the micro level whilst offering little understanding of the macro social context in which it is placed. Whitty (1985) suggests that it is only recently that the two categories in the sociology of education have begun to merge, and he points to the work of Goodson (1985) as an example in this country. He sees as most fruitful,

however, the emergence of work in the 'critical' tradition in America embracing, as it does, a more 'dynamic relationship' between theoretical and empirical traditions.

III. CRITICAL THEORY

Giroux (1981) describes the 'real issue' for the sociology of education as:

'whether the knowledge produced represents a view of reality that comprehends how knowledge itself can be distorted or falsified in the interests of a dominant ideology...[and]..how structural determinants in the wider society function to sustain and uphold forms of knowledge and modes of reasoning that mystify the nature of social reality' (p.104)

Giroux points to the work of Freire who views all educational theories as political theories, and where knowledge is seen as a 'liberating tool' and 'the basis for social action'. Thus, a radical education should ask questions about the nature of knowledge itself, for example: ' 'whose reality is being legitimated with this knowledge?'; 'why this knowledge in the first place?'; 'whose interests does this knowledge represent?'' (Giroux 1981 p.132).

Clearly, these questions are important in the context of this study and they recur in the discussions on the fieldwork - (particularly in chapters 5 and 6). However, critical theorists view analysis alone as inadequate. Instead, action for change is fundamental and,

specifically, action to eliminate injustice is an imperative. This critical perspective is important for my thesis because of the influence it has on current writing in the sociology of physical education (see next section). A problem arises, however, in attempting to grasp the essential nature of the theory. In particular, it seems difficult to envisage that better future which clearly lies in the minds of the proponents. To support this critique, the work of Giroux (1989) is illustrative. (See, also, later comments on Giroux, 1991.) Giroux identifies the need for a 'critical theory for citizenship' to be at the heart of education in a democracy. He sees the need to 'reconstruct a visionary language and public philosophy that put equality, liberty and human life at the center of the notions of democracy and citizenship' (p.28). He exemplifies this in terms of what a 'discourse of democracy' should focus upon in the struggle for 'civic responsibility and public good'. The term 'radical democracy' is used freely and it becomes clear that Giroux views the general populace as 'oppressed':

'The theoretical framework presented here makes no claim to certainty; it is a discourse that is unfinished, but one that may help illuminate the specifics of oppression and the possibilities for democratic struggle and renewal for those educators who believe that schools and society can be changed and that their individual and collective actions can make a difference.' (p.36)

The questions which arise for me are: 'change to what?' and 'how would this curriculum operate in practice?'. Giroux

makes some suggestions for organising 'a radical pedagogy of citizenship around a theory of critical literacy' yet the specific nature of such a curriculum is still somewhat elusive. That the political orientation of critical theory is 'left' is made clear, as is the distaste for 'the new right' who are seen to have seized the initiative in too many areas. The difficulty for me arises from Giroux's implied notion that people are somehow deluded because they have embraced the views of the 'new right'. There is a feeling that if only they could be made aware of their 'oppression', individuals and groups would move in the direction of the 'left'. Giroux states, above, that his theory makes no claim to certainty, and yet it seems to be almost arrogant in its certainty that people need change, and that his type of change will be for the better. Whitty (1985), in a critique of early critical theory, points to 'ambiguity in political goals' and the 'assumption that there is general agreement about what sorts of educational and social change are desirable' (p.51). Further to this, I feel that Halpin's (1990) criticism of Young's 'Knowledge and Control' can be similarly applied to critical theory; the failure to develop specific curriculum models which can be analysed and evaluated. The 'new sociology of physical education' is no more forthcoming on the detail of a better, more just society or specific curriculum proposals.

The case being made here is that critical theory could be

more convincing if the silences were filled. It is further suggested here that critical theory is 'teacher proof theory' in that it attempts to exhort teachers to be different, to have different backgrounds and different motivations for teaching. (Indeed, Giroux, 1981 suggests that individuals must 'escape' from their own history. Later, (1991) he describes how students could 'rewrite their own histories, identities and learning possibilities' p.512). In other words, critical theory can be criticised in the same general terms as 'teacher proof' curriculum resource 'packages': ie, what I would term, lack of 'sufficient respect' for the teacher as he/she actually exists and works (see below).

In addition to being more convincing, a 'teacher friendly' approach could also be more powerful in stimulating change. Forbes and Street (1986) make the point quite clearly in their discussion on socialism:

'The transition to socialism must start from the analysis of people as they are (and concomitantly must be sensitive to existing forms of thought and behaviour) not as they might be. Whatever particular vision of the future that socialists might adopt their first step has to involve them in linking the world as they find it with the world as they would like it to be.' (p.17)

The principle that teachers must be understood as they are is one of the foundations upon which this study has been designed. I go even further, however, and suggest that critical sociologists must not only analyse people as they

are, as is indicated above, but rather they must have 'sufficient respect' for individuals; for the decisions they have taken and the choices they have made.

The notion of 'sufficient respect' recurs at several points in this thesis. The general idea arose from the fieldwork where it became apparent that physical education teachers had little idea of the expectations which others in the school had of them and had only a very sketchy understanding of the philosophies which each member within the department held dear. As a result, they tended to guess, to caricature and to presume about the motives of others in the school community. (See, also, Bell 1986.) As was discussed in the methodology chapter (chapter 1), it must be recognised that teachers' views can be 'wrong' (see points made by Hammersley 1992b, Wilson 1972 and Peshkin 1990) but this does not make those views any the less powerful in governing behaviour, or resisting change. Therefore, the suggestion made in that chapter is that the notion of 'sufficient respect' may be helpful in coming to an 'understanding' (in the sense described by Wolcott 1990) of the origins and the detail of others' positions. This, I suggest, might be the process which will allow researchers, theorists, and teachers themselves to, as Forbes and Street suggest above, 'link.. the world as they find it with the world as they would like it to be' (p.17). In another sense, this could be described as an extension of the much

described role of the 'reflective practitioner' (Schon 1983), in that it implies reflexivity in the context of personal practice and the ideologies and practice of significant others in the department/school. The possibilities for change may, in some circumstances, be enhanced as a result.

There is increasing recognition of the individuality of teachers' responses to their work, and of the need for research to take account of this. Alexander et al (1992) state:

'Highly idiosyncratic orientations tend to underlie all that teachers do. The ways they approach the tasks of teaching, their reflections on that teaching, their relationships with students and peers are highly personalized.' (p.59)

L. Evans (1992) eschews the suggestion of homogeneity which is ascribed to teachers in much research. Her research on teacher morale:

'has revealed very little evidence of....group cohesiveness amongst my sample, who demonstrated individuality to the extent that I seriously question the notion of group goals as a baseline against which morale may be measured.' (p.163)

Research by Mac An Ghaill (1992) points to the consequences of the actions of a head teacher who failed to take proper account (sufficient respect?) of the positions of his staff:

'The headteacher failed to acknowledge that policy is mediated through individuals and groups and that of paramount importance here is the lived reality of teachers' occupational culture.' (p.184)

Importantly, in the context of the National Curriculum, Ball and Bowe (1992) point to the way in which the Curriculum is not so much 'implemented' as 'recreated' based on the different interpretational stances of schools and within departments (see chapter 7 for further discussion on this research).

Thus, it is surely salutary for researchers and theorists to note the idiosyncratic way in which teachers operate in response to documents which carry the full weight of the law. It seems unlikely that, for example critical theorists, will succeed in 'utilising' teachers any more effectively. It is in this sense, therefore, that the two terms - 'teacher-proof theory' and 'sufficient respect' are used in this research.

To return to the earlier discussion, there is a level of support for the argument that critical sociologists should adopt a more grounded approach, although from a different standpoint, in Ellsworth's challenging analysis of critical theory: 'Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Myths of Critical Pedagogy' (1989). In 1988, Ellsworth taught and evaluated a course based on the fundamental

critical concepts of 'empowerment', 'student voice' and 'dialogue'. She found, however, that much of the available material was presented at 'a high level of abstraction' with little emphasis upon historical context or political position. Three points made by Ellsworth are particularly relevant and they are detailed here in the form of quite lengthy quotes:

1. '..when educational researchers advocating critical pedagogy fail to provide a clear statement of their political agendas, the effect is to hide the fact that as critical pedagogues, they are, in fact, seeking to appropriate public resources...to further various 'progressive' political agendas that they believe to be for the public good - and therefore deserving of public resources' (p.301)
2. 'The concept of a critical pedagogy assumes a commitment on the part of the professor/teacher toward ending the student's oppression. Yet the literature offers no sustained attempt to problematize this stance and confront the likelihood that the professor brings to social movements interests of her or his own race, class, ethnicity, gender, and other positions' (p.309)

Ellsworth also describes, in graphic detail, the problematic nature of the concept of 'student voice' in the context of multiple and contradictory social positionings in a group of students:

3. 'Conventional notions of dialogue and democracy assume rationalised, individualised subjects capable of agreeing on universalizable 'fundamental moral principles' and 'quality of human life' that become self-evident when subjects cease to be self-interested and particularistic about group rights. Yet social agents are not capable of being fully rational and disinterested; and they are subjects split between the conscious and the unconscious and among multiple social

Points 1 and 2 reinforce the earlier discussion. The third point warrents a comment. At a different level, physical education teachers at Citylimits High School face the dilemma of 'multiple social positionings' in the context of their roles as educationists and sportsmen/women. This is, of course, to be expected and, again predictably, they attempted to justify themselves in terms which often undermined their value as teachers of a practical subject (in particular see the section on 'Jane. The Head of Department' in chapter 4) Of particular interest, however, is the fact that they, as physical education teachers, felt the need to do this at all. That 'knowledge that' has primacy over 'knowledge how' has been discussed at some length in chapter 2. That such inequality endures in schools and staffrooms, rendering some teachers and some subjects less valuable than others (Bell 1986), may be viewed as an indictment of efforts to foster 'equality' in education. Perhaps, however, it is simply an example of the enormity of exhortations to build a more 'just' society and 'free the oppressed' when they indicate change as close to home as the staffroom and in the fundamental area of the value of theoretical knowledge. The 'multiple social positionings' of teachers is brought sharply into focus. (See, also, Giroux (1991).)

These issues are complex and are explored at several points in the thesis (see chapters 4, 5 and 6). The purpose of this discussion has been to develop further the theoretical framework for issues which arose in the fieldwork. In general, teachers at Citylimits High School seemed relatively unaffected by the tenets of critical theory. Their notion of 'physical education for all' was far removed from the emancipatory ideals of Giroux et al. The importance of this analysis is, therefore, in the context of the emergence of theory in physical education from a critical perspective, and its potential impact upon practice. It is to examples of this theory that the discussion now turns.

IV. CURRENT TRENDS IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The foundation to much current thinking in the sociology of physical education is a critique of what has been termed 'scientific pedagogy' (Tinning 1990), 'the scientization of physical education' (Whitson and Macintosh 1990) and 'technocratic physical education' (McKay et al 1990). An early critique was a paper by Charles, in 1979, which discussed the spread of what he termed 'technocentric ideology' in physical education:

'Technocentric physical educators tend to adopt mechanistic, positivistic teaching styles to legitimate the technological world view...The child is viewed as a

deficit system, a passive object to be progressively initiated into the public thought forms...The cognitive content of the lesson is nonnegotiable because the teacher is the machine operator - an authority figure who understands the knowledge of physical education, controls the answers, and directs students into the optimal modes of performance.' (Charles 1979 p.281)

The paper fails to make explicit an alternative curriculum, based presumably on the view of the child as an active creator of knowledge with the teacher in a facilitating role. However, by 1988, Hellison was able to detect 'winds of change' in the study of teaching in physical education, citing moves towards research in the interpretive paradigm and the resurgence of the curriculum reconceptualist movement as evidence. Hellison points to the importance of a focus on such issues as 'subjectivity of experience, social problems, reflection and empowerment of teachers and students, and alternatives to the empirical-analytical research paradigm' (p.88).

That much of this thinking hales from a critical perspective is quite clear. In particular, there is a strong body of theory emerging from Australia which is attempting to develop a critical approach to physical education. A paper by Tinning (1990) is illustrative. In addressing the notion of pedagogy in teacher education, Tinning makes a direct comparison between 'scientific pedagogy', 'critical pedagogy' and 'post-modern pedagogy'. He highlights the importance of an analysis of discourse,

and takes as his starting point the fundamental notion that 'those who control the discourse control the practice' (p.1). (See, however, the points made above about teacher individuality from research by Mac An Ghaill 1992 and Ball and Bowe 1992.) The key point made in chapter two of this research is that, from a philosophical perspective, much of the confusion surrounding physical education is largely unrecognised, obscured, as it is, by an unworkable discourse and contradictory language. This issue is, therefore, an interesting meeting point for the two disciplines which inform the analysis of fieldwork at Citylimits High School.

In identifying three types of pedagogy, Tinning addresses a question of central importance to the sociology of physical education:

'given the multiple pedagogies, why is there a hierarchy of pedagogies and why is the 'scientific' the dominant pedagogical discourse in PETE? [physical education, teacher education]' (p.2)

Tinning describes 'critical pedagogy' as a rejection of the discourse of science. Instead, in the tradition of critical theory, it looks to the concepts of 'emancipation', 'student voice' etc. Although relatively new to physical education, sociologists are currently addressing these issues and Tinning cites the work of Kirk (1986, 1988) as an example. 'Postmodern pedagogy' is less well documented.

It is an elusive concept and seems best described as 'a response to the shortcomings of critical pedagogy' (Tinning 1990 P.3). Such shortcomings are detailed in the previous section of this chapter and a useful summary of the postmodern response is provided by Lather:

'In essence, the postmodern argument is that dualisms which continue to dominate Western thought are inadequate for understanding a world of multiple causes and effects interacting in complex and non-linear ways, all of which are rooted in a limitless array of historical and cultural specificities.'

(in Tinning 1990 p.9)

If this is the case, and postmodernism is an attempt to think beyond traditional dualisms then, at one level, it would appear that this thesis is inclined towards a postmodern rationale, if not a postmodern discourse. In utilising the disciplines of sociology and philosophy to understand physical education at Citylimits High School, and in attempting to use them in positive combination, I feel that I am merely reflecting the complexity of the situation as I found it. An analysis of knowledge in the context of physical education at Citylimits High School seemed, quite logically, to require input from (at least) two disciplines.

Giddens (1992) describes post-modernism as:

'decentred; there is a profusion of style and orientation. Stylistic changes no longer 'build on the past' or carry on a dialogue with it, but instead are autonomous and transient. Any attempt to penetrate a deeper reality is abandoned and mimesis loses all

meaning.' (p.21)

More dramatically, for Giddens the end of modernity means that:

'the dreams and aspirations which drove Western society forward succumb to the very mundanity of a social order which tames everything by condemning nothing.' (p.21)

In some senses, the moves to recognise (and have sufficient respect for) the individuality of teachers in schools (as described earlier) could be seen as broadly in line with a postmodern view. If 'the confident certainties of the past have gone' (Corfield 1992 p.15), then the complexity of teachers, and some level of acceptance of their many and various positions, would appear to be indicated. As Giroux (1991) notes in defining, what he terms, 'border pedagogy', it:

'necessitates combining the modernist emphasis on the capacity of individuals to use critical reason to address the issue of public life with a postmodernist concern with how we might experience agency in a world constituted in differences...' (p.511, my emphasis)

In the case of physical education, 'mass sport' would seem to be closely implicated in descriptions of a postmodern society :

'a world full of 'designer cultures' created for the needs of groups, presented by media persons, film and pop stars, advertisers, sportsmen, evangelists and millionaires, to fill the cultural void left by the collapse of cultural traditions.' (Gibbins 1989 p.24)

As a result, it may be somewhat inevitable that there will be an impact on physical education – notwithstanding the attempts made in the National Curriculum document (described earlier) to distance physical education from sport. The data from Citylimits High School makes it clear that, for many respondents, physical education and sport are – at the very least – closely related (see chapter 4) and, in the context of education, Gilbert (1992) points out:

‘A feature of postmodern styles is that they are archetypically the styles of the young – cinema, television, MTV, fashion, rock music, dance, cultural forms which are the expressive channels of a generation. Educators ignore this life world at their peril.’ (p.56)

It is clear, however, that postmodern theory has had little impact, to date, on theory in physical education.

The last two years has seen a proliferation of articles in the British Journal of Physical Education which can be regarded as representative of current thinking from a critical perspective: what might be termed ‘a new sociology of physical education’. Authors such as Evans, Kirk, Golby, Sparkes, and Colquhoun characterise this perspective, and an examination of their recent work gives a clear indication of its basic position. This is not to suggest, however, that all these authors hold the same beliefs on each issue.

One of the major targets for the new sociologists has been the emergence of Health Related Fitness (H.R.F.) within the physical education curriculum - viewed as a paradigm example of 'scientific pedagogy'. A wealth of H.R.F. material, which is essentially content based, has been made available (ie., from the Health and Physical Education Project) and the initiative appears to have caught the imagination of teachers and pupils. However, sociologists such as Sparkes, Kirk and Colquhoun have criticised the H.R.F. movement for its failure to:

'probe deeper to the ideological roots of the curriculum process and the manner in which this prevents children gaining a more coherent understanding of health in our society.' (Sparkes 1989 p.61)

and for its silence on issues related to the social construction of health:

'Health education then is a form of knowledge which I would argue, has been socially constructed. By that I mean that the present form of health education has been shaped by social processes throughout the subject's development and history.' (Colquhoun 1989 p.119)

The strongest criticisms of H.R.F., however, are centred on the notion of individualism, which is seen as the prevailing ideology in the innovation:

'This ideology views individual choice as both an

accurate account of the status quo, and as a desirable goal for which to aim. In particular individualism places a heavy emphasis upon individual responsibility so that a range of social problems become defined as individual problems...' (Sparkes 1989 p.61)

The result of the focus on individualism, according to these authors, is a prevailing view of health (and, of course, illness) as largely a matter of personal choice. The work of Almond (1988); Biddle (1981); and Corbin et al (1987) is thus criticised for diverting attention

'away from the hazards to health caused by industrial processes and environmental pollution. Attention is also diverted away from the inequalities that exist in relation to health in terms of social class, gender and race.' (Sparkes *ibid.*)

The only way forward, in this view, is for H.R.F. to be placed firmly in its political context in a fundamental challenge to the status quo. The challenge, therefore, is based as much upon a critique of the current political climate as upon strong convictions about a 'better' society. (See Golby and Viant (1990) for an example of this view.)

Evans (1989a), whilst acknowledging the value of critical debate, makes the point that H.R.F. may 'empower people'. He suggests there is a need for empirical data, particularly from practitioners, which can help to identify how 'social, cultural and political influences touch upon

and enter the curriculum and teaching of physical education' (p.189/90). I would agree with this latter point, particularly in its reference to practitioners, for it is at this level that we need to operate. Theoretical critique has a tendency to become divorced from the realities of the teacher, and from teaching at the micro level.

I would, however, go further than Evans and level a fundamental criticism at the work of Sparkes and Colquhoun for its failure to appreciate teachers as they actually exist: thus is born **teacher-proof theory** in physical education. Teachers are seen in the image of the highly motivated theorist who wishes to change the world 'for the better'. Change in the existing order is the central design of such an approach - as is detailed earlier in this chapter in the discussion on critical theory.

Meanwhile, at the level of day-to-day practice, teachers embrace an innovation such as health related fitness not, perhaps, as a direct attempt to solve world problems of pollution and inequality, but as a concrete and manageable way in which they can help pupils to gain knowledge about and confidence in themselves. Holt's (1964) comments are interesting in this context:

'About six or seven years ago I began to stop talking

to teachers and would be teachers about radical change in schools. Why keep asking them to do what was so obviously beyond their power to do? I began instead to talk about small...and do-able ways in which.... they could improve their teaching.....thinking about such apparently tiny and trivial matters as how better to teach children to read or add or spell has made my work as a teacher enormously challenging and exciting.'

(p.277)

Health related fitness, in addition to appealing to teachers' 'commonsense knowledge' about the nature of physical education, has arrived with an abundance of resource materials to support teachers in their work. It is thus ideally positioned to gain a place in the curriculum as a 'do-able' measure. (In contrast, many of the approaches suggested by the new sociologists are exceptionally difficult to quantify in terms of curriculum content and practice. See the points made earlier by Halpin.) This is not to suggest that 'do-able' measures are conservative in their outcomes. On the contrary, such measures may have the potential to initiate major change proceeding, as they do, from a standpoint which has 'sufficient respect' for teachers as they exist. It may be significant that H.R.F. gives physical education teachers a medium for helping pupils to gain the same enjoyment and personal fulfillment from exercise that they themselves have experienced. In the research at Citylimits High, teachers cited this as one of their main motivations for entering the physical education profession. (See, also, research by Bell, 1986, and comments in chapter 5 of this

thesis.)

Sparkes, Colquhoun and others make, potentially, a further error, however, in assuming that the emphasis upon individualism necessarily presents a barrier to pupils' wider understanding of the concept of health. Rather, I would suggest, the reverse may be true. It is only by allowing individuals to understand that they do have some control over their personal health, that we can ever hope to alert them to broader notions of, for example, community health. Individual health is a manageable concept which can be seen as the gateway to a more informed perspective. Crucially, through H.R.F. pupils may begin to see, possibly for the first time, that health is an issue in which they have a legitimate interest. Maybe by assuming a realistic measure of personal responsibility, individuals can begin, also, to understand the nature of their responsibility on a wider scale. In other words individualism, or a version of it may, after all, be the route to 'empowerment'.

At a practical level, however, a consideration of what is achievable in limited curriculum time may need consideration. The research from Citylimits High reinforced the notion that the goal of 'fitness for life' is attractive to physical education teachers. Furthermore, parents, pupils and other teachers seemed to have some firm expectations of physical education in this respect. Yet,

the reality is that in the curriculum time given, there is very little opportunity for a significant impact upon pupils' current - or long term - fitness (see chapters 5 and 7 for more detail on this issue).

In combination, the two issues of 'teacher-proof' theory and unrealistic expectations may go some way towards explaining the slow progress in curriculum change at anything other than the 'surface' level (Sparkes 1989).

Other material from the sociological perspective is more helpful. Evans (1989b), Talbot (1987), Flintoff (1991) and Carrington and Leaman (1986) have contributed much of value on equality of opportunity. A feature of much of this work is that it draws upon knowledge and experience from projects in other curriculum areas and our understanding is furthered as a result. Of greater significance, perhaps, is the emergence of a body of qualitative research in physical education. Evans (1986) and (1988) are examples of this paradigm and it is clear that there is much to be learned from close examination of the teaching and learning processes. This study is an attempt to take a further tentative step along that pathway and it owes much to those who have already conducted fieldwork of this type.

A DUAL-FOCUS ANALYSIS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION THEORY

To conclude this chapter, it is interesting to focus on some of the most recent developments in the theory of physical education, and to illustrate the value of raising questions from both a philosophical and a sociological perspective about the knowledge claims which are implied. This is merely an illustrative exercise but it does, I would suggest, prepare the ground for analysis of the fieldwork. It also acts as a useful summary of chapters 2 and 3.

The first example is the guest editorial in the Spring 1990 edition of the British Journal Of Physical Education. In this article, Casbon poses two fundamental questions: firstly, 'what is the real relationship between physical education and the rest of the curriculum?' and secondly, what are 'the real purposes behind the teaching of physical education'? Discussion around these two issues leads Casbon to the view that, as the main purpose of education is 'to produce young people who are able to act autonomously and confidently within our society' (p220) then the unique contribution made by physical education is to the development of an 'effective physical life':

'We, as a profession, know that people who have efficient and healthy bodies lead more productive, valued and contented lives' (p.220)

According to Casbon, we deny pupils the opportunity to make

informed choices and so maintain 'the P.E. stereotype'. His suggestions for the future are based on developing skills such as 'citizenship, communication, confidence, problem solving, planning and organisation, and many other personal and social skills'. Sport and leisure education is to be the medium for teaching and, in this framework, physical education in the National Curriculum can be seen to be 'taking on ..responsibility for the whole child, as opposed to responsibility and accountability for one or more sports' (p.220).

In the light of the discussion in chapter two, some questions are immediately pressing. For example, it seems likely that that physical education will continue to be a marginal subject (Bell 1986) 'on the edge of the curriculum' if Casbon's version of dualism endures. Is it plausible to talk of a pupil's 'physical life'? Does this not deny that very wholeness which Casbon then goes on to identify towards the end of the article? Surely it is damaging to presume that 'wholeness' can only be served through such notions as problem solving and personal/social skills. Casbon has, I would suggest, effectively reduced the major activities of the physical education curriculum to the level of trivia. Practical knowledge is subordinated to 'citizenship' and 'communication' which, as was stated in the last chapter, can just as easily be delivered through any of the other areas of the school curriculum.

With reference to the thoughts presented earlier in this chapter, Casbon would appear to have a loose affiliation to a sociological perspective, as is characteristic of much theory in education and physical education. He questions both the differentiation of knowledge at an implicit level, and the concept of teacher power and control. However, the 'new' sociology of knowledge would probably demand a greater concern with the processes by which teachers and pupils construct physical education and Casbon appears to have set up an internal conflict in his argument in this respect. How is it possible, for example, to allow pupils to make informed choices and, at the same time, 'know' the intended outcome of a programme: ie., he states that pupils must leave with 'the knowledge and desire' to keep 'fit and efficient bodies'. Not much room for pupil choice there except, perhaps, in the selection of activities which will achieve that end. Furthermore, questions about Casbon's physically educated pupil from a critical perspective would surely focus on the rather conservative qualities implicit in his preferred outcomes.

The second example of theory in physical education is that which emerged from the Interim Working Group on Physical Education in the National Curriculum (I.W.G. - also referred to in chapter two). Again, this report is taken from an issue of the British Journal of Physical Education.

It is significant, in that the group represented many interests within the profession, and so any points of concensus merit consideration.

In essence, this was a progress report – unfinished, but published – which consisted of a number of 'principles' upon which the work of the group was based; an AIM for physical education; some questions about the essential nature of the activity itself and preliminary thoughts on assessment. Philosophical questions from chapter two of the study could focus on several areas, for example principle 4, which states 'that the physical education curriculum should be more about how children learn and how they learn to learn than it should be about exactly what they learn'. Leaving aside the rather obvious question about seeing learning as somehow divorced from anything to be learnt, it is the issue of teacher responsibility which is of central concern. Principle 4, read in conjunction with the AIM, which refers to providing 'access' to knowledge, skills and attitudes, would seem to indicate that physical education has no responsibility to ensure that anything in particular is learnt (see earlier comments by Curn 1990). If this is the case, then it seems strange to highlight in the next part of the AIM, the importance of 'culturally valued physical activities'. There would seem to be an internal conflict in this statement which could render the whole, unintelligible.

A sociological perspective could add to the analysis by asking questions about principle 6: 'that the attitude of children to a healthy lifestyle is a significant part of our work...'. In particular, Evans' reminders about the nature of poor practice in this area are significant:

'I have witnessed examples of H.R.F. in which children seem to be learning only what they cannot do, what physical shapes they cannot but ought to be, how unfit they are, how inadequate are their diets and that each must bear the blame for the physical condition that they are in.' (Evans 1989 p.189)

At a conceptual level, a sociological analysis might also question the fundamental wisdom of principle 5: 'that it is important that children are initiated into forms of activity that have strong cultural significance in our way of life in this country'. If an aim of critical sociology is to stimulate change, then principle 5 could be challenged on its inherent position of stability. In addition, it leaves little room for teacher/pupil negotiated meanings and, furthermore, places the control over the learning process firmly in the hands of the teacher (or coach) who has the requisite expertise. Not that any of this is necessarily problematic....except, that is, if simultaneous claims are being made to the contrary.

Finally, since writing earlier drafts of this chapter, the

final document for Physical Education in the National Curriculum has been published (D.E.S. 1992). In the previous chapter, questions from a philosophical perspective were raised about the relationship between physical education and sport, the aims of physical education and the place of 'performance' or practical activity, as detailed in the document. A sociological perspective, however, would raise fundamental questions about the desirability of the whole enterprise. Giroux's (1981) questions, detailed earlier in this chapter, would be particularly relevant; for example, 'whose interests does this knowledge represent?' (p.132). Reference back to the Physical Education Working Group Interim Report makes it clear that the wishes of the physical education profession, and those of the Minister for Education, were sometimes in conflict. In the final event, however, physical education teachers will either 'implement' or 'recreate' the National Curriculum and, as is shown in Ball and Bowe's (1992) research, the latter seems quite likely.

To conclude, therefore, it is not suggested that the analysis of the three examples presented here is the correct interpretation, nor is it necessarily a criticism. It is merely an illustration of the kinds of questions which could be levelled at physical education from two theoretical perspectives. In most cases, theoretical statements about physical education are making explicit or

implicit knowledge claims, but I have suggested that these are, on the whole, confused (perhaps necessarily so) and can be viewed as unhelpful both to those inside and outside the profession. Furthermore, they often ignore teachers at the crucial micro level of their realities. I have, therefore, attempted to identify key concepts and then demonstrate the value of a dual-focus analysis in preparation for just such an approach to the data from the fieldwork in the following chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

KNOWLEDGE AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT CITYLIMITS HIGH SCHOOL

Citylimits High School

'The teacher's voice must speak from an embeddedness within the culture of the particular school, the school system and society in which the teacher lives and works'
(Elbaz 1991 p.13)

Following Elbaz, therefore, a description of the research school precedes the presentation of data from respondents.

As suggested by its pseudonym, Citylimits High is located on the outskirts of a major city. It was built in the late 1950s/early 1960s and is fairly typical of its genre - rather plain in design, much glass, overpoweringly hot in the summer and difficult to heat in the winter. The school has many long, straight passages, a newer science and technology block, a dual-use sports hall, extensive playing fields and hardcourt areas - most of which are in a poor state of repair.

Originally, Citylimits High was a Secondary Modern School.

It became fully comprehensive in the early '80s and, although it has yet to equal the reputation of the former grammar schools in the area, it is highly regarded, oversubscribed (now a six form entry, 11-18) and is considered to be 'on the up' (local authority advisor). In fact, most schools in the area are popular, particularly, perhaps, as those in the same borough, but closer to the city, are suffering from falling rolls and parental disaffection. At the time of the fieldwork, the Head strenuously denied rumours that Citylimits High was considering opting out of local authority control. Within a year, however, it had done so. During the time of the research, the school was grappling with 'Local Management of Schools' and a newly constituted Governing Body (as detailed in the Education Reform Act 1988).

In the 'Staff Handbook', 62 staff are listed: 26 men and 36 women. In general, males hold most of the key posts - the complete 'Senior Management Team' totals 12 staff; 9 men and 3 women. 15 men are heads of department, as compared to 10 women. The list of 'Non-Teaching Staff' comprises 15 women and 4 men. The Handbook makes it clear that the school is quite traditional in many respects - a 'Form Points' system operates and competitions between forms, in a wide variety of areas, are encouraged. The emphasis, however, is upon pupils' achievement 'relative to their ability....to ensure a fair distribution of points across

the ability range'. Formal School Detentions are available - 'to help maintain discipline within the classroom and the school'. In addition, there are specific detentions for litter and lateness.

The school's 'mission', expressed as an 'overall aim' is to enable all members of the school 'fully to realise their potential'. More specifically, the school sets out to provide a curriculum which 'serves the needs of all pupils as well as of society', to encourage in pupils a 'sense of responsibility' and the ability to 'exercise self-discipline rather than subject them to a plethora of rules and regulations'. The School Rule is:

'Act with honesty, courtesy and in a reasonable manner, with consideration for others at all times'

All this is to be embedded firmly in the context of the local community and pupils are to be prepared to 'take their place in the modern adult world'.

In summary, a fairly conservative set of aspirations: reassuring for many parents (as testified by the increasing popularity of the school) and probably disappointing to theorists who might judge them from a critical perspective. The Physical Education Department is respected in the Borough for its contribution to local sports competitions, and appears to have a sound reputation within the school,

marred somewhat by the divisions within the department. The teachers, two male and two female, are known as:

Jane - Head of Department. Until recently, Head of Girls' Physical Education; Has taught at Citylimits High for 6 years;

Arnold - former Head of Boys' Physical Education - now moved into careers and more pastoral responsibility. Has taught at Citylimits High for 12 years;

Pete - applied for Head of Department post when the department was unified. Rejected. Jane's appointment has caused him much discomfort. Has taught at Citylimits High for 10 years. Pete is viewed as the 'odd man out' in the department and he has limited respect for the other physical education staff;

Diane - the youngest member of the department in her second year of teaching.

Further detail on these and other characters is presented in the context of interview data in this and later chapters.

Citylimits High School had an air of common purpose and joint resolve. The notion of 'whole school approaches' was

being vigorously promoted at the time of the research. This was evident in training days and was encouraged in departmental curriculum planning; for example, in the establishment of cross-curricular links and a common language policy. It was rather more difficult to see evidence of the approach in practice. On the whole, staff seemed to like the school, and felt they were quite fortunate in their pupils. Parents were involved in many aspects of school life and, although the catchment area could not be described as wealthy, there was little evidence of poverty either. Perhaps the enduring impression is of a school seeking to be progressive and traditional, all at the same time.

In presenting data from the fieldwork I have taken, as my starting point, the evidence from interviews with members of the physical education department. The focus then moves to other teachers in the organisation, initially those with positions of responsibility (the management team), and then to subject teachers; to pupils; and to parents and governors. Respondents have offered their personal philosophies of physical education and their theoretical justifications for its existence. In addition, teacher respondents were asked to define 'success' for physical education and to identify ways in which they could (or do) evaluate the effectiveness of the department in the context of their earlier comments. Parents were asked (in a

questionnaire), to detail what they wanted from physical education for their children and whether they viewed it as an important subject and why. Pupils were asked, in interviews, to decide what they felt they had learnt in physical education, and fifth form pupils were asked to comment upon the perceived importance of physical education within the wider school community (see methodology chapter for full details on respondents). In this way, I have tried to gain a comprehensive picture of physical education as experienced and perceived by those involved in Citylimits High School. Reference is also made to other data collected, for example, observation of lessons or general fieldnotes.

The approach taken requires fairly lengthy extracts from the physical education teachers and the management team interviews. These interviews were conducted in some depth, and I have tried to avoid extensive summarising and editing of responses in the belief that, in many cases, this would merely dilute the richness of the evidence in an unacceptable way. Questionnaires and pupil interview responses were much shorter, although more numerous, and they have, therefore, been summarised, supported by illustrative quotes where appropriate.

In general, this chapter is best viewed as a largely empirical chapter, providing the background for an

increasingly analytical approach in chapters 5, 6 and 7. Chapter 5, for example, focusses specifically upon the life history accounts from the four physical education teachers in the context of the emerging importance of the concept of 'agency'.

THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Initial interviews with the four members of the physical education department were conducted at an early stage in the research. The main purpose of these interviews was to obtain some data on each individual's personal beliefs about the nature of the subject and its future direction. Respondents were specifically asked to identify 'success' for the subject and for themselves, and they were encouraged to comment on their personal philosophies in comparison with the perceived philosophies of the other members of the department. Implicit in each interviewee's responses is a theory of knowledge and, inevitably, a theory of the knowledge of physical education. As was indicated in the introduction to this thesis, differences and uncertainties (and a measure of insecurity) about the nature and status of knowledge in physical education was, in innumerable different ways, a pervasive factor in the 'life' of the physical education department at Citylimits High School.

JANE: THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Jane's comments on a successful physical education department give many clues to her priorities for the subject:

(in extracts from interviews, underlined words indicate emphasis on the part of the respondent)

'I think it's a joint thing between, uhm, good teams and things that people can see outside school - not necessarily teams that are doing brilliantly, but teams that do function; practices and clubs that are - every day things, that the parents know every Monday night their child goes to trampoline club, you know, something like that - it doesn't have to be a, an actual team practice or game. So that they can see the interest that they've got in school - they're actually carrying it on out of school - that's the first thing. And I think it's got to be sort of united with what they actually do in games lessons and what we're educating them for - so that they can go home and, you know, see that they have really got fitness for life and were thinking of being fit for life.....I think it's important to get it in school right and then, and then, get it out of school. And I really see it as a 50:50 thing, and I know there's a lot of people think that it's more important just educating them in school and, you know, not worrying too much about out of school, but I think you've got to try and get somewhere between the two.'

It was evident that Jane felt that her view of physical education and its role was somehow under threat and, given the opportunity to express these views, she talked freely and with feeling. She interrupted my next question to add to the above:

'The other thing about being successful, of course, I think is the G.C.S.E., which now we're going on to

different committees and, like, I'm on the academic committee which, in the past, you didn't used to count quite as much on that. Now they've got to accommodate us for written examinations, they've got to see us not only as sport, but as an education.'

The notion of sport as distinct from education was reinforced in later comments in response to a question about the difference between sport and physical education:

'Well, there's a link between the two, but, I mean, I think when we're talking about physical education we're really talking about education - acquisition of knowledge, understanding and - you know how you can cope with the children so that they can understand it and, perhaps, give them the feel behind something and not necessarily that they can do it but at least that they know about their bodies and - they've got a clear understanding of how to get fit even if they're not. But sport is just doing it.'

Jane obviously sees 'knowledge' as theoretical knowledge. For her, in an educational context, it is more important to learn about something than to display the ability to do it. Thus sport is assigned a non-educational status because it is 'just doing it'. Her supporting theory of knowledge is quite clear, and is further endorsed by her enthusiasm for the G.C.S.E. and her evident enjoyment of the theoretical aspect of the course. For example, on several occasions during my time in the school she expressed satisfaction about the amount and the difficulty of the theory in the G.C.S.E.:

*Jane was marking some G.C.S.E. files. She commented that the most able kids were advised against P.E.. Jane insisted that she didn't mind about this, but then recounted a conversation she had overheard between two pupils:

1st pupil- 'My parents say that G.C.S.E. P.E. is not a proper exam and it won't get me anywhere'

2nd pupil- 'Don't you believe it - it's the hardest one I do!'

Jane is clearly proud of this latter comment about her subject because it shows that 'the message is getting around'. (Extract from fieldnotes 27-1-89)

Jane gives a general impression of having to battle constantly for her subject and, at times, she seems a little weary of it. She is convinced of the value of physical education, yet, at the same time, is wedded to a view of education which trivialises much of what she does. Her response to this has been to 'theorise' the subject. She also seems to know, instinctively, that it is somehow not good enough to be involved in 'just sport', in the context of education, - yet cannot really support this with a coherent argument. Furthermore, it became apparent in her life history interview that sport has been anything but 'just sport' in her own life.

The internal tension in Jane's position must be a source of some discomfort. It is, I would suggest, not unlike the position in which many other physical educationists find themselves. Jane is right to suppose that the theoretical content of the G.C.S.E., and the consequent written

examination, is 'good' for herself and for the subject: the Deputy Head (Curriculum) confirmed that it brings her into contact with Jane in a way which could not otherwise have occurred; suddenly, physical education has to be considered in an academic framework (see later interview).

But, while not for a moment wishing to question the value of the G.C.S.E., it does seem a pity to slip into a rigid dualistic view of our pupils and to endorse the superiority of the 'ghost' over the 'machine' (Ryle, 1949, see chapter 2). Perhaps Jane needs the support of a less rigid form of dualism, or even a monist perception to square her instincts about 'doing' with her pragmatic approach to succeeding in an educational framework.

PETE: THE RUGBY 'LAD'

Pete holds a traditional, and in many ways a stereotypical view, of physical education and of his role as a teacher. As with all stereotypes, however, the picture is far from simple. His preferred image is one of 'tradition' and 'excellence', but the bravado masks disenchantment with a system which he genuinely feels is failing pupils, and which he believes has failed him in terms of recognition and promotion. Pete has refused to conform to 'educational bullshit' and although many would find some of his comments objectionable - and, at the very least, unfashionable, he has some interesting and thought provoking points to make.

He tends to disagree with the other members of the department, particularly Jane, for whom he has little respect. On the surface, at least, this typifies his general approach to women although, here again, the picture is a little more complex than it first appears. It would be fair to say that he tries to make life as difficult as possible for Jane - although it must also be recognised that the feeling is mutual, as is the antagonism. Essentially, Pete feels that he has lost the battle to see his version of physical education legitimised. He looks for:

'Successful teams, successful individuals in individual sports, uhm, I firmly believe that this brings - it sets standards and it raises the less able to be better than less able. In comparison they'll always be less able than the top ones within the group but I think the over-all standard will raise. Standards were far higher at this school when we pushed for more excellence.'

In response to my question about the effect of labelling pupils in this way, Pete began his assault on 'educationists':

'Well that's a fact of life. See educationists think you can make it meaningful for everybody but I don't think you can. Not everybody is trying to search for this common ground - not everybody wants the same things.'

Mixed ability teaching was, for Pete, symptomatic of the problem:

'.....What do you do in that situation? The educationists would say you have to teach the group - I said, look, that's what you're trying to do but you're failing, you're not really getting the cricket over to the people who are potentially cricketers and they're suffering because you're having to spend pro-rata more time on those who are totally disenchanted - well, out of love with cricket..be satisfied with those people who are not really going to get it, be satisfied with those people who are not going to reach a good standard and really get into those who you can perhaps see are going to make cricketers, and get some degree of excellence in a mixed ability group.'

Pete seemed to be totally oblivious to the effect of his preferred policy upon those pupils who couldn't quite make the grade. On further probing, however, it seems likely that he had based his comments on what he considered to be the practical problems of teaching:

'There's no point in working in groups of, say, 8, maybe putting 2 skilful people in and six - uhm - motor morons, you know because at the end of the day, the 2 skilful ones rely, in a team game, rely on people of a similar ability to work with. It's no good for them to do a good pass if the person at the other end has no concept of controlling it and then, perhaps if they do control it, no concept of laying it off to someone who's running the space, because it just makes the two skilful people, uhm, well, it's a waste of time.'

Although such a statement could be written off as the mutterings of an unskilled teacher, it is also an honest statement on the very real difficulties experienced in dealing with a broad band of ability in any one group. Importantly, none of the other teachers in the department would endorse such a view, yet, from my observations, it

was evident that the problem frequently arose in their lessons also (see methodology for details on observation) usually at the stage of playing 'the full game'. In some cases the problem was completely ignored, even though it was quite clear that the lesson was of little value to either the most or the least able:

*Went out to a netball lesson with Jane - 4th year girls. It's freezing! The lesson is focussing on playing the full game and umpiring. It is obvious that approx. 50% of the pupils are simply enduring this. The able pupils are completely dominating the game - to the benefit of no-one, least of all the less able - or should we feel more sorry for the able pupils? (Extract from fieldnotes 27-1-89)

*Indoor rugby lesson with Arnold - 1st year boys. Informs me about the standard of the group: 'these are not bright'. The boys are generally lively and quite rowdy. Arnold is very sympathetic in his style - yet does not really generate much enthusiasm for the lesson. He seems a bit bored with something. The 4/5 most able lads are clearly bored and are attempting to run an extra activity alongside the main lesson. From their skill level here, it is obvious that the skills being taught to the group are inappropriate for the more able. They are merely wasting time - trying to arrange some extra activity for themselves without incurring Arnold's wrath. (Extract from fieldnotes 2-3-89)

In many ways, Pete's remarks about mixed ability groups typify his approach to many issues: he is often insensitive, can be offensive, and so his views are usually disregarded by other teachers - unsurprisingly, perhaps. However, Pete's comments and complaints were insightful in the context of this research, as they often represented a blunt and brutally honest admittance of frustration and

difficulty as experienced in the day to day business of trying to teach pupils something specific. Other members of the department were more willing to gloss over some of these local difficulties, perhaps in pursuit of higher ideals.

For Pete, then, the knowledge of physical education is, essentially, practical knowledge - sport. He endorsed the introduction of health related fitness as it coincided with his personal belief in the 'importance of staying fit and consequently healthy'. This particular area of the curriculum was a rare point of common agreement between all members of the department (and other respondents) therefore, it is an issue which is revisited in this and later chapters.

Pete's emphasis on the 'practical', and on ensuring that pupils were actually taught how to play games, was reflected in his view of the examination:

'I'm not sure about that yet, uhm, I remember [a college lecturer] saying to me once when I brought that up in a lecture, he said that P.E. should be an alternative subject, alternative to exams, playing sport should be enjoyable and you shouldn't have the pressures of exams, er, I don't know, I'm not sure about it yet.'

He saw one over-riding difficulty, however:

'They have to do 5 [activities] yes, but they're involved in 15, so they have - well one course was, what, 4/5 weeks with bank holidays and that sort of thing, which was a complete nonsense. You couldn't

really teach them anything.'

Again, Pete's desire is to teach pupils how to play the game, how to do the activity and how to do it well. In the absence of persuasive and coherent arguments to the contrary, he will continue to see this as the core to knowledge in physical education. For him, other claims are nebulous, impossible to quantify and, more importantly perhaps, he sees no evidence of other teachers - although they talk about some other view of physical education - doing anything different from himself. To a certain extent he is right. The most startling thing about lessons observed, as taught by all four teachers, was their similarity! (See chapter 5 and comments from life-history interviews.)

Two other points should be made about Pete's views. Firstly, he believes absolutely in the value of his subject as he sees it. But he is also a supporter of pupils in other areas of the curriculum, where they are demonstrating an inclination or a level of achievement. He finds it difficult to accept, therefore, what he perceives as apathy among other teachers towards sporting achievements:

'When we were successful in sport I used to say to one lady 'get off your backside and get out, support them'. That same person was encouraging staff to gee them up in the classroom - the academic side - but how about the sports side? Some of those, uhm, sports personalities,

some of those were not particularly academic high achievers, but they were high achievers in that area.'

Secondly, Pete feels strongly that a teacher must get to know a pupil to be an effective teacher. For him, getting to know pupils is teaching. One of his major complaints about mixed P.E. was the lack of contact with pupils in the changing room:

'I mean, you get to this time of year and you're writing reports for people and some of them ?? I've hardly ever seen - it's a farce....Yeh, talking about relationships, I like to get relationships with the kids - you know - before the lesson starts, in the changing rooms, I'm disciplining, chatting, cheeking, you know, all the things that a teacher should do but half the class [in a mixed class] just walks into the sports hall. At the end of the lesson it's the same, 20 minutes of the lesson - 15/20 minutes, you are not talking to half the class. That's a major problem as far as I'm concerned.'

In this context, the following extract from fieldnotes is quite revealing. I was sitting in the staffroom in a quiet period at the time:

*The music teacher is collating her form's reports. She makes a general comment to those around her: '[Pete's] reports are really good. He's always spot on about the pupils. (Extract from field notes 27-4-89)

Pete received few such compliments from other teachers, and there was some friction between him and the music teacher quoted. However, it does seem to endorse Pete's assessment

of himself in this respect.

In general, Pete is best described as a paradox. His theory of knowledge is similar to Jane's in that he sees a clear distinction between practical and theoretical knowledge. However, Pete makes no apology for practical knowledge and is a passionate believer in its worth in its own right. His refusal to support the educationist perspective, which he sees as damaging to his subject, and his abrasive manner, combine to present a picture (to those who don't share his views) of an uncaring and cynical individual. My contact with Pete would suggest that he is certainly cynical, but not uncaring. He sees no possibility that his views will ever be respected, and so he has retreated into a defensive and antagonistic stance which allows him to do his own thing, largely unhindered, both inside and outside school. He does have a contribution to make but it will not be tolerated by teachers who do not support his personal philosophy of education.

ARNOLD: THE HOLISTIC TEACHER

Arnold is quite different from Jane and Pete. He is highly regarded by other members of staff and by the senior management team. It is recognised, by staff generally, that Arnold is 'going places'. He is much more adept in the use

of educational language than either of the other two and, within the teacher group, he appears to hold the 'correct' philosophy, unlike Pete whose philosophy is most definitely 'incorrect'. (See the methodology chapter for a description of the school and tension in its philosophy, and also later interviews with the head and senior managers.) He is, however, less than enthusiastic about physical education, and he often seemed to be so involved in other aspects of his work (careers and work experience) that he had little energy left to devote to his main teaching subject. He also expressed a high level of dissatisfaction with his job and he made it clear, on several occasions, that he is looking to 'get out', and has been doing so for a number of years. A certain despondency characterises much of Arnold's thinking.

In many of his comments about physical education, it is difficult to discern much difference between Arnold and the other members of the department. For example, he summarises his view of the aim of the subject as follows:

'I think to promote a healthy lifestyle, yes, to also be able to direct individual skills to something fulfilling in terms of, er, a sport that they can take-up or follow; to be able to understand various sports that they come into contact with and to be able to improve their ability to be able to watch and take part.'

He sees health and fitness as an increasingly important

area but he's unhappy with what he considers to be a poor success rate:

'We've tried to encourage them to, to understand that we can't do it for them - that they have to take the responsibility themselves and introduce them to some ways of doing it - er- and I think we fall down in some ways with our, - the fact that we've got quite a large 6th form who voluntarily come and ask to use the things we have because there's no programme for them. So it's a bit of a hypocritical situation from our side. Last year I did try to point out the facilities that were available and there's a local booklet that's produced to give some ideas of where to go and what to do but we don't follow it up enough to find out who's doing what. Tend to meet them in bars and pubs in a few years time and they're a gigantic size and not doing any sport at all- although some do carry on - uhm, but although we do try and put it over in the five years, I think in some ways the fifth year being a recreational type of period, then the health aspect is lost.'

Arnold supports the continuance of school clubs and sees much of value in the existence of a 'school sport layer' in competitive sport. He places particular value on the concept of 'friendly rivalry' with other school teams and upon allowing 'kids to work with kids from their own school'. He views physical education as 'a balance' between courses, teams, etc.:

'I think for most of our courses we are attempting to give them an idea of the skills involved in various sports, and our club facilities plus our team games should be complimenting that for the ones that actually want to improve or to go further, and need coaching really, you know, in a much smaller group than being in a normal lesson.'

His view on the G.C.S.E. is more positive than Pete's, but is less enthusiastic - perhaps more pragmatic than Jane's,

'We have got into examinations because it seems to justify our place a little more than it did before.'

He foresees the end of the G.C.S.E. in the near future, however, when 'it all becomes prescribed' in the national curriculum.

Perhaps the main difference between Arnold and the rest of the department is his perception of his own teaching style. He does not teach different activities to the others, and his comments on the content, aims etc of the subject are broadly similar. He does, though, admit to a different philosophy of teaching:

'I've seen Jane teach and I've seen Pete teach and I think mine is more a holistic type of approach and then coming back to the methodology, the foundations, approaching various skills. Obviously Jane's is very much more skills based all the way through, probably more didactic as well. And I also try to use the reciprocal method of working, of helping each other and, er, everyone trying to spot each other's mistakes, that sort of thing, - to improve their skills and to improve their relationships with others in the group, uhm, to be supportive of those who find it difficult, what have you, and I also think it does improve skills as well, and it improves their ability to be able to assess what's going on, possibly you could look at it long term to the fact that they can actually appreciate sport when they, er, view it.'

Implicit in this, is a perspective on knowledge in physical education which involves more than just content. It is probably a more articulate version of Jane's 'it's more educational' and it suggests a specific concern with the social and moral development of pupils - similar, perhaps, to Casbon's (1990) 'citizenship' as discussed in chapter 3. Essentially, however, this is the 'correct' way to talk about an educational activity and Arnold is admired for it:

'I think the same [as Arnold]. If he says something I usually think 'I would have said that' or 'I agree with that''. Diane, physical education department.
(Interview following.)

'I think Arnold has tried probably harder than anybody else to be less formal [in his teaching style] uhm, so he sometimes comes over as being a little freer'
Jane. Extract from initial interview

'Arnold is better than most male teachers' Female supply teacher. Extract from field notes 28-6-89

Other members of staff see Arnold as very different to Pete and, as they see Pete as 'typical', so Arnold is atypical of the male teacher of physical education (see later interviews). Taking all this into account, I was expecting to find that Arnold's lessons would be quite different in character and approach to those taught by other members of the department. In the event, this was not really the case, and the following extract from fieldnotes is illustrative:

*Joined Arnold for a mixed cricket lesson with 2nd

years. Arnold joins in with a girl and sets off exercises with a ball as they wait for the other girls to arrive. The rest of the girls are 10 minutes late as they went to the wrong place. Much hilarity from the boys as the girls enter. Arnold gives a recap and some instructions - takes it very seriously - a fairly traditional start to the lesson. He rarely relaxes, uses little imagery, does not attempt to make it 'fun'. Sets up the second practice and this time reminds pupils to:

'Tell you're partner - see what they're doing'

'Tell him if he's doing it all right'

'Constructive criticism please'

The pupils completely ignore this and get on with the activity. Arnold then draws them in and asks them to comment on their partner's performance - the pupils are unable to comment and seem confused by the question. I wonder if this has been for my benefit? (Arnold confirms this in a subsequent discussion) The lesson continues with lots of teacher talk and lots of information imparted. Less action than in some other lessons I've seen, but the pupils are taking it all quite seriously.*

Fieldnotes: 28-6-89

Comparisons between Arnold and Pete were made by many teachers and by members of the senior management team in interviews. Perhaps the most damaging charge levelled at Pete was that of sexism, and he certainly made every effort to reinforce that view in his comments to and about female staff, and in his refusal to enthuse about mixed P.E. On one occasion, a member of staff asked me about my day's activities and, when I replied that I would be spending time with Pete, she laughed, saying: 'Oh you'll be researching sexism then!'. The comparison between the two male teachers was a recurring feature, and it led me to assume - and this was generally accepted - that Arnold was quite free of sexist tendencies. Once again, however, in practice this just was not the case. As I observed sports day trials, for example, it was quite obvious that Arnold

pushed the boys more and gave them full recognition for their achievements, whereas the girls were more or less dismissed. It was Arnold who labelled the girls' discus trial as a 'mothers' meeting' and who joked long and hard with the male P.E. student about their attempts at the 1500 metres. At the time, Jane was at the other end of the sports field. (From fieldnotes 29-6-89)

I can only conclude from my observations that Arnold was quite similar to the other members of the department in terms of lesson content, pace, and style. He was known to be a more 'holistic' teacher but, in reality, it was hard to discern major differences in his approach. The important factor is that he was perceived by others as a 'better' teacher, although much of this recognition came from administrative work in other areas of the curriculum; careers and pastoral. I would suggest that he was accorded esteem because he could speak the approved language of education; possibly a classic case of effective use of language in the 'educationist context' (Keddie 1971), or what Sparkes (1987) termed 'strategic rhetoric'. At the level of practice, he appeared to lack enthusiasm for physical education.

Arnold had accepted the fact that physical education was a low status subject and that it would get him nowhere. Even though, upon probing, he was able to name several heads and

deputy heads who had come through physical education, he felt that he would have to gain a further qualification to prove he had 'academic knowledge' as well. He believed that physical educationists were seen as 'good disciplinarians' and 'good with kids' but, when it came down to it, not much else.

DIANE: THE DIPLOMAT

Diane is a recent addition to the department and has just completed her probationary year. She enjoys her job, feels very comfortable in the department, works well with Jane and has some firm beliefs about physical education. Her general approach is characterised as 'diplomatic' in that she is respectful to senior members of staff and is most supportive of Jane. She particularly admires Arnold for his ability to 'say all the right things'.

As is often the case with new teachers, Diane sees little difficulty with innovations and she wholeheartedly endorses mixed physical education, G.C.S.E., and health related fitness. (Similarly, in her research, Sikes (1988) noted that: 'young physical education teachers tended to be strongly committed to their job' (p.28).) Diane made the point quite clearly that she would not wish to work in a school where such policies were not in operation. Here again, the theoretical aspect of both mixed P.E. and the

G.C.S.E. were attractive:

'It's good for the department to have an exam - it gives more status, uhm, to teach it - if I moved on - I'd like the school to do it and if not I'd try and get it started. It doesn't bother me - the theory and all that. Some people at college didn't want to do it, but I really enjoy it.'

Diane seemed to have very similar views to Jane and this probably explains their excellent working relationship. She also endorses Arnold's approach, although not nearly as eloquently; for example, on the distinction between physical education and sport:

'I think there's a definite difference - in that we are teaching them how to do the activities, and they are learning about their bodies, and how to use their minds as well, and all the social and emotional things that come into it. Whereas sport, I always see as out of school, they're just doing things - doing the activity and so education is them learning about themselves and the activity, whereas sport - they're just doing it. I mean they do co-incide in school, where they actually get into a game at the end and they actually do the activity - and, - I suppose, in clubs....They are mutually beneficial, yes. The education side is obviously more intense, but then you learn anyway when you play sport - like to interact with other people and taking responsibility in, for example, a team.'

For Diane, then, the important knowledge of physical education is not the skills required to complete the activity successfully, but, like Jane, it is learning about something else (in this case themselves) and, like Arnold, there is a social dimension. So, when pupils play in a

game, they are essentially learning how to work with others, with the execution of the activity itself as of secondary importance. The significance of the exam is thus identified as the theoretical 'respectability' which it brings. Diane was not particularly happy with her response; she felt she had contradicted herself, and that she had missed something. Yet she couldn't pin-point it and in the end decided her explanation would have to do.

Like others in the department, Diane thought teams and clubs were important, and that the success of the teams emanated from a successful curriculum. She also felt that it was very important to have a 'structured and organised syllabus', and that she should present an active and enthusiastic image if she wanted success and promotion:

'..always to be very enthusiastic, very - wanting to help out all the time - always involved, to be seen to be doing something - like in the staffroom - always to be involved. In education as a whole, trying to get more involved with the pastoral work and also equal opportunities - I try and do lots of things.'

Diane did not identify with Pete at all, yet she highlighted 'knowing' the pupils as one of the most important aspects of teaching. To this end, she had involved herself in trips with pupils from all years: 'it's good for them to see me as a person and not just a teacher'.

Diane was much more positive than any of the others about teaching and about physical education. Her philosophy was compatible with that of the other teachers, and it is quite remarkable that her practice was also so similar, given the wide gap in their ages and training. This point was also noted by Jane who seemed encouraged by the similarity. (See also the comments from life-history interviews in chapter 5.)

THE HEAD AND THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The head teacher and all members of 'the senior management team' were interviewed individually, and at some length. The reason for this was a belief that they represent a group who, notionally at least, are in a position within the organisation to influence the physical education department and its practice. (The issue of power is explored at several points in the following chapters.)

THE HEAD TEACHER

For the head teacher, identifying the essential nature of physical education proved somewhat problematic. Although he was aware, in advance of the interview, of the nature of my questions and had given the matter some thought, he still seemed rather vague in his responses. He identified the main purpose of physical education as:

'To provide everybody with an opportunity to obtain some sort of physical activity, uhm, some training of some sort of physical activity, knowledge of what is available in terms of - physical activity.....I think it's much more important that it should be P.E. which is available for all rather than being the sort of elitist approach that one used to have - to providing school teams. Er, I think I would say in terms of what it's all about, uhm, an aspect of education which is, uhm, if you like, helping pupils to make more of their lives in the sense that they presumably will gain some benefit from being physically fit, they will enjoy the social benefits of, uhm, sport and so on..'

He felt particularly strongly that competition should not be a major focus for the subject:

'I'm not necessarily a total pacifist, but I think, er, I think one ought to look upon, uhm. sports and games and so-on, games rather than physical education at the moment, er, I think one should look upon those as something which, er, encourages people to work together rather than to compete against each other, particularly if it comes to the point of physical aggression and indeed, er, putting it in simple terms, PUTTING ONE OVER THE OTHER.'

He also demonstrated that he was somewhat confused about the terminology to be used in this discussion:

'essentially, whether it be games or P.E. it should be available to everyone.....'.

The head's view of a successful P.E. department was closely allied to his earlier points ie., he looked for 'P.E. for all'; pupils' focussed on: 'keeping fit, remaining fit';

and, if the talented pupils 'just happened along', then

'if the department finds the opportunity to, to bring sufficient of those together and form a representative team and go out and do something for school X which will to some extent put school X on the map, that's fine.'

He made the point about his relaxed attitude to school sport several times, almost defensively, as if he felt he should prove that he was not a trophy hunting head teacher. (I had never suggested that he was.) He felt that he would be able to judge the effectiveness of the department by the number of pupils who were attempting to avoid lessons and 'the degree of enthusiasm' with which pupils were participating. He felt you could 'see' this from watching lessons. It was interesting to note, therefore, that at a later point in the interview he bemoaned the fact that he is now rarely in school and that he feels he is getting 'out of touch'.

He added a further point at a later stage in the interview, about the main contribution of the physical education department to the school:

'they have managed to persuade boys and girls to spend more time in P.E. together.....I think it's a fairly relevant contribution to, uhm, breaking down discriminatory barriers within the school'

For the head, then, it can be assumed that the important knowledge of physical education is not quite the same as for the physical education teachers. Although there is, again, a measure of agreement on the issue of health/fitness, the head has great difficulty in reconciling the place of sport within what he hopes is an egalitarian framework. His personal involvement in sport was described as 'virtually nil frankly' and he recounted a series of incidents which left him feeling unhappy with sport, games and 'macho sportsmen'. His antagonism towards Pete was openly acknowledged and, given his views on both sport and education, this is not surprising. Arnold was praised by him on several occasions; neither Jane, nor Diane were mentioned, except in passing.

DEPUTY HEAD ADMIN: JOSEPH

Joseph made it clear, at the outset, that although he was a former head of physical education, he had never excelled at sport - but he always tried hard. It was evident throughout the interview that this background had a strong impact upon his view of the knowledge of physical education. Joseph put much thought into his responses and several interesting points arose from what turned out to be a much extended interview. He saw physical education as

'a different form of education. Nowhere else do you, do

you get education through the physical, and because I think it's a vehicle for promoting many of the values and attitudes which might otherwise not be promoted, - I'm really talking about positive attitudes to things, taking up challenges, and achieving the best you can. Being prepared not to be the best but to give of your best and that being a reward in itself. In other words, fulfilling the best you can - so you can't shot-put very far, but you can do it and have a go at it.....I hold Corinthian values very dear to me.....I've always thought P.E. a marvellous vehicle for Corinthian values..'

'That's how I saw P.E., I saw it as, well I saw it as education: the activities for their own sake I would value - to hurdle is an experience so from the experiential point of view, it is wonderful to do a whole range of activities and also to develop skills and so on. But it was also, uhm, I saw it as education through the physical - er, with all these values, but then of course you can expand it into the examination world and there's a whole field of knowledge to be developed.'

Although this is a rather lengthy extract, it does represent a coherent and carefully considered view. Joseph makes no apology for seeing physical education as an effective medium for giving pupils values which he would hold dear. He is not unlike others in this respect, but he is very open about it. Knowledge in physical education is, in his view, quite extensive, and he embraces a plethora of perspectives with consummate ease. He had little difficulty in identifying his criteria for success, until, that is, I asked him to detail how he could actually measure success:

'Success would be seen in the attitude the children bring to their physical education....If you have a positive attitude towards sport and physical activity that will be a lifelong thing...if you have this strong feeling that exercise is important and understand the

value of it and you want to do it, then you're willing to encourage your children to do the same. I hate the thought of judging the school by the success of its teams and the size of its trophy cabinet...having said all that, excellence in all its forms must be developed in schools. It's quite wrong not to encourage competition and we must have good sides and teams but that's not, that's the icing on the cake. The important thing is the cake.'

I then posed the question about measuring Joseph's form of success and after thinking for a while he admitted that, given that it was 'an attitudinal thing', then it was very hard to measure. He felt it would be wrong to measure the department on pupils' skill level because 'it depends what you're starting off with doesn't it?'. He suggested that he would look at pupils' kit, at their enthusiasm for and enjoyment of lessons and at how the programme is set out. He then became worried because he realised that he was judging merely by 'feel' and he felt that was somehow unfair. I raised the point that other subjects were judged by results even though their initial material was beyond their control. Finally, Joseph came up with a response which clarified his position:

'I think it's because it's an intrinsic part of your lessons to prepare children for examinations in history, but it's not an intrinsic part of the P.E. lesson to prepare people for the football team. I mean, if I'm teaching, teaching football or I'm teaching any other physical activity, I don't - I'm not conscious that I'm preparing them for the team or that result there. I'm trying to improve their ability at the sport in order that they may, if they wish, use it and that is a difference isn't it? Yes, that is a difference.'

Although there is tension remaining in this statement, and the assumption that other teachers teach mainly for an exam could probably be questioned, the point about ability in sport being improved to give pupils options is important. That education should be 'for life' is a commonly held belief, but for physical education, this has long been its only real claim to legitimacy. Whereas other departments can look to examination results as an 'on the spot' indicator of performance, assuming all the while that it is long term 'education for life' principles that are really important, physical education has been without the same immediate performance indicator and public endorsement of its knowledge claims. At one level, this probably explains the primacy of teams and team success in the eyes of some teachers. Looking for success in the 'lifetime' framework is an extraordinarily difficult task.

Joseph did admit that identifying attitudes by way of 'feeling' was rather problematic. It is, and has been his measure, however; it is endorsed by other deputy heads and it raises some interesting questions about the legitimacy and accuracy of such a process. (See later discussions, particularly in chapter 7.)

DEPUTY HEAD CURRICULUM: KAREN

Karen is a popular member of the senior management team. She is respected by other teachers for her intellectual ability, her efficiency and her willingness to listen. Her views on physical education stem directly from her belief in the importance of exercise in her own life. She feels that participation in physical activity gives her 'more control and more energy' and it is this which she wants for pupils. Her background in sport is extensive: captain of lacrosse at school and a member of every team on offer; currently participating in squash, swimming and tennis.

Karen sees the value of physical education in the context of personal/social/health education (P.S.H.E.). She does recognise a distinction between physical education and sport, and it is largely in the orientation of the former towards the broad concept of health:

'I think they (sport/P.E.) are related, but I think of P.E. as broader than sport. I think sport is part of it, but I think if some children are going to enjoy different kinds of activity, some will be very sporting in what they do enjoy, and join clubs and be competitive, but I think to make sure that everybody appreciates that exercising the body just generally contributes to physical health which contributes to the whole notion of health. I mean, in my last school, in P.S.H.E., we always used to start off with the triangle of health, you know, physical health, mental and emotional health, and I think that is what is important; that you don't sort of play sport like mad in all the school teams, but suddenly because there's no team structure, and no set up, you're not doing anything anymore. And I suppose an understanding of what kinds of activities are most helpful for what sorts of physical development, uhm, and how often it is necessary to do it, how it contributes to the health of the whole

person.'

Once again, this respondent found it difficult to articulate how she would measure the effectiveness of her preferred view of physical education. She thought for sometime, and finally suggested some form of research, both qualitative and quantitative. The latter would be employed to determine what pupils were doing a year after school (or after the end of compulsory P.E.) whilst the former could occur in the framework of P.S.H.E. to ascertain pupils' attitudes. Karen also thought it might be possible to measure skill development:

'Uhm, I think it's also relevant to look at things like, you know, skill development, uhm, which you can measure by successful teams as well as by personal success in activities which lend themselves very easily to measurement, and there's all the different awards that I s'pose you could use as a measure of personal, sort of, skill development..'

She stressed the importance of some sort of systematic evaluation which, in her experience, she had never encountered. Asked to give her opinions on the department at Citylimits High School, she felt that all she really knew was that Jane, the head of department, had a 'rigorous and professional' approach. She also noted the popularity of the G.C.S.E.

In general terms Karen felt that a sound academic education was the key to everything and then, in addition, she

thought it was essential to focus on relationships, values and attitudes. Physical education clearly fell into the second category.

DEPUTY HEAD 'PEOPLE': WENDY

Wendy seemed harrassed and stressed throughout my research period at Citylimits. She rarely had time to speak to other members of staff and she was never in the staffroom. It proved to be quite difficult to arrange an interview and our appointment was cancelled twice. I began to feel that I should not be adding to her problems and would have dropped my request for an interview after the third attempt. In the event the interview, which I had been warned could take only fifteen minutes, lasted for nearly two hours. However, much of this time was spent discussing Wendy's personal problems - an occupational hazard for interviewers!

There is little doubt that Wendy held a faintly bemused view of physical education and physical education teachers (and researchers). She seemed to find it difficult to take the subject seriously; even more so since she had volunteered to take some 'keep-fit' and badminton with the fifth year girls:

'Yes, it was splendid. Yes, lovely, but I'm not doing it next year. I was quite happy to do it next year - it was really good, didn't have to do very much preparation - I did have to read a badminton book, but there was no marking. It was wonderful being a P.E. teacher, (laughs)

and I loved being with the kids as well because I was able just to get to know them.'

These points raise several interesting questions. Wendy saw her involvement in the fifth form options programme as fun and an easy time. Preparation could be minimal and the absence of marking was a further bonus. In addition, she could 'get to know' the pupils in a way which presumably she never found time for in her traditional teaching subject; English. (See also Hendry 1975 and Bell 1986, who make similar points). Thus physical education was, for Wendy, a soft option. Even at fifth form level, reading a badminton book and finding a 'Jane Fonda' tape were seen as sufficient preparation.

In response to questions about the value of physical education, Wendy saw health and fitness as the central focus of the subject. She also saw it as 'a good socialising tool' assisting pupils 'in the development of their own behaviour patterns'. Sport, for Wendy, was related to physical education, but the latter was also related to 'a person's own image of themselves'. Finally, she described sport as 'one of the performance areas of physical education', and she suggested that this element, in the form of team participation, was one way in which she, personally, measured the success of the department. However, like other respondents, she found questions on measuring success to be problematic:

'Uhm, whether the children look happy when they're going into the changing rooms, whether they go there quickly or dally, (pause) whether there are teams and the tradition of team commitments and team achievement outside of school, uhm, I s'pose enthusiasm more than achievement because it depends on your intake and a particular year group as to whether they'll achieve in terms of each other, but I s'pose you could sort of pick out their own personal achievements and getting better (pause), uhm, I s'pose I tend to keep thinking about achievement because my own personal subject area is an area which is measurable in achievement. Uhm, (pause) whether the staff are happy, whether, uhm, there is a team commitment from the staff, how much and how deeply they're involved with the children, uhm, but I think you can probably measure all of the staff in-puts through the children's attitudes - or the majority of children anyway.'

Not for the first (or the last) time in this research, I found myself thinking that physical education departments would do well to teach pupils to 'look happy' before and after physical education lessons. Perhaps they should even award points to pupils for racing to lessons, because it would appear that in the absence of other measures of achievement, physical education teachers are being judged on some questionable criteria. Furthermore Wendy has indicated, yet again, that physical education is somehow 'different'. She seems to feel that it is perfectly acceptable to measure achievement in theoretical knowledge areas, even though success here must also be influenced by pupil intake. There seems to be an assumption that physical education teachers cannot be held accountable for their success or otherwise in teaching practical skills and sports. Rather, they must ensure that pupils are 'happy'

and willing. Siedentop's (1990) criticisms (see chapter 2) are not without foundation, it would seem.

Wendy made it abundantly clear that she saw Pete as the major weakness of the department. For her, he was the stereo-typical male P.E. teacher. In contrast, the other members of the department were described as 'sensitive' and having 'an understanding of a whole school approach'. They were even described as intelligent:

'they have an understanding of how P.E. would fit in and does fit in and should fit in to the rest of the curriculum. I mean I think what I'm trying to say is that (laughs) three-quarters of the department seem very intelligent, (laughs) let's be grown-up about this (laughs)'

It is probably unwise to dwell upon the patronising nature of this comment, but an interesting principle has been established; namely, that to be considered 'intelligent', a physical education teacher **must** embrace the approved discourse of education. To disagree is to be unintelligent. The paradox, of course, is in the practice as exemplified by Wendy in her fifth form physical education classes. Though she may extol the virtues of a 'whole school approach', one is left to search for the evidence of it in her description of her own approach to badminton and keep-fit lessons. Rather, she makes it clear that physical education is different from most other subjects in terms of its goals, and she treated it accordingly.

MANAGEMENT TEAM - TEACHER I/C LOWER SCHOOL: ROY

Roy is an ex-physical education teacher who maintains some involvement with the subject at Citylimits High School; teaching 6/8 periods per week. His interests are largely outside physical education, however, and he spends most of his time on pre-vocational work and pastoral issues, which arise frequently in his role as year head. He has, in the past, been a keen and talented sportsman, but injury has forced him to retire and he admits to being 'turned-off' sport as a participant, and is bored with it as a teacher. This was evident in lessons which I observed. For example, on no occasions when I was present did he find himself able to arrive at a physical education lesson on time. This was not because he was 'shirking' somewhere, but because a problem would arise which fell within his pastoral role, and he always felt that this was more important than the class waiting for a physical education lesson. There was also little evidence of his philosophy, as revealed in the interview, influencing his teaching in any way except, that is, his avowed disapproval of mixed physical education.

Roy summarised the value of physical education as follows:

'I s'pose the phrase to use would be 'education through the physical' wouldn't it? That covers a whole multitude of sins. Uhm, I think certainly it serves to encourage

the social development of pupils besides the physical, which I think is primary in the sense that it is the only physical exercise that happens in school, uhm, certainly the social, the social side, - er, psychomotor skills that they can use in other areas, uhm, I think it is the social side I can see as being important - kids relate to other kids, a tremendous amount of personal inter-relation like, and then kids with staff and so-on. And definitely the physical side, in fact, I don't think we do enough on the physical health side....Although P.E. here is good, it's got its own fitness section, it's not tied into the curriculum in the sense of cross-curricular work, when it could be, certainly with active tutorial work, whatever you like to call it.'

The importance of physical education as social education surfaced several times in the interview. In particular, Roy thought that physical education was a good medium for relating to problem kids because 'you can get closer to them', without the barrier of a desk or the formality of his usual form of dress; a suit.

Given this preoccupation with the social value of the subject, Roy's views on mixed physical education are somewhat contradictory. He felt that this was a 'massive issue' and he was quite convinced that it 'lowered standards'. In particular he thought that boys would lose out, and that the only way to overcome this was to 'set' pupils by ability within lessons. He was sure that this would lead to boys and girls working in single sex groups for the most part, which they 'would probably prefer anyway'. It is difficult to understand how Roy could reconcile this view (which certainly did manifest itself in lessons which I observed) with his perception of physical

education as social education where: 'kids relate to other kids'. He did qualify his position slightly by stating that mixed P.E. could be 'excellent for equal opportunities', but this only served to deepen the inherent tension in his argument.

It is unsurprising, perhaps, that Roy found it very difficult to detail how one could, or should, measure the success of a physical education department. The sort of knowledge he is describing is not measurable in any easily identifiable ways. In the end he re-iterated the views of several others and endorsed 'two sides' to the subject; mass participation and clubs/teams. He thought that teams were very important and that parents and outsiders were interested in a school's sports results in much the same way as they were interested in examination results. After further thought he decided that he personally judges the department, at a general level, on the basis of his conversations with kids and his assessment of whether they, and the staff, are 'happy'.

MANAGEMENT TEAM - TEACHER I/C UPPER SCHOOL: JEZ

Jez, like Wendy, was rarely found in the staffroom and seemed to be under constant pressure. He commanded little respect from other members of staff, mainly because he was viewed as 'soft' on discipline and it was even suggested

that he was afraid of older pupils. He certainly avoided confrontation where possible, tending to leave staff to cope with their own problems. In many ways, he presents an interesting comparison with Pete. Pete was disliked for his 'macho' approach but, it would seem, the opposite approach finds little favour either. This may be an indication of the paradox identified at the beginning of this chapter, where Citylimits is described as 'a school seeking to be progressive and traditional, all at the same time'.

In many ways, Jez seemed out of place at secondary school level, only really coming into his own with committed A' level pupils. However, he made it clear that he was looking forward to our interview and he put much thought into each of his responses, seeming to relish the intellectual challenge of some of the contradictions which emerged. As a result the interview was lengthy and some of his responses are quite wordy.

In identifying the value of physical education, Jez was emphatic that it was 'essential'. He was the only teacher who recognised that physical education could be concerned with cognitive development, although he identified 'psychomotor' development as its primary role. He also thought daily physical education was important in the development of pupils' personalities, particularly where pupils had learning or other difficulties:

'It develops, as I say, psychomotor skills, it develops a sense of, er, release of aggression, pent up emotions, er, setting targets for oneself, creativity as well.'

Like all other respondents, Jez was confounded, initially, by my question about his personal measures of success for physical education at Citylimits. He was also rather intrigued, however, and I have reproduced his response in full because it gives an interesting insight into the process which took him to his final conclusion:

'Certainly I wouldn't use, er, competitive sport, although I think there's a place for it. I wouldn't turn around and say 'yes - here are glorious victories and narrow defeats' (laughs) - I wouldn't use that as a criteria. Er, in my own, as it were, in my position with pastoral responsibility, I find it is very difficult to quantify, it is a feel; what I'd observe going in and out of form groups, what I'd observe going in and out of classes, the use of language, the style, the way they're addressed, the feel; the sense of - the communication, the two way communication between the staff and the pupils, the sense of openness and approachability, the sense of trust and of care and concern, I think that's what I'd be looking for. Uhm, er, certainly I'd be looking for uhm, er, uhm, I suppose, er, something that would give me an indication as to the use of language in terms of how they're spoken to, the body language. Too often, in the past, I've seen, uhm, many P.E. teachers who've adopted a very aggressive approach, be it enhancing the male stereotype, you know, macho, and er a female response of being aggressive to, er, many of the P.E. females feeling that the only way to gain control and respect of the girls is to be particularly aggressive and to be more aggressive than they are. But certainly, that's not my notion of it. But the whole feel, the whole (long pause) it's, er, the whole philosophy the person brings to it, the whole view of P.E., the feel.'

At this point, Jez felt that his response was inadequate in some way, and that he had failed to articulate anything

beyond a fairly hazy notion of 'feel'. He felt that he should try to be more specific:

'One could pin it down to the incidents, in terms of the incidents that would emanate from a P.E. department, because as a rule if you find that the majority of them are dealt with within the department then there must be an element of respect and a finger on the pulse, because very quickly parents, if they're unhappy, in my experience, if they're unhappy with the way a matter has been dealt with in P.E., uhm, they'd be very quickly on to someone to complain, you know. And I think, as well, one's got to be very sensitive in one's approach within P.E., that's what I'd be looking for as well, sensitivity. But er, yes, a lot of it is subjective, but it's based on experience I suppose, yes, and also I suppose, observing sports outside and being aware of, er, the nature of the sport that's involved, like we have inter-form competitions which means, you know, that everyone is open to have a go, the collectivist approach that everybody is in the form and has a go. (pause) Er, the nature of the sport you'd seize upon at times, you know, I think sometimes there's an element with softball - it's more fun for some reason, rather than say football, which would bring out the male aggression. (pause) Yes, a lot of it is subjective.'

In other words, Jez really got no further in his deliberations than in his first attempt. Like other respondents, he places importance on what he observes, albeit at a very general level. Yet he rarely, if ever, sees a physical education lesson. He certainly would see pupils on their way to lessons, and he would teach pupils after P.E., but this probably amounts to no more than a cursory knowledge of the department and its success or otherwise. It is interesting to note that Jez's notion of 'feel' probably sums up what most of the other teachers were trying to say. Like them, in particular the Head, he suggests that he would be able to identify 'the feel' by

watching lessons - even though he has a limited knowledge of what they are trying to achieve. It is also interesting to note that he makes no reference to the levels attained by the pupils; ie, whether they are learning anything specific and are progressing. Here again, it is made clear that physical education is somehow different to other subjects and that physical education teachers should not be held responsible for teaching pupils specific skills. Instead, they must keep pupils happy, disciplined and, above all, **passive**, if they are to be deemed successful.

MANAGEMENT TEAM - TEACHER I/C COVER + TIMETABLE: JULIAN

Julian was very surprised to find that he was required for an interview as he felt that he had little to offer. He was relatively new to the school and often seemed to be sinking beneath the problems associated with teacher absences. He was not enjoying his job and he was often seen chasing teachers and frowning at his extensive cover notices. Other members of staff felt that he made a fairly simple task over-complex, and few had any sympathy for him as he was deemed to be 'unfair' in apportioning cover. Our interview was somewhat shorter than most others, but still some different points emerged. On the essential value of physical education, Julian felt that it was a subject which was ultimately justified in the context of a balanced curriculum and he reiterated the dualist mind/body

approach:

'I think you can't work well unless you're reasonably fit, so if youngsters have a reasonable level of fitness, they're more likely to work quite well in their other subjects as well'

He felt it was important for non-specialists to be involved in physical education to give it 'a broader perspective' although for such a teacher 'it would tend to be not specialist P.E. lessons but in games lessons'. Julian saw a distinction between physical education and sport, although this was somewhat confused and is summarised in the comment: 'I regard P.E. as the sort of building block of sport'. In his comments on success for physical education, he developed this theme:

'Oh, (pause), when there's good relationships between youngsters and staff, and between staff. Uhm, (pause), when, as far as I'm concerned, when sport is involved, that there is 'sportsmanship', that, er, the youngsters are there to enjoy the game rather than win at all odds, at all costs. Uhm, and when people are enthusiastic enough to get involved in it themselves, so that for something like a sports day, the whole staff is involved and feel they're part of it.....But, er, I should think relationships and involvement of both pupils and staff in sporting matters and a measure of success in external games'

Julian's comments about sports day are interesting in the light of my observations in the staffroom during the preparations for the day. Staff, on the whole, were reluctant to help and were annoyed at the loss of timetable time. In addition, some members of staff made their

hostility to the event quite evident as they undertook their assigned tasks:

It is clear that staff outside the P.E. department are not taking sports day seriously. Angela, the announcer, (maths department) is making light of successes and is indulging in silly comments. The teachers who are measuring the long jump look bored, and are doing nothing to encourage the pupils. There is much hilarity when pupils do something badly, ie., losing a race by a long way. There is much sympathy for those pupils who have chosen not to participate but who are forced to spectate. Sadly, there is only grudging praise for the fifth form boy who dominates the running events. His success is seen as 'inevitable', 'just a product of an outside club' and 'the result of all that mindless training - no wonder he has no time for anything else!' In other words neither he, nor the P.E. department, should expect praise for his achievements. Yet, his running career was initiated in the P.E. department and they are still involved in his training and progress - particularly Pete. Staff reaction to sports day is sending some very unhelpful messages to pupils.

(Extract from fieldnotes 17-8-89)

In the light of interview responses as presented in this chapter, this lack of enthusiasm for success at sports day is more easily understood. Other members of staff don't really appear to mind what standard the pupils reach in the activities which make up physical education, as long as the pupils don't strive too hard to win, and as long as they are 'happy'. The boy detailed above seemed to be a source of embarrassment as much as anything else. It is important to note, however, that for Julian, the enthusiasm of other members of staff to become involved in such events as sports day was an indicator of the success of the P.E. department and, on this measure, they had clearly failed. When asked about the difficulty of quantifying his measures

of success, Julian admitted that he was not sure how he would do it, and then seemed to change his position a little:

'Uhm, I s'pose, to an extent, uhm, there's more, there are more elements of P.E. being used in examinations now, now that there's a G.C.S.E. in sporting activities, so that in that sense there's an academic side to P.E. now which perhaps was lacking in the past and therefore there is a similar measure of the department. Uhm, I suppose another measure of 'success' is, is the way in which the head of P.E. is involved in committees and so on in the school, how much his or her voice is given weight in considerations. But those are still nebulous measures aren't they? They're not, uhm, based on any particular criteria. So, I don't know.'

That Julian had never really considered the issue was evident. Yet, as Head of Maths, a member of the management team and likely to be a deputy head in the near future (he pointed out that maths teachers tend to get rapid promotion) he will undoubtedly find himself with responsibility for a physical education department. A clear message which does emerge from this research, is that P.E. teachers would do well to find out just what it is that senior teachers expect, and how it is that they will measure the department. At least, in this way, they might encourage managers to make explicit their criteria - a valid exercise in itself, it would seem.

OTHER MEMBERS OF STAFF

A short open-ended questionnaire was distributed to all

other members of staff. As was related in the methodology chapter (and see that chapter for full details) it is clear that I made a tactical error at this point in the research by distributing questionnaires too late in the summer term. In addition, some of the data has proved to be superfluous to the needs of this study as it has developed. However, that which is relevant is detailed below. Wherever possible, data from questionnaires is presented in a simple frequency of mention format. (See Appendix C for complete questionnaires.)

Q.2. How does physical education contribute to the process of education in secondary schools?

- the development of health and fitness: 4
- the development of sports/physical skills: 4
- involvement in teams: 3
- participation: 3
- competition: 3
- as a physically active subject: 2
- self-awareness: 1
- group dynamic skills: 1
- group/school identity: 1
- co-operation: 1

Q.6. How would you define success for a physical education department?

The following are representative comments:

'All pupils perform measurably better at any given activity after a course than when it commenced'

'Participation and success achieved against comparable schools'

'Involves all pupils whatever their abilities - does not allow the untalented to suffer'

'Good sports results and facilities'

'Pupil involvement/enjoyment'

The responses are unsurprising and seem to be in line with the philosophy of the physical education department as detailed in interviews. Of interest, is the emphasis upon health/fitness and sports skills, and the clear implication that pupils should not only enjoy the activities, but that they should also improve their standard of performance. Perhaps this is a grounded reflection of teachers' priorities for their own subjects. It certainly seems to contrast with the comments made by some of the management team. However, it is difficult to use the data any further than this and it is included merely to add one further dimension to the discussion.

GOVERNING BODY

Here again, and for similar reasons, the response rate was less than expected (5 out of 10). However, those who did respond did so at some length. As was indicated in the methodology chapter, at the time of the fieldwork, both the school and the governing body were attempting to come to terms with the new powers of the latter, as a result of the 1988 Education Act. The decision to include the governors in the research, was based upon a perception that they would have the power to make decisions which could affect the physical education department in some potentially profound ways. In reality, however, from my

observations at meetings, it was clear that the head teacher still had over-riding control of the decision making process. The governors appeared, at this early stage in the reform, unwilling to challenge his authority.

Q.2. In your view, why is physical education taught in secondary schools; what is its purpose?

- health/fitness: 4
- healthy mind/body: 3
- interpersonal skills: 2
- team spirit: 1
- channel aggression: 1
- preparation for life: 1

Q.4. In your opinion, is physical education at Citylimits High School successful? Explain your answer.

Three of the five respondents answered this question and I present their comments in full:

'Yes, I believe so. The school has a good record of participation in sports activities within the Borough and many children are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities after school. The emphasis at the school is on allowing all children to participate at whatever level and to develop the children's interests. If there is any area where the school has been less successful it is in persuading children of the dangers of smoking.' Computer Centre Manager

'Yes. The school offers a large variety of sporting activities catering for both sexes where this is necessary and mixed events' Company Director

'Generally yes - There are however problems in some areas because of lack of facilities. Team sports seem to have suffered somewhat over recent years due to the unwillingness of staff (understandable as this arose during the pay dispute) to spend the time needed outside normal hours. Would suggest that sometimes too much choice, or rather desire to cover too many activities in a short time - can have a detrimental effect of developing strong teams because of lack of continuity eg. with rugby. (I am concerned about the effect of

this in rugby on the game at senior and international level in the future)'

Personnel Manager (Chair)

The three comments seem to summarise the enduring dilemmas within physical education: breadth v depth; the place of health education; curricular v extra-curricular; school and national sport; girls and boys. The comment about smoking is somewhat incongruous at first glance, but in the context of responses which highlighted the centrality of health/fitness in physical education it is, perhaps, quite fitting.

PARENTS

An open ended questionnaire was sent to a random sample of parents (n = 187). 94 questionnaires were returned (50.26%). 62 were completed by the mother and 32 by the father. In some cases, (apparently randomly) parents responded to some questions and not others.

Q.2. What do you want your child to learn in physical education?

- specific sports: 35
- health/fitness: 33
- team spirit/team work: 21
- learning to compete/win/lose: 11
- enjoyment: 12
- movement/physical activity: 8
- preparation for life: 7
- discipline: 5
- develop individual potential: 4
- safety: 2

- relaxation: 1
- sociability: 1
- confidence: 1
- practical and theory: 1
- challenge: 1

Q.3. In your opinion, is physical education an important subject? Explain your answer.

Yes: 81 respondents.

- health/fitness: 41
- relaxation from work/other subjects: 18
- team spirit: 11
- healthy body - healthy mind: 11
- channel energy: 9
- discipline: 7
- competitive spirit: 7
- good winner/loser: 7
- sociability: 5
- physical development: 3
- enjoyment of sport: 3
- good for less academic pupils: 3
- character building: 3
- confidence: 2
- self expression: 2

No: 13 respondents.

- should be voluntary: 5
- academic subjects more important: 4

Although most of these responses could have been anticipated, the number who identified the 'healthy body/healthy mind' issue was unexpected. One respondent answered: 'Yes of course. Healthy body leads to healthy mind'. Another: 'Yes, because being fit and healthy must be an important aid to an individual's ability to absorb information and store it'. Interestingly, these comments not only reinforce the dualist perspective, they clearly point to the higher value placed upon the mind - physical activity is important because it improves the capacity of the mind. This is further exemplified in the large number

of parents who identified 'relaxation' as an important function of physical education. Thus it is, perhaps, understandable that some find it difficult to accept the notion of an examination in such a subject. In a sense, physical education is stepping outside of its primary function, ie., to improve their child's performance in other subjects.

The emphasis upon health/fitness as a justification for physical education was expected. This is mirrored in the responses from all parties in the research. The issue is explored further in later chapters.

Q.4. Are you happy or unhappy with physical education at Citylimits High School? Give reasons for your answer.

Happy: 50 respondents. Illustrative comments:
'Yes. Structure and variety are good'
'There seems to be a good variety of sports and lots of enjoyment for the children.'

Happy, but qualified: 22 respondents. Illustrative comments:
'Yes apart from the rugby, which I do not approve of as I feel it is far too rough and unnecessary and I would rather my son didn't do it.'
'Yes, but I don't like the way the male P.E. teachers judge children on ball skills alone and give low grades for achievement even when effort is +++'
'Reasonably happy, but I don't think enough time is given to any one sport'

Unhappy: 12 respondents. Illustrative comments:
'No, there seems to be no structured school teams and practice sessions are erratic. Games against other schools are few and far between and often last minute affairs. The pupils are missing out.'
'Unhappy. There is not enough consistency in subjects from term to term.'

The physical education department were quite pleased with this result. They had anticipated the general nature of both positive and negative comments, largely because they are issues which arise in on-going debate within the department. It is interesting to note the comments about achievement and effort. They seem to point to an expectation among some parents that achievement in physical education is effort - there is nothing of educational significance beyond this. This mirrors some of the comments made by the management team about successful physical education.

THE PUPILS

54 pupils were interviewed during the course of the fieldwork - as is described, in detail, in the methodology chapter (see chapter 1). Pupils were selected, at random, during physical education lessons and from the playground at lunchtimes. A summary of their responses is as follows:

Q. Why do you think you are taught physical education? What do you think is the point of it?

- health and fitness: 31
- specific sports: 11
- a break from lessons: 5
- enjoyment: 5
- for life after school: 4
- career: 3
- competing:1

Fifth form pupils (year 11) at the end of compulsory

physical education, were asked a further question:

Q. What do you feel you have learnt in physical education at Citylimits High School?

- named sports: 10
- health/fitness: 7
- nothing: 3
- to win/lose: 2
- to participate: 1
- to do your best: 1

Q. All pupils were asked to identify the best and worst aspects of physical education:

Best:

- enjoyment: 14
- being active: 10
- variety of sports: 5
- unlike work: 4
- social aspects: 4
- named sports: 3
- playing a game: 3
- being outside: 2
- winning: 2
- teamwork: 2
- competing: 2
- nothing: 3

Worst:

- named sports: 20 (of which running: 9)
- being outside in the cold: 13
- not enough time for P.E.: 10
- compulsory P.E.: 3
- outside in the heat: 2
- being pushed too hard: 1
- losing: 1
- others not making an effort: 1
- kit: 1
- showers: 1
- impatient teachers: 1

Q. Pupils were also asked to describe the qualities of an ideal teacher of physical education:

- is patient/helpful/explains: 20
- not too strict/gets on with the pupils: 19
- not too lax on discipline: 9
- pushes you just far enough/knows your ability: 8
- makes it fun/interesting: 8
- good at sports: 7
- knowledgeable about sports: 7
- a woman: 6
- enthusiastic: 4

- gives individual attention: 4
- gives you choice: 3
- no favourites: 2
- not sexist: 1
- won't embarrass you: 1
- leaves time to have a game: 1

It is interesting to note the fine line which teachers must tread in order to gain pupil approval: not too strict or too lax; patient but pushing pupils to achieve. Responses from female pupils, indicating that they would prefer a woman, were mostly from 5th form girls. They had been introduced to mixed physical education at 4th form level, and some resented it. On the other hand, several girls indicated that they preferred the male teachers because they were pushed to work to capacity.

Fourth and fifth year pupils were asked whether they thought physical education was viewed as an important subject, in particular by other teachers and by the head. Most felt that it was not important, but had some difficulty in explaining why they felt this to be the case:

'From what I've gathered through school, I don't think they do (pause) because, you see, they're not a part of it and they don't take much interest in it'

'Some do. Games teachers see it as a necessity - you're a complete moron if you don't want to do it. Others who don't like games, they take a different view, and the only time I've seen the head is in assembly'

'Yes, as a break for us from lessons'

'I should think so but they're not too worried whether

you do it or not'

'All teachers think their subject is the only important thing!'

'I don't think so, er, I think they'd prefer you - say it was an English teacher, they'd prefer you to get down and do English or whatever'

'No, I don't think so - I don't know why I think that. (pause) They want us in our own interest to do P.E. but they don't see it as major in a good education'

'No, I wouldn't have thought the head or many other teachers considered it to be important. It's one of those subjects that just seems pointless to some people. [Int. - 'Why is that?'] 'Well if I was a head, it's the same view as parents really. I'd think it's not doing anything for you. You don't get anything out of it at the end except a bit of fitness'

Pupils were almost unanimous in their answers to this question, and many raised the point that teachers are only interested in their own subject. Only one pupil felt that other members of staff were supportive of her efforts in physical education. Such responses raise some pertinent questions about a 'whole school approach' to learning, which was identified as crucial by Wendy, a deputy head (see earlier interview). It may be the case that, although such an approach is advocated, and physical education teachers are exhorted to make their subject compatible with the school approach, the promise of greater recognition is still elusive. Even if changes are made in departmental policy and practice, requisite changes in the attitudes of other teachers towards physical education can not be guaranteed.

In summary, questions about knowledge and physical education can be viewed as having a major impact on the 'life' of the physical education department at Citylimits High School. The range of data, presented in some detail in this chapter, illustrates the complex nature of both the differences in respondents' understandings of the nature and purpose of physical education, and also the existence of some shared understandings. In this context, the data from the four physical education teachers, taken in conjunction with the data from the senior management team, begins to point to the complex process whereby an individual's viewpoint is considered to be 'appropriate' or 'inappropriate' in a particular context. Career opportunities are enhanced or restricted accordingly.

In identifying specific issues for further discussion, I highlight the following:

- the place of sport in physical education
- the implications of the comments made by most respondents on the centrality of health/fitness as a justification for physical education
- notions of 'success' for the subject of physical education and its teachers
- perceptions of physical education, held by senior teachers, which would appear to be most strongly influenced by personal experience and, what might be termed, individual's current 'scripts' (see chapter 7) for education.

These issues are discussed in chapter 7, in conjunction with issues arising from data presented in the next two chapters.

The next task, however, is to focus in greater depth upon the four physical education teachers. More information is required on the processes in the lives of the teachers which culminated in physical education as it was found, and understood, at Citylimits High School. To this end, 'life-history' interviews were conducted.

CHAPTER FIVE

PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AT CITYLIMITS HIGH SCHOOL

From the outset, it has been my intention that this thesis should be viewed as a response to issues which arose from the fieldwork. Thus, in an attempt to present a grounded account of physical education at Citylimits High School, the theory has been developed from the fieldwork evidence (see methodology chapter) - hence, for example, the need to delve into both philosophy and sociology at earlier stages in the thesis. At this point, however, it is within sociology that the most relevant theoretical debate is to be found - that of agency/structure. Specifically, this chapter focuses on the notion of 'agency' as illustrated by the four members of the physical education department. In addition, the assertion made earlier in the thesis, that much current theory in the 'critical' tradition is 'teacher-proof', is supported further in the analysis of life history reflections and is discussed in the context of the development of knowledge in physical education.

As has been illustrated throughout this study, reference to an earlier classic text can provide a remarkably accurate summary of current thinking. Thus, in the agency/structure debate :

'We have come to know that every individual lives, from one generation to the next in some society; that he lives out a biography and that he lives it out within some historical sequence. By the fact of his living he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove.'

(C. Wright Mills 1959 p.6)

Similar points are made by a number of theorists following Wright Mills, and in a variety of contexts:

- Esland (1971), 'The individual biography is, therefore, both a subjective and an institutional history of the self: the one acts on the other' (p.77)
- Giddens (1979) in his theory of the duality of structures: 'Any explanation of social reproduction which imputes teleology to social systems must be declared invalid' (p.7)
- Giroux (1981) on structural restraints in schools: 'They are concrete but they are not static, they can be changed' (p.107)
- Pollard (1982) in his work on teacher coping strategies: 'Thus from the point of view of a teacher and their 'coping' problems the institutional bias may be both constraining and enabling' (p.27)
- Woods (1990) on a life history study: 'The case of Tom shows that a teacher's self, in part at least, both finds expression in, and gives expression to a curriculum area. The dialectic involves persistent and complex strategies, trade-offs, gains and losses.' (p.172)
- Sparkes (1991) in his summary of a discussion on curriculum change quotes Fullan (1982): 'Educational change depends on what teachers do and think -it's as simple and complex as that' (p.16. my emphasis)

The last point is highlighted because it is particularly pertinent for this discussion which acknowledges the 'duality of structures', and yet seeks to present a case for greater understanding of the actions of the agent; in this case the teacher of physical education. Indeed, Sparkes (1991) suggests that 'we ignore it [Fullan's point]

at our peril' and it may be that a criticism of 'teacher proof theory', as described earlier in this thesis, is implicit in such comments.

Before presenting evidence from the life history interviews with the four teachers at Citylimits High School, it is helpful to consider points raised by Elbaz (1991) in her work on the use of 'story' as a medium for understanding more about teachers' knowledge. Although these are issues related to a specific research methodology - the story - they can be seen to have implications for life history reflections, as employed at Citylimits. Clearly, the methodology chapter provides the main platform for such considerations, however I feel it is useful to reiterate the principles upon which the ensuing discussion has been based.

Elbaz makes three assertions which are of particular relevance to this study:

(i) 'the story is the very stuff of teaching...the landscape within which we live as teachers' and furthermore it gives teachers a 'voice': 'a language in which to give expression to one's authentic concerns' (p.3).

The first principle, therefore, is that the four physical education teachers have been given a 'voice' in the life history interviews. As such, and to extend the metaphor, the voice of the teachers should be louder than the voice

of the researcher. It follows, therefore, that the teachers' responses must be taken at face-value; as an expression of 'authentic concerns'. This is not to suggest that the teachers' views are always 'right'; the points made in the methodology chapter by both Hammersley (1992b) and Wilson (1972) are particularly relevant here. However, the task of the research is to have 'sufficient respect' for the teachers in order to hear, and attempt to understand their stories.

(ii) 'I believe the place of tradition in teacher thinking is a matter we have tended to treat poorly...I believe our difficulty in finding a place for tradition in our own conceptualisations of teacher thinking has to do with the conceptual maps we have ourselves acquired from liberal theories of education according to which progress and change based on dispassionate criticism of the outmoded ways of the past are unquestioned goods, and the traditional is seen as equivalent to the conservative and the archaic (p.14/15)

The second principle, therefore, is a progression of the first in that the physical education teachers are to be respected for the choices and decisions they have made, rather than criticised for the changes they have not made. Failure to change is not viewed as deviant in this analysis. Rather, in the emphasis upon agency, the decision to resist change is deemed to be as appropriate as the decision to embrace it. Fundamentally, there is no assumption that anything better than the current position exists (see, again, the methodology chapter). This represents an attempt to support, unreservedly, Keddie's

(1971) conclusion that: 'subjects are what practitioners do with them' (p.44). (The comment could, perhaps, be extended thus : '..rather than what we would wish practitioners to do with them!')

(iii) Following Wright Mills (1959) and drawing upon the work of Clark (1986), Elbaz suggests: 'The teacher's voice must speak from an embeddedness within the culture of the particular school, school system, and society in which the teacher lives and works' (p.13)

The third principle, therefore, is a recognition of both the complexity of the agent/structure relationship and the partial nature of the accounts presented by the teachers. To know everything is impossible; to know something interesting about those teachers, in that place, at that time, is achievable. Carr and Kemmis (1986) describe social life as 'reflexive' and they suggest that social and educational theories must address reflexivity:

'the 'truth' they tell must be seen as located in particular historical circumstances and social contexts, and as answers to particular questions asked in the intellectual context of a particular time.' (p.43)

Wright Mills (1959) had earlier made essentially the same point:

'Whatever else he may be, man is a social and an historical actor who must be understood, if at all, in close and intricate interplay with social and historical structures' (p.158).

Pressing questions immediately arise about representativeness and the possibilities for generalisation

from this type of research. These are addressed in the methodology chapter, however, at this point, it is helpful to restate a viewpoint presented in that chapter:

'Each of the subjects is, I feel, uniquely himself. Whether he is an archetypal American figure, reflecting thought and condition over and above himself, is for the reader to judge, calling upon his own experience, observations, and an occasional look in the mirror'
(Terkel 1968 in Lawn & Barton 1981 p.245)

Perhaps this most accurately represents the strength of the life history accounts of the four physical education teachers. Much of what they say will strike chords with others in the profession - thus there is the possibility of identifying common shared experiences and, importantly, of developing a greater understanding of the processes which culminate in 'physical education' as it exists in schools today. At the same time, each individual is also unique in some aspects; a forceful reminder of the dangers of attempting to see physical education teachers as a homogenous group. Connell (1985), from his study of teachers, makes the point in unequivocal terms:

'One might wonder, looking back over this catalogue of divisions, if it makes any sense to talk of 'teachers' as a single group at all. Certainly the somewhat glib definitions of the 'teacher role' in old-fashioned sociology of education textbooks look a bit sick when set beside this reality.' (p.167)

It is in this context that the life history reflections of the physical education teachers are presented.

LIFE HISTORY REFLECTIONS

The evidence from life history interviews with the four physical education teachers is presented in sections related to phases in life, rather than in separate individual stories. In this format, it is easier to identify similarities and differences, and to discuss elements which appear to be critical in informing the teachers' current understanding of physical education and teaching. Thus, the discussion is organised in two chapters, under the following headings:

This chapter:

1. Family influence
2. School experiences
3. 'And on to college!'

Chapter 6:

4. 'Doing the job' at Citylimits High School

Experiences prior to teaching at Citylimits are viewed as steps towards that point and, therefore, 'doing the job' is the meeting point for personal history, philosophies and aspirations at that moment in time. In addition, the individual is placed firmly in a structure: Citylimits High School. Of central importance, however, are the pictures of the teachers which emerge and the inescapable conclusion that theory, if it is to have a positive impact on practice, must seek both to understand and to have 'sufficient respect' for teachers as they are: thus the

plea, once again, for 'teacher friendly' rather than 'teacher proof' theory (refer to discussion in chapter three).

1. FAMILY INFLUENCES

'It was no part of our research plan to psychoanalyze anybody...' (Connell et al. 1983 p.76)

Similarly, the evidence in this section is presented tentatively and without pretensions to be operating in a psychoanalytical paradigm. Connell does, however, highlight related theoretical issues which are useful in the context of this research and his work has informed the discussion accordingly.

Connell (1985) identifies three paths towards the decision to embark upon teaching as a career: (i) family influence, (ii) recruitment by teachers and (iii) as an alternative to another job/career. Physical education teachers at Citylimits High School reflect various elements of these three pathways in a series of complex patterns. In this first section, the teachers are presented individually.

JANE

During her childhood, Jane's parents were both teachers and were both very interested in sport (and are still involved

regularly). Furthermore, Jane describes her physical education teachers as 'really nice'; 'used to go to her house'; 'really good friends'; 'always got on with them well'. In fact, Jane chose to train as a teacher at the same college as her favourite physical education teacher. Jane made it clear that, in her opinion, neither parents nor teachers influenced her decision to teach. However, it seems likely that, in combination, they presented powerful models to a girl who loved sport. (Jane's relationship with her physical education teachers is discussed in more detail in the next section.) Jane's parents certainly supported Jane in her sporting endeavours - and it would appear that, through this medium, they encouraged her to consider teaching:

'No, I don't think they did actually [influence]...like I said all the time that I was not going to teach and the only way to persuade me to go to college was to say 'if all that you want to do is to play sport, yes, well just go and play sport for three years and then we can decide what you want to do' and, er...I definitely went on my first teaching practice and I just thought I wasn't going to enjoy it at all, and suddenly it came to me that I did quite enjoy it...but, uhm, they didn't pressurise me or push me into it. But maybe because he [father] could see, I mean he was in a secondary school and he could see that I hadn't (laughs), perhaps, got ability in a lot of other things, he just let me follow the thing I could do and then sort it out...'

Jane, reinforced by her parents' views, still has very little faith in her academic ability and, in that respect, she might be described as a perfect candidate for teaching and for the B.Ed degree (see Woods 1980 and Mardle & Walker

1980). However, Jane describes her upbringing as 'relaxed'; 'happy, not traumatic in any way'; 'they [parents] always supported the authorities...school staff were always right!'; 'lots of freedom and, because I was an only child, money available'. Being an only child seems to have resulted in Jane placing a high value upon establishing and belonging to a large circle of friends. In this respect, Sport has offered Jane valuable opportunities to make contacts and build the large, stable group she seeks.

Jane seems to have experienced very little conflict within her parental family life - indeed, she describes adolescence as 'no problem, not too traumatic at all'. Certainly it is difficult to see signs of 'the formative clash between native impulse and the demands of social structure' as identified by Connell et al (1983). It may be as a result of this that Jane finds it difficult to cope with conflict in her personal life and at work. She has been through a divorce and, subsequently, the breakdown of a second long-term relationship. Her only comment on these traumas was 'Too much hassle'. In addition, Jane views the difficulties with Pete, within the physical education department at Citylimits, as an example of personal failure:

'I'd really like to feel that the department was running really smoothly and it isn't. I don't think I've been successful in that...it does worry me, you know, that I havn't really got a united department.'

(Initial interview transcript)

Thus, it is, that some of the many facets of Jane's family background have manifested themselves in Jane's working life. Even at this early stage in the analysis, and without speculating further, it is apparent that an understanding of 'Jane, the teacher' is enhanced by such insight.

PETE

There are some elements of Pete's story which, given his reputation for sexism, seem almost entirely predictable. For example, the relationship between his father and mother:

'My father was, uhm, an electrician. (pause). Mother's always been a housewife. Father said 'you will never work'. (pause) I look back, I firmly believe that he implanted in my mind a lot of my values that I hold these days. Very much a dated outlook on the lady. Even in those days, I would say, I mean ladies did work in those days, although not so much in the country, more so in the city. But he would never allow mother to work, uhm, I always thought there was an element of distrust there. He was a very jealous man, I know that. Perhaps they wouldn't have stuck together in this era.'

Pete described his father as 'very strict, ie., 'wait until father gets home''. In contrast his mother was 'the weak one, uhm, obviously you exploit that don't you?'. Connell (1983) identifies the relationship between husband and wife as 'the basis of family organisation' and, drawing upon the work of Freud, he describes a family 'type':

'where there is a powerful, somewhat remote and strongly

masculine father, and a mother entrusted with childcare, who functions as the emotional centre of the household. This seems tailor-made to produce classic examples of what Freud called the 'oedipal crisis', where love for the mother, jealousy and fear of the father, and repression of the forbidden impulses, result in the boy's identification with the father and the beginnings of a masculinity similar to his.' (p.76/77)

Without entering further into such analysis, it seems clear that the model has direct relevance to the case of Pete. It is further complicated by the involvement of his grandmother and his relationship with his brother. Pete describes his grandmother as 'strong' and, therefore, worthy of respect:

'most fantastic woman you'd ever wish to meet, uhm, still goes out everyday for her Guinness, down the local pub, married three or four times, (laughs) killed them all off...she is a real character, a real extrovert, and we all love her because of that. She'll never be old in our eyes. That side of the family are real survivors, they really are.'

The quality of Pete's relationship with female teachers at Citylimits High School was governed by his assessment of them as 'strong' or otherwise. Thus he had immense respect for two female teachers in particular - one of maths and one of drama - and had developed a sound working relationship with them within the pastoral curriculum. Jane, on the other hand, was considered to be rather weak, all the more so because she allowed Pete to aggravate her but didn't retaliate in an open manner. I suspect that, for reasons which are outlined in the methodology chapter,

Pete considered me to be 'strong' by his measures, and thus he was co-operative throughout the research.

Pete described his childhood as 'very happy' with 'good parents...nice rural upbringing'. He highlighted the excellent relationship he had with his older brother and it soon became apparent that Pete idolised him. Both his father and his brother were involved in sport: 'father played rugby and cricket...I was adventurous, always running with the older boys, my older brother.' Pete played all sports from a young age, but he never attained the same standards as his brother: 'he was always regarded as better than me...a faster runner and better behaved - I was always in trouble.' Later in the interview, Pete even described his talented brother as 'a big cross to carry' as he attempted to follow him through secondary school. Connell (1983) points to the importance of sibling relationships in upbringing and, in the case of Pete, this point is exemplified. His older brother gained a place at teacher training college directly from school and Pete struggled to achieve that goal for many years.

In his personal adult life, Pete has been married twice. The first ended because he decided to leave his job with his wife's family business to embark upon a teacher training course in physical education. However, upon reflection, he sees this as merely the final straw: 'the

work clashed with sport on Saturdays - rugby 9 months of the year and cricket too for 6 months'. In the end they were divorced and he met his current wife:

'She was more of a liberal lass, a London lass, er, she was so, she was marvellous, still is marvellous, she, (pause) if I want to do something she will support me right up to the hilt, and the way she helped me through college...she had an incredible job, she was one of the whizz kids in the Civil Service. I've probably dragged her down a little bit, as far as she being a career minded lady. (pause) Yes, she was very, very supportive.'

It would appear that Pete has spent much of his life attempting to 'prove himself' in one sphere or another. In turn, he expects others to strive to prove themselves in all that they do - and particularly to him. Thus he views physical education as an opportunity for pupils to strive to achieve: 'if I work with people, I really want to work with them, I like standards, I drive people and I get respect'. His comments about quality physical education in the initial interview are now placed in context: 'successful teams, successful individuals in individual sports'. Thus, as with Jane, there were clear family influences upon his choice to become a physical education teacher and, like her, a love of sport has permeated his life.

ARNOLD

As the youngest brother of four sisters, two of whom became teachers, Arnold saw teaching as 'perfectly respectable'.

Unlike Jane and Pete, however, there was no sporting influence emanating from his family. Indeed, although Arnold's parents were closely involved with his secondary school, for example in the P.T.A., 'they were never, ever, able to watch any sports'. This was due, in the main, to family commitment to the farm which they ran, however, their apparent lack of interest caused Arnold to feel resentful.

Arnold describes his family life as 'relaxed', and himself as 'rather spoilt' by his older sisters, whom he sees as being a dominant influence on his life. In addition, the demands of farm life meant, for example, that he was never available for summer sports at school:

'I didn't play cricket because summers were always taken up on the farm, and I always put my lack of summer sporting ability down to the fact that I was always hay-making. Really!'

In Arnold's case, the decision to teach physical education was based entirely upon his experiences at school, particularly in the latter years when he attended a larger school, and at college. This is discussed at length in the next sections. It is apparent, however, that family influences manifested themselves in two ways: the endorsement of teaching as a worthy career and, more negatively, the impact of his parents' apparent disinterest in Arnold's sporting activities. At several stages in the

discussion (in later sections), Arnold makes it clear that he feels he has little sporting talent. Perhaps this explains his preferred 'holistic' approach to teaching and his empathy with pupils who have difficulties:

'I do think you can turn a lot of kids off and that particular group I've got, I get them, I know, because I'm, Jane knows that I'm more sympathetic than Pete, so she gives them to me, and they are not, er, extremely well motivated normally, but they always seem to be quite quite enjoying themselves when I've got them, probably because in lots of ways I don't push them as hard as other people might and, again, I don't lose patience with them as easily as others.'

Arnold volunteered little more on his family in the interview, whereas he spoke at length about school experiences and higher education. Certainly, it is in these latter phases that the most obvious influences upon Arnold as a teacher of physical education can be seen. To conclude, Arnold has recently married another teacher. His only comment on this was about the pressure of work they both faced in the evenings. He saw this as a threat to their marriage and it gave him a further incentive to leave the profession although, as he pointed out: 'on my present salary, it's difficult to get out onto an equitable salary. If I go any higher, as in head of school, deputy head, it would be even more difficult to get out'. Furthermore, he and his wife use the vacations for world travel, a shared interest which would be curtailed if Arnold changed occupation.

DIANE

Diane's memories of her childhood are of a close, happy and somewhat extended family. She was close to her grandparents, cousins and, in particular, her older brother. Although there were no teacher models within the family, there was a high degree of involvement in sport - particularly with Diane's mother:

'My parents, or my mum especially, was into lots of sports, and then with the school being good at it too, I got into it from there.'

Like Jane, Diane's interest in the teaching profession appears to have been fostered within a supportive family unit and further developed with a strong element of teacher recruitment (see next section). Most significant, however, is Diane's enduring love of, and aptitude for, sport. Perhaps this is an indication that, based on this research, a fourth pathway into teaching can be added to Connell's (1985) list of 3, detailed earlier:

- as an expression of personal interest in, and aptitude for, a defined area of knowledge or a specific subject.

This notion will be developed as the discussion progresses into other phases in life. Interestingly Diane, like Jane, appears to place a high value on the social benefits of sport. The difference is that Diane is best described as a calm individual, who appears to be perfectly at ease with herself and who socialises effortlessly. Jane, on the other

hand, can be characterised as someone who has to work hard to establish and maintain friendships.

In summarising this section, it is only possible to point to the complex nature of the potential family influences upon each individual. (See, also, Hendry 1986.) To attempt to identify a reproducible pattern is, of course, fruitless - the completed patterns can surely be most accurately described as 'one-off originals'. However, each case is interesting for different reasons and, of further interest, is the way in which the individual's stories seem to merge during the next two phases - schooling and higher education. This may appear to endorse the primacy of 'structures' in determining the actions of the individual. However, stark differences emerge again, once the teachers are established in the job at Citylimits High School.

2. SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

'The preparation of teachers does not begin in colleges but in infant schools. Students entering college already know what teaching is' (Hanson and Herrington 1976 p.12)

The comment gives an indication of the centrality of personal school experiences in the development of an individual's understanding of teaching. Certainly this is borne out in this research. Contrast the above comment, however, with Giroux's (1988) vision of the purpose of

schools, and the value which he hopes his particular brand of theory may bring:

'..it is a discourse that is unfinished, but one that may help illuminate the specifics of oppression and the possibilities for democratic struggle and renewal for those educators who believe that schools and society can be changed and that their individual and collective actions can make a difference.' (p. 36)

I suggest that the two statements are entirely incompatible, and that their incompatibility is an illustration of what I would tentatively describe as a '**function gap**'. In essence, it characterises the experiences of the four teachers in this study. I contend that the teachers knew about teaching and, specifically, about the role of the physical education teacher, by the time they left secondary school (and probably well before). Moreover, they chose to undertake this role themselves. It is understandable, therefore, that such teachers might reject Giroux's call for schools and teaching to change society, for he is indicating that teaching is a different job from the one they expected to undertake. There may even be a level of dishonesty in Giroux's position - using the label 'teaching' to represent something which is, in fact, fundamentally different to what is traditionally understood by that term. Hence, the notion of a '**function gap**'. (See also the critique of critical theory in chapter three, and comments below.)

The case of Diane illustrates the point. Diane describes herself as 'a right goody, goody' at primary school: 'I always did well, always got awards for this, that and the other, so I liked it there'. Even at this stage Diane was heavily involved in sport. At the end of primary school, Diane refused to take the scholarship examination for a local private school, and similarly refused a place at a prestigious girls' church school. Her parents accepted her decision and she attended the nearest comprehensive school. Throughout secondary school, Diane was closely involved with the physical education department. She describes her physical education teachers in some detail:

'Oh they were brilliant! Absolutely brilliant. Jack, I suppose, was the one who had the most impact on me, he was there from when I was a first year, right up until I left. Uhm, he was really into skiing, he ran the ski trips every year and he was such a nice person, I mean, when I failed one of my exams he gave me a big hug, as he was so upset for me 'cos I was so - I get really emotional...he was such good fun, I got on really well with him. And Tracy, she was really good...she was so loud, so unlike anybody you've met before (laughs) and she was so down to earth, and we sort of got on really well and she helped me a lot...Karen was a really good netball player, so she got our teams really going well, you know, she was good influence on my playing ability and, well, we were just really, really friendly and I could chat to them and go down and help them'

Diane had this depth of relationship only with physical education teachers; as she put it: 'just because of my interest in sport - it's where I was all the time'. The strength of this interest in sport is illustrated by her reaction to her perceived lack of ability in athletics: 'I

was really into photography as well and I used to go along to the Borough sports and because I was no good at athletics, I used to take photos of sport instead. I still like it'.

The decision to become a teacher wasn't taken until the fifth year:

'Yeh, in my 5th year I think it was. We were having our P.E., I was standing by the trampoline talking to some boy. He wanted to go to [a local teacher training college], and, er, I thought, 'Oh yes, that's quite good, and, uhm, I like children, and I wanted to keep up sport and I discussed it with my parents, and we came up with that, and then mum and dad came into school, just when we were trying to decide what A' level courses to do, to discuss it with the teachers and it was from there onwards really, that I decided that I was gonna do that and I had to get this, that and the other to do it'.

Characteristically, Diane made an assessment of her own ability and refused to take more than two A' levels: 'I knew I couldn't cope with 3, and I was right'.

It is at this point, once the decision to teach had been taken, that the influence of the female physical education teacher, Tracy, is seen most obviously:

'When I wanted to go to P.E. college she made me get all the prospectuses in and she sat down with me and we all went through them and sorted it out, and because she went to X College, she sort of pushed me in that direction. She was really nice, and we still keep in touch'.

Logically, and because teacher and pupil had a good

relationship, it can be presumed that Tracy encouraged Diane to choose her former college for positive reasons ie.,- because she felt it had a good course; she felt reasonably well equipped to teach as a result of the course and, probably most importantly, she had enjoyed her years as a student and could predict, with some confidence, that Diane would gain similar levels of enjoyment and satisfaction. This process of choosing a college, taken in conjunction with Diane's original motivation for entering the teaching profession: 'I like children and I wanted to keep up sport'; gives the clearest possible illustration of the 'function gap' which was described, if tentatively, earlier. Whereas it is feasible to hope that teachers like Diane will be open to new teaching ideas, which may make them more effective in their attempts to teach physical education as they understand it, it is surely unrealistic, and perhaps unfair, to assume this must lead to a desire to change society. Furthermore, questions must be raised about the appropriateness of teachers, ie., 'real' teachers such as those presented in this study, to undertake the mobilisation of critical theory. It could even be suggested, from reading Giroux's work (see detailed discussion in chapter 3) that critical theory merely serves to undermine teachers for the work that they do (not radical enough) and almost 'mocks' them for their conservative values. Thus it is, as I have suggested earlier in this thesis, 'teacher proof theory'.

There is a further related issue. Diane's 'story' about her school experiences seems to confirm some of the points made by Pollard (1982) in his criticism of A. Hargreaves' model of classroom interaction. Pollard suggests that 'it is most unrealistic to analyse teacher strategies or child strategies in isolation from each other' (p.23). Instead, Pollard points out that pupils:

'..each have their own interests to defend and for a full analysis of this it is necessary to have a sense of the children's own social structure which makes the analysis far more complex' (p.23)

Connell et al (1983) make essentially the same point:

'[teacher pupil relationship], like all other relationships of schooling, exists only as practices; and those practices are always being constructed anew.'

(p.100)

The case of Diane as a pupil illustrates this complexity. For example, to assume an overbearing role for the school in assigning Diane to a career would be, quite simply, incorrect. It is easy to suspect influencing factors, both from Diane's family and school background - but it is impossible to infer a straightforward 'cause and effect' process. Given this understanding, I would suggest that a further element of 'teacher proof' theory can be questioned. Giroux (1981), in addition to criticising teachers for their acceptance of the world as it is and their attempts to educate for it, exhorts individuals to 'escape' from their own biography:

'For we must turn to history to understand the traditions that have shaped our individual biographies and intersubjective relationships with other human beings. This critical attentiveness to one's own history represents an important element in examining the socially constructed sources underlying one's own formative processes' (p.57)

It seems clear from the evidence presented so far that the notion of 'escaping' from personal biography is unhelpful on at least two counts: firstly, the complexity of the interaction between self and structure would be virtually impossible to unravel and, secondly, were it attempted, the resulting knowledge would be of little practical use in its decontextualised form. Eventually, and essentially if action is to result, it would have to be placed back within the context of the individual. Furthermore, an escape approach seems to imply that history and traditions are, almost by definition, 'bad', a point made by Elbaz (1991) earlier. Thus, Giroux embarks upon, what might be termed, a form of 'macho theory' in the 'teacher proof' vein - where teachers need to be jolted out of their complacency in order to understand the world from the theorist's point of view. (See, also, earlier comments in chapter 3.)

It should not be assumed that such criticisms are directed at the fundamental points made by Giroux. These may be valid and, indeed, it is probably essential that teachers attempt to understand something of their own biographies if they are to reconcile beliefs, actions and frustrations.

However, coming to an 'understanding' of personal biography is quite different to 'escaping' it, and it is more than an issue of semantics. Rather, I return to the suggestion made at several points in this thesis: theory, if it is to have an impact on practice, should attempt to proceed from a position of 'sufficient respect' for teachers, as they are. Examples from the reflections of the other three teachers serve to illustrate the foregoing discussion. Arnold describes his enjoyable years at a small village school which were dominated by 'a typical school ma'am' of whom he was 'always very wary'. Having achieved only a 'B' grade in the 11+, Arnold was offered a place at a small local boys' grammar school: 'very strict...the teachers were very, very hard...surnames only used'. Neither teaching nor physical education in this school were presented as positive models for Arnold: 'very unstructured lessons, it was very much , here's a ball, go on down and get yourself organised'. However, he represented the school at most sports even though he describes himself as not particularly talented: 'it was such a small school it wasn't difficult to get into sides'. It was at this point in the interview that Arnold made his comments on the disappointment he felt at his parents' lack of interest in his sporting endeavours.

In the context of this research, the most obvious significant development in Arnold's school career was the move to a different 6th form as a result of local

reorganisation of schools:

'6th form is always a strange move because we came from a very regimented system in a grammar school with a uniform and all that, to a big school, with lots of girls, which was a big attraction to us, the chance to wear, uhm, non-uniform, a very free atmosphere, table-tennis tables, coffee machines and that sort of thing, so it was quite mind-blowing for us really.'

In terms of physical education, there was much more available at the new school and Arnold was able to become involved in a variety of new sports. In addition, he saw what he describes as a role model; 'a real physical education teacher' for the first time:

'P.E. teachers there were very committed, uhm, very good sportsmen in their own right, and it was there I met the first chap from X college. They were always available, lunch times and after school practices and that sort of thing. And extra curricular activities were featured high on the school programme and they were very well thought of within the area and very well thought of, I believe, by the senior management at that school. I suppose, even at that time I looked up to them as, er, role models, as I said, as fit, committed people'

Arnold did not make a conscious decision to teach at this stage. Rather, he chose to go to college as 'an enjoyable way to spend three or four years; to be involved in sport in that way'. As was detailed earlier, Jane's decision to teach was, similarly, as a result of experiences at college rather than planned prior to entry. Like Arnold, the opportunity to 'play sport for three years' was the main motivation for choosing a physical education course.

Jane describes her primary school as enjoyable after the first few weeks, although the sport was 'non-existent'. Illness prevented her from taking the 11+ and she was, as she recalls it, assigned to a place at a technical school. Jane was instantly impressed with the school because of the new buildings and the uniform, and she thoroughly enjoyed her years there. She describes her academic career as 'fairly average, (laughs), didn't do a great deal, (sighs) I just did as little as I could'. She failed Physics and Biology O' Levels, but retook Biology as it was required for physical education college - 'and got a grade 1. It's just the sort of person I am'. Socially, Jane felt she was lucky because she had 'nice mixed groups, and we all got on well right from the first year'. She stressed the value of this peer group relationship at several points in the interview. It was in sport that Jane really excelled and she became closely involved with the physical education department. Evidently, Jane felt that she was, primarily, a swimmer but she was persuaded to try other sports by members of the department:

'It wasn't until, you know, I sort of got to know the P.E. teacher quite well, I went on holiday with one of them...and we had a good chat then and she was saying, you know, you can't be a swimmer unless you're absolutely brilliant, by which time I realised I wasn't going to be quite so brilliant, you know, you're going to have to do something else, and you can do something else. So I started to do more things for them. I remember playing for the school in virtually everything, but probably not until the third year upwards. I remember having an absolutely super trampoline club with one of the teachers, very relaxed, you know, we all got on very well. And there was a tradition in the school

that all the P.E. teachers came from X college, and every year there would be, about, I would think, 6 or 7 pupils that went to X. So when I got there, you know, there were loads of people from two or three years above.'

Jane placed great emphasis upon her friendship with the physical education teachers and she expressed some regret that she had been unable to develop the same depth of relationship with her own pupils.

In many ways, Arnold and Jane tell similar stories, although it is evident that Jane received more support for her interest in sport from her family. In neither case, I would suggest, is it fruitful to attempt to 'escape' from the personal history. Perhaps the reverse is true - personal experiences must be embraced as entirely relevant and worthy. Thus, it is, that both Arnold and Jane can come to terms with the strengths and weaknesses of their role models from secondary school. In addition, they may wish to evaluate the pivotal role of traditional competitive sport in their own lives. It is possible, however, that this can only be done fruitfully if it is clear that the evaluation is to be undertaken in the spirit of enquiry, rather than implied criticism. (As is detailed towards the end of this chapter, Giroux, in his later work (1991) makes a similar point.)

Pete's case is a little different in that his family,

specifically his brother, seems to present him with the most enduring role models. Teachers are described as good or otherwise in characteristic terms; for example, at primary school:

'I had good, in my eyes I had good teachers, they had a tremendous reputation, they achieved tremendous results. It was a good school. One teacher, oh, little dynamo he was, uhm, no-one gave him any shit, took none, a disciplinarian, he gave you everything, a man who gave few smiles, but when he did you valued them. Always remember that.'

At secondary school, a grammar school, Pete appears to have spent much of his time trying to emulate his brother. As was detailed earlier, Pete viewed his brother's ability as 'a big cross to carry', yet he shows no sign of resentment. He is quite clear that his brother was not so much an influence: 'he didn't encourage me', as 'the goal'.

In describing his physical education teachers, Pete makes a clear distinction between the two approaches he encountered. The first was 'a good man. He helped kids out'. The second was 'more of a 'jack-the-lad' P.E. teacher, he was a big womaniser...he wasn't so dedicated'. Pete feels that neither provided him with a major role model, although 'I can see the merits of the different ways they approached the subject.'

The over-riding factor in Pete's secondary school career was sport and its impact upon his academic work:

'It was all sport. I mean, it was the downfall of my education. I mean I got to the fifth form and I ended up with two O'levels and in a grammar school, that is bad! That is really bad. Needed four O' levels to stay on. It [returning to retake] was the most degrading thing I've ever had to experience. Well not ever, but nearly. How am I going to face the music, and go back and be there, as somebody who's been a cap in the school cricket team, the school rugby team...I was a well known figure in the school and the county and to stay on, in my own eyes, well, perhaps I put too much emphasis on it, perhaps I felt that people were looking at me more than perhaps they were, but, staying down with a bunch of kids in the fourth year - that is degrading. Er, but I had to do it and I worked like bugger...and I'd got another six [O' levels] by Christmas. As soon as I'd got them I buggered off!'

A proud individual, Pete spoke with feeling throughout the above. (I could almost feel the degradation he was describing.) Perhaps this is because he places such value on his position as a 'well known figure', a position for which he seems to strive, and for which sport is a vehicle. Certainly, it arises again as a central issue in his job at Citylimits.

In summary, it seems important to note, once again, the various similarities and differences between the four individuals:

-Jane had teaching role models in her family and at school. She loved sport, a passion which was shared by her parents and which was encouraged by her physical education teachers, with whom she was very friendly. She chose to enter teacher training in order to play sport for three years.

-Diane loved sport and, here again, this was shared with her family. She had no teacher role models in the family but, from her strong interest in sport, she developed warm

relationships with her physical education teachers. Diane had already decided to teach when she entered higher education.

-Arnold's older sister was a teacher and his parents were supportive of, and involved in, Arnold's secondary school. His love of sport was not shared by his family, however, and it was not until the 6th form that he encountered, what he terms, 'real' P.E. teachers. Although he admired these teachers, he chose a physical education degree primarily for the opportunities it afforded to take part in sport. The decision to teach was taken during the course.

-Pete modelled himself on his brother and father, and both were keen sportsmen. It would appear that Pete's decision to teach was based on his love of sport and his desire to follow in the footsteps of his brother. Unlike the other three teachers he left school after O'levels, worked in the civil service, married, worked in the supermarket business, divorced, and then entered higher education. He describes his desire to teach as 'a long held burning ambition'.

In summarising the differences, the single unifying element in these stories also emerges - the interest and involvement in sport which has featured so prominently in the lives of these individuals. It may even be feasible to identify sport as 'this inner core' which Sparkes (1991) describes as being so resistant to change. If this is the case, there are implications for those who seek to initiate change in the physical education curriculum. A paper presented earlier in this thesis (in chapter 3) may be relevant here: Halpin (1990) calls for dialogue between two disciplines - the Sociology of Education and Curriculum Studies - in the interests of offering 'a better chance for scholars collectively to make their voices heard and learn from one another' (p.32). His comments are made within the context of the challenges facing educationists within the framework of the National Curriculum. Similarly, therefore,

it may be fruitful for physical educationists to work more closely with theorists in sport, particularly sports sociologists as they develop an increasing interest in qualitative research methods. This research suggests that, notwithstanding variations in other personal experiences, the physical education teachers at Citylimits High (and possibly most other physical education teachers) are, or have been, what can be loosely termed - sportsmen and women. It seems clear, therefore, that the influence of this element of their biographies should be understood. Furthermore, it seems likely that many physical education teachers will have great difficulty in escaping this central element of their biography. (See, also, discussion later in this chapter.)

3. AND ON TO COLLEGE!

This section is presented somewhat differently. The reactions to my questions about teacher training were quite remarkable for their similarity and their sheer enthusiasm: a sense that, for three of the teachers at least, nothing before or since has matched the experience. Responses are presented below, in full, with discussion to follow:

Jane:

'On to college? (laughs) And on to college! (pause). BEST THREE YEARS OF MY LIFE. Absolutely superb! I loved it. I had a terrific group of friends - I don't know how we got together but after about, uhm, three months we'd established a group of ten that were in different lecture groups...and so in the second year we had to

live out and have 'living in rooms'...so we had ten people in our room, and we've kept in touch really ever since. It was excellent. Everybody was from different areas, different walks of life. None of the group were the people that I'd come from home with, you know, they all found groups of their own and, uhm, we all mixed in...we all just got on so well. Socially it was an absolute laugh, and we worked hard as well. We all enjoyed our sport. In fact doing the practical lectures and, I don't know, doing the sport took up most of the time. [Int. 'any theory?'] No, I don't remember much about that. (laughs) I can't really remember too much. I suppose I slugged my way through it - must have done - anatomy and phys., I remember doing that (pause), we just had to do it in the first year and if you passed it, that was it. We all helped one another though, we really helped one another to work on things, you know, that we weren't quite so good on'

Diane:

'BRILLIANT! BRILLIANT! I miss it SO much, not necessarily doing the work (laughs), that was, I was glad to see the back of that, but I miss being there, I miss being with everybody, you know, it's so nice to see people still from college, we had a big party a couple of weeks ago and it was lovely to be back. In the first year, we sort of tended to go back down to X college every now and again, you know, we had to go there, we felt a need to keep going back. It's not so much now, but I would never, you know, not have gone and I would always say to somebody 'going away to university or college is for definite, you've just got to do it.' You learn so much about yourself, about other people, it's the time of your life! I mean, you work hard as well, or some people do, I had to (laughs), I wouldn't have got through it if I didn't. But, er, it was brilliant, absolutely brilliant. Some of the theory was so irrelevant it was unbelievable. We did this thing in the 1st and 2nd year: 'Aesthetic and Cultural Forms' and it was learning about Greek statues, I felt it was a totally, a waste of everybody's time. Uhm, we had this lecturer who couldn't really relate to people, but we were quite a lively group, one of the mixed groups, as our year was the first mixed year. Some of our science areas, 'motor learning' it was called, are so hard to understand and you really don't realise how relevant some of that is until you leave, until you get a job and you see things going on and you think 'oh yes, that's so and so', and the biomechanics, and things like that, that I was useless at, but I'm glad I did, because when I'm teaching G.C.S.E. it all helps. I really enjoyed the psychology option.'

Arnold:

'Oh, (pause), whale of a time! I mean, small boy from the, er, provinces, from my small school background to a slightly larger one in the 6th form, then going to X college that's got one of the biggest campuses, you know, in the country...we worked hard, er, enjoyed all the female company, er, representatively, I played soccer when I was there for about 3 to 4 months, wasn't very enamoured with the actual soccer situation at college, uhm, played at second team level only, I wasn't brilliant anyway, but, it was very much a rugby college, and rugby was the thing that was the social side of the college but, uhm, I probably would have played representative rugby there, but I was deemed not good enough. Er, I may have got into one of the sides, but certainly not as a fresher. So, I looked to other things and started to sail when I was there as well, and played squash, because it's something I've never done before. Very fond memories, uhm, great teaching staff and lots and lots of good friends....In fact they [the staff] were all such outstanding sports persons in their own right that I could never really look up to reaching that sort of level. Some, that were particularly sarcastic who, uhm, I felt antagonistic towards uhm, some, that were very sympathetic to, you know, people who found certain sports difficult, and who were very helpful. Uhm, from all of them I think I've acquired a certain professionalism in (pause) dress and, uhm, the way I approach kids and that sort of thing. And I know that I've got a lot of their mannerisms, and probably a lot of the ways they introduce certain things, the way they speak to kids - 'the gentlemen' - as I call the boys, that comes from that. All the methodology teaching I received has stuck with me and that's been a formative part of all my teaching I'm sure. But then I also think that the teaching I received as a student I've remembered.'

Pete:

'Yeh, good times! Wishing that I was of student age...felt a little bit, uhm what's the word, not helpless, (pause), I didn't go to college at my prime in sport, and I felt that because I wasn't really competing with, uhm, college lads, I really wasn't doing myself credit, you know, I was too old, basically, for the rugby side and, er, cricket, I was still being paid to go back home. So I was a little bit over the hill as far as being a performer. I worked really hard on the education side, I studied like mad, not easy after you've had such a long break away. But again, I had tremendous support from [my wife] on that. Basically, very enjoyable. Only stayed for 3 years - long enough - didn't really see the benefits of staying on for honours at the time. Of the staff, X was excellent. Set standards. No-one missed X's lectures, no-one. And no-one came without their P.E. kit. He was a great one'

on, and I still am, even with my rugby sides I run, I'm keen on discipline and presentation. X had a good old set of values which were not always there with other lecturers.'

The extent of the teachers' enthusiasm for their experiences was striking, even more so given that each attended a different college and each was trained at a different point in a 10 year phase: Jane first, in the late '70s, then Arnold, then Pete - a mature student who is older than the other teachers and finally Diane, in the late 1980s. They enjoyed recounting tales of 'good' and 'bad' lectures and lecturers, of many and various student exploits, of work to be 'slugged through' (Jane), and of a camaraderie which three of the teachers miss and, perhaps, will never recapture fully. From my vantage point as interviewer, I can most accurately describe the respondents as animated during this section of the interviews. The significance of such experiences is thus intimated. As Bell (1986) notes: 'the expectations which P.E. teachers have been led to have of themselves through their professional training cannot be discounted' (p.102). Equally striking is the way in which the responses can be paired, in certain respects, along gender lines. Thus, Jane and Diane highlight the sociability of college life, while both Arnold and Pete feel it is important to describe their sporting prowess. (My question had been entirely open.) In fact, both Jane and Diane had represented college and county in their preferred sports, but neither chose to

identify this as central to the discussion - perhaps they took it for granted. Arnold and Pete were, in different ways, disappointed by their level of achievement and this possibly rendered the whole area more poignant. A further issue is the evident enthusiasm for theory courses from the two men. Pete, for example, describes himself as working 'really hard on the education side' and Arnold feels that the methodology teaching he received at college has continued to inform his practice. Contrast these positions with that of Jane, who can't really remember much theory, and Diane, who eschews all except the science courses which were 'so hard' but which are proving to be useful in the context of the G.C.S.E. (In the light of Diane's comments, it is interesting to refer back to the points made in chapter 3 about 'scientism' in physical education.)

Apart from these observations, there are points raised in each teacher's story which merely serve, once again, to highlight the individual nature of each case.

For the purposes of this study, teacher training is discussed in the context of the development of teachers' understanding of knowledge in physical education, as manifested in 'doing the job' at Citylimits High School. There is some confusion in the literature, however, on the role of colleges in the development of teachers' knowledge.

Denscombe (1980) claims:

'Essentially, it is in the school classroom rather than the college lecture theatre that competence is acquired. Competence as a teacher, it follows, is not the outcome

of training and qualifications but is learnt on-site working with colleagues and pupils who, through various subtle methods, introduce the new teacher to established norms.' (p. 284)

Mardle and Walker (1980), on the other hand, describe the training process as being more central in developing an understanding of the teacher role. They use the term: 'domination', whereby students must conform to a particular view of the world, as presented in the training institution:

'What we are suggesting is that within such a course the broad framework presents very little scope for the students to move outside, or debate, the parameters of the teaching process itself.' (p.109)

Yet, both these positions are surely too extreme, too certain to explain the complex processes which result in teachers coming to understand their roles. Arnold makes it clear that he can identify influences from both school and college tutors. This seems quite feasible given the brief nature of his interaction with 'real' physical education teachers at school. Pete has obviously sought to emulate other males in his family, yet he also identifies a college tutor who has had a significant impact on his practice, if only to strengthen and develop cherished beliefs. Jane and Diane have modelled themselves, primarily, on physical education teachers with whom they developed strong relationships at school. It is also probable that peers at college exerted their own type of influence, however, it

would be foolhardy to attempt to make any further claims to certainty. Diane, in particular, is an individual whose past history of 'knowing' her own strengths, her weaknesses and her ambitions, seems to defy any over-deterministic view of the development of teachers' knowledge.

Of interest, in this context, is an analysis of the work of McKay, Gore and Kirk (1990). Following comments made earlier, about the need to understand physical education teachers as, what is loosely termed; sportsmen and women, McKay et al raise some challenging questions about physical education students and their relationship with sport:

'Student teachers' success in sport and the common sense definitions they internalize from coaches, physical education teachers, peers and the media frequently means that their understanding of sport is overwhelmingly positive and uncritical.' (p.61).

And even more damning:

'Most students are unaware of racial and ethnic inequalities in sport and physical education and when presented with evidence on these topics, invariably attempt to counter them with biological and individualistic accounts. Trying to explain there are social classes in capitalist societies is a difficult task, let alone suggesting that sport and physical education are shot through with physical inequalities...Many find it arduous to conceive of alternatives to sport that are not based on traditionally masculine notions of strength and speed. Thus, it is extremely difficult to get students to be reflective or critical about sport.' (p.61)

The comments could be considered extreme, and more than a little patronising. However, if they are accepted as even

partially true, evidence from the four teachers in this study may provide some clues as to why physical education students might respond in the manner described. For example, it is apparent that sport is a major element in the life history of each of the four teachers and, furthermore, it is probable that sport has contributed much more to personal development than the physical activity alone. From her research with physical education teachers, Sikes (1988) notes that: 'sport is an important part of their lives and preferred identity' (p.32). More specifically, it can be presumed that, for many physical education students and teachers sport, as it currently exists, may have provided satisfaction, enjoyment, recognition, goals, motivation, friendship, camaraderie, frustration, pain, tension, a career...and so on. Fundamentally, therefore, I would reaffirm my contention that sport may be seen as the source of that 'inner core' described by Sparkes as being so resistant to change.

So where does this leave those charges made by Mckay et al (1990)? Their proposed strategy, to enable them to challenge physical education students, is as follows:

'A goal of counterhegemonic intellectuals is not to abolish ideologies - an impossible task - but to turn the contradictory elements of superordinates' ideologies back on them, while simultaneously articulating oppositional ones which resonate with people's lived experiences' (p.53)

Taking into account my earlier identification of 'teacher proof theory', the related concept of 'sufficient respect' (both in chapter 3) and the notion of a 'function gap' (discussed earlier in this chapter) perhaps the intransigence of students is explained and the sheer complexity of the task to change attitudes is again highlighted. Any attempt to take a 'macho' approach to changing attitudes is, thus, likely to result in teachers' adopting 'strategic rhetoric' as they seek to avoid 'real change' (Sparkes 1987). Furthermore, recent suggestions by Giroux (1991) would appear to resonate with my criticism of 'macho theory' (which was a criticism I levelled at some of Giroux's earlier work). Instead, Giroux's summary of his concept of 'border pedagogy' echoes sentiments expressed in this research:

'Put simply, students must be given the opportunity to cross ideological and political borders as a way of furthering the limits of their own understanding in a setting that is pedagogically safe and nurturing rather than authoritarian and infused with the suffocating smugness of a certain political correctness' (p.514)

CHAPTER 6

'DOING THE JOB' AT CITYLIMITS HIGH SCHOOL

'Given their biographies and the scientific, apolitical, and bureaucratic aspects of their educational experiences, most students go to the classroom, gymnasium, and playing field with sedimented practices similar to those of their professional mentors. Here, they encounter the intractable bureaucratic and political structures of their schools and communities for which they have had little or no preparation.' (McKay, Gore and Kirk 1990 p.62)

'Doing the job' at Citylimits High is viewed as the culmination of the development of teachers' physical education knowledge to that point. As each teacher enters the school, the choice might appear as one where past experiences and understandings must be either calibrated to work within the structure that is Citylimits High School, or set in conflict with that context, perhaps in an attempt to initiate change. It is suggested in this study, however, that neither of these two positions accurately reflects reality. Instead, the teachers weave a complex web of self-interest, concern for pupils and subject loyalty. This discussion is then, to some extent, a rebuttal of McKay et al's position as quoted above, in that it would seem that individuals can just as easily be described as 'intractable', leaving the 'bureaucratic and political structures of their schools' to cope or adapt accordingly. This dialectical position is supported by a number of theorists. As was suggested in the previous chapter, C. Wright Mills most accurately summarises the theoretical

stance of the discussion, a stance which, I would claim, has been necessitated by evidence from the fieldwork. It is worth restating Wright Mills' point here:

'We have come to know that every individual lives, from one generation to the next in some society; that he lives out a biography and that he lives it out within some historical sequence. By the fact of his living he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove.'

(1959 p.6 my emphasis)

Giroux (1981), in his criticism of reproductive and interpretive rationalities, makes a similar point:

'In both rationalities, there is a failure to overcome the false dualism of subject and object in the analysis of cultural and social reproduction. Neither account links action and structure so as to illustrate how they interpenetrate and affect each other in a non-reductive fashion.'

(p.16 my emphasis)

It is thus, primarily, the complexity of the agent/structure relationship, as exemplified by physical education teachers at Citylimits High School, which is the central focus of this analysis.

The theoretical framework for the analysis of the agent/structure relationship is most clearly illustrated by further reference to a selection of thoughts from Giroux (1981). His identification, and explication of the dynamic nature of three central concepts: 'ideology', 'hegemony', and 'culture', is important. 'Ideology', for example, must,

in Giroux's view, be developed to 'provide an analysis of how schools sustain and produce ideologies as well as how individuals...negotiate, resist or accept them' (p.22). 'Hegemony', from Gramsci, is viewed as 'riddled with contradictions and tensions' thus offering potential for 'counter-hegemonic struggle'. Of importance for Giroux is how hegemony functions in schools and how it is challenged or sustained. (Schon's (1971) concept of 'dynamic conservatism' could be applied to individuals in this context.) Giroux views 'culture' as politicized, as 'lived antagonistic relations', both 'limiting' and 'enabling'. He suggests it is more fruitful to identify a number of cultures, and he notes that it is important to: 'identify the specific content, mechanisms and principles that underlie hegemonic school practices. But it is equally important to situate them within the contradictory lived relations that make up the cultural field of the school itself'. (p.29)

In his later work, Giroux (1991) reinforces further the notion of 'difference' in the development of his concept of 'border pedagogy' (see, also, chapter 3). For example, he suggests that culture must be viewed as:

'neither ...monolithic or unchanging, but as a site of multiple and heterogeneous borders where different histories, languages, experiences and voices intermingle amid diverse relationships of power and privilege.'

(p.514)

Underpinning all of the above is the earlier work by Giddens (1979) who set out to develop his 'theory of structuration' in response to a perceived over-emphasis on determinism in the social sciences. Giddens' 'theory of action' was based on the leading theorem that: 'every social actor knows a great deal about the conditions of reproduction of the society of which he or she is a member' thus, according to this theory, 'any explanation of social reproduction which imputes teleology to social systems must be declared invalid.' (p.7)

The implication of all the theoretical positions illustrated so far, is that individuals hold, to some degree and in some form, power to determine the shape of their own lives. Wright Mills (1959) points to the complexity of the notion of power, and argues for a three dimensional understanding of the concept: authority, manipulation and coercion. He describes power as 'whatever decisions 'men' make about the arrangements under which they live' and he identifies the basic problem of power as 'who makes the decisions' (p.40). Foucault (1980), however, describes power in terms which seem to have direct relevance for this study:

'Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is localised here, or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the

position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.'

(in Gordon, 1980, p.98)

The intricate complexity of the concept of power, as described by Foucault, seems to fit most closely with the notion of the agent/structure as described earlier in this chapter. It also seems to hint, in its broadest interpretation, at the possibility of individuals achieving that state of freedom described by Wright Mills:

'Freedom is not merely the chance to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the chance to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, to argue over them - and then, the opportunity to choose.' (1959 p.174)

In summary, therefore, this section of the fieldwork evidence from Citylimits High School is presented in this chapter (and developed in the next) within a theoretical framework which seeks to:

- develop an understanding of the intricacies of the agent/structure relationship
- place emphasis upon explicating a role for the agent
- comment upon the level or form of power held by physical education teachers at Citylimits High School.

The evidence from physical education teachers, as they

undertake their jobs, will be matched against Wright Mills' description of 'freedom', in a discussion which is continued into the following chapter.

In this chapter, evidence from the final section of the life-history interviews is presented in individual teacher sections. Where appropriate, reference is made to issues raised in the initial interviews conducted with each teacher, evidence from which is presented in chapter 4.

1. JANE: 'ALL THIS NEW JARGON AND ADMIN.'

Jane had very little difficulty in finding teaching posts. As she put it: 'all the jobs came so easily!'. In her first post she enjoyed extensive, excellent facilities and well motivated pupils. However, Jane then married the head of physical education and felt that it was better not to work in the same school as her husband. Her second post was: 'very different - small and very, very multicultural... hardly any white children, but, uhm, they were all different'. Jane thoroughly enjoyed this job, became head of a mixed department and developed lasting relationships with many of the pupils: 'kept in touch with them because they're the kind of children that are really likeable, you know'.

Jane's first marriage ended and, in starting a new

relationship, Jane decided that she should move jobs again – this time to be nearer her partner. It proved to be more difficult to change jobs at head of department level but, finally, Jane obtained the post of head of girls' physical education at Citylimits High School. This has since changed to encompass both boys' and girls' P.E. In general, Jane describes her 6 years at Citylimits as enjoyable and positive. Early in her post, she was closely involved with Physical Education C.S.E. courses and, more recently, she has embraced the G.C.S.E – as is described in chapter 4. In both cases, the examination was viewed, by Jane, as a route to academic respectability, fitting neatly with her interpretation of the concept of knowledge (see chapter 4 for full discussion).

As was highlighted in chapter 4, at the time of the fieldwork at Citylimits, there was a sense in which Jane could be described as 'weary' and a little despondent. Some suggestions for understanding the roots of her malaise were made in that chapter, based on evidence from the initial interview. However, the life-history interview provides further insight in two important areas. Firstly, shortly after the fieldwork was concluded, Jane's second major relationship ended amid much acrimony. According to her colleagues, the relationship had been a problem for some time and this undoubtedly affected Jane's manner and outlook. It is significant that, at the same time, Jane

also changed jobs. This would seem to be a characteristic response to major upheavals in her personal life.

The second area relates to Jane's perception of both her most successful times in teaching - and her identification of the problems with the job. First, the successes:

'I think when you, uhm, have a successful team. That can make you feel, well, pretty good. But, personally, I'll always remember at [second teaching post] I had somebody who was pretty uncordinated, I had a very nice gym, lots and lots of good apparatus, and I used to encourage this girl as much as I possibly could in all the lessons, and she improved so much, that - that really made me feel on a high. But, there was this particular day and I'd just been teaching a normal gym lesson, I think we were doing levels or something, then suddenly one of them said that she [pupil mentioned above] was stuck at the top of the wall bars. Now, I mean, like, er, 6 months before she would never have gone to the top of the wall bars, so, you know, I'd felt that working with her I'd done quite well. But then, she was really stuck and I felt, you know, this is my fault, in a way, and I went up to her, with the girl that had told me, and she wasn't totally neurotic, she wasn't going to fall off, which was the first thing to establish, you know. I gradually talked her down and, it was really good that she had the confidence to be able to do it. She didn't want us to help her or to hold her or anything, but she just wanted us there, uhm, at the end of it I thought she was going to turn around and say to me, you know, 'I wished I hadn't done that' but she didn't, she just said 'thank-you very much, that was really good' and (pause). As much as I can say that I've really felt good when my teams have won and things, sometimes, well, I think it comes down to individuals.'

And the problems:

'The main things that get me fed up with teaching are (pause) the administration, and I really don't think that I actually get fed up with the teaching itself, I don't think I've really thought, ever, if I've been teaching, never thought, you know, 'what am I doing here?'. Sometimes I think 'this isn't as good as it should be', or, you know, 'better work to improve this next time', but it's not the teaching and I definitely go through phases, especially in the last couple of

years, that all this new jargon and administration etc., is really too much and is really not for me. I mean the last training day we had...I, er, just found the whole thing not terribly relevant...and, I could have spent the whole day working on my G.C.S.E. work - I could have definitely spent one day, if not six days, working it out and I will do this summer, you know, like a lot of the theory and things. Uhm, and now I've been told that in 1993 it won't even exist as a G.C.S.E. [projections by a speaker at the training day], I just think it's so destructive, what's happening, and that does get me fed up. And then the next thing we did [on the training day] after we'd had this huge lecture on a lot of things like that was to go and divide into groups and the first task was to go into pairs - one of you draw a house and the other one criticise it, or something like that. It was so totally irrelevant and it was just to prove that everybody has got their own ideas (pause) and I mean that's just an example of, uh, the kind of things ... Mostly in the training days, I've found to be, uhm, a lot of playing at games and who, who is gaining by that, I'm personally not, I just switch off. At the last one somebody asked me if I was feeling all right, 'cos I obviously wasn't my usual cheerful self, or I wasn't looking very happy. But that makes me fed up. But, I mean, I know that you shouldn't work in total isolation, I do realise that and I think I probably could work in total isolation (laughs) just get on with what I think is the right thing to do. I mean, I do realise it, but I just can't get along with all this admin.'

Jane appears to use 'admin' as a generic term to refer to a plethora of general education initiatives with which she is uncomfortable. She is clearly not, for example, referring to the administration attached to running examination courses in physical education or outdoor education/skiing trips, of which there are several each year. Both from the initial interview and from this life-history evidence, it is apparent that Jane views her subject base as central to her role as a teacher: she seeks to provide pupils with fulfillment through physical education and sport just as she, herself, has achieved this end. She embraces

initiatives which help her in this mission, as evidenced by her drive to introduce mixed physical education and health-related fitness. Her view of sport is a broad one and, from my observations and discussions, it was clear that she eschewed any elitist approach to teaching. The 'admin' which seems to cause the problem for Jane is that which resides outside of her own subject department and, therefore, is a distraction from her perceived role. The training day described earlier was an example of a school attempting to derive 'whole school policies' to deal with future developments in education (see chapter 4). To Jane, it was an irrelevance.

It would be simplistic to attribute Jane's stance to political naivety. On the contrary, Jane made it quite clear in the initial interview (chapter 4) that she was aware of the best means of promoting her subject. Furthermore, she was fully aware of the positive impact of some of her initiatives - particularly mixed physical education and health related fitness - upon the head teacher and other members of the senior management team. Jane clearly knew what she wanted for her subject and how to get it. She also made it quite clear, on several occasions during the fieldwork, that she had no desire to go any further up the hierarchy of school management - she wanted nothing that would take her away from the day to day immersion in physical education.

As was indicated earlier, Jane's response to 'all this new jargon and admin' (and other issues in her personal life) was to change jobs. Her new post, in a college of further education, allows her to concentrate upon physical education almost exclusively. She is able to run G.C.S.E. and A' level courses, various sports awards, and can focus upon developing her subject in a less restrictive structure. This post would appear to offer Jane the opportunity to work in a way which she finds rewarding, and it fits most aptly with her personal teaching philosophy. In reflecting upon all of the fieldwork, it would appear that this overriding philosophy can best be described as a 'physical education focus' upon both sport and education.

Other career possibilities which emerged in discussions during the fieldwork were either physical education or sport oriented, ie., coaching tennis and running private activity clubs for pupils after school.

In summary, there can be no suggestion from Jane's story that she was in any way unaware of her circumstances, unaware of the prevailing school philosophy, unaware of her career prospects, unaware of the micro-political skills required to promote herself or her subject. Instead, Jane had made an assessment of her philosophy, and that of the school, and had rejected the latter. The desire to fight

for her beliefs within the school was tempered by her lack of ambition, particularly for career development in the broader school context. Given the stated intention of this research to respect the decisions that teachers take, it is difficult to view Jane's change of career direction as anything other than informed and positive, for her purposes. At the same time, it is difficult to suggest how a school can more readily enhance the job satisfaction of someone like Jane. Unless Jane was to be allowed to continue in her preferred way, effectively isolated, some degree of discontent was almost inevitable. Given that analysis, the situation seems to have been resolved to the advantage of all. Perhaps this is one example of the 'intractability' of both structures and agents. (See, also, comments on the elusive nature of power in chapter 7.)

2. PETE: 'IN FULL CONTROL'

Upon leaving college, Pete obtained the post at Citylimits High and has remained there since (10 years). His first comments about his job reflect his bitterness and frustration with his lack of progress in career terms. It would appear that he had an excellent relationship with the former head teacher. (He was given a 'scale 2' after only 9 months in post.) However, mutual dislike was evident in his relationship with the current head - see chapter 4 - and he has made little progress from that point. It is difficult

to discern all the causes this; Pete is scornful of the head on a number of counts:

'he is, a little bit indecisive...he was never a good P.R. man, I mean he was terrible'

'he invited us out for drinks, and to sit there at the end of the evening and say, 'well, we've only got time for one more drink, uhm, shall we go 50/50 on it?' you know, I could have gone through the table (pause) so I called his bluff, I said, 'look, I'll get it', and he said 'alright'. Things like that, small, insignificant, but it's not - shows up the man in my eyes.'

Apart from the clear clash in philosophies on physical education and, more fundamentally, about what it is to be a 'man', I suspect there may have been other reasons for the poor relationship of which I was unaware.

In addition, Pete feels that the whole senior management style is in opposition to his perception of how things should be. He describes himself as an 'innovator' and a 'motivator'. He feels that he has been responsible for most of the new initiatives at Citylimits High, in particular the outdoor pursuits course which is undertaken by all pupils in the second year. Within the borough he has been active in developing rugby and cricket. However:

'I did all these things, and I saw certain people [ie Arnold] who'd be wearing nice white shorts and nice this and that and being praised. I'd hear it from [the deputy head] how you should project the P.E. department, and, er, what he says is right in one way but, at the end of the day, who do you have - best teacher or best dressed one? ...Or one who doesn't create too many waves? There's no harm in waves, you know, I've created waves, some waves need to be created!'

Clearly, Pete feels that he is undervalued and unappreciated, and he describes the 'high' and 'low' points of teaching in characteristic terms. Most of the successful moments are related to team and individual instances of excellence in sporting achievements:

'not just rugby, but anything...because that is where I see, you know, a lot of hard work has been put in after school, which is of my own volition, you know, no-one's forcing me to do it and that's where it really comes through. That's a high for me.'

In contrast:

'Lows have been when (pause) I've been stopped from getting to a high, getting promotion, having my own department. [Tried for three jobs in the borough] When I didn't get those jobs, alright, I may not have been the best one, but, (pause) I'm so conceited that I know I was the best, I was the best, I really know I was the best. I also know that, uhm, I mean two of those heads of department actually asked for me to be in charge of their departments when they left and they were not just sort of 'easy Jacks' who'd just say 'Ah, Pete's a good bloke', you know, I respected those two guys, they had quite a standing in the borough, when P.E. was more of a force, had a better reputation than it does now. May well have been, [a failure to present a good image at interview] I don't know what the reasons were, I just don't know...perhaps the head realised that I was a good bet for him, as far as getting the school on the map, and I was, you know, I had newspaper men coming around, I encouraged local reporters who I knew to get in the school, and we had all our rugby results in the newspaper. I gave the school a very high profile through sport and I say it, I did it.'

Finally, Pete summarised his current position:

'A situation's been created here where I'm gonna stay at Citylimits as long as I want to, Uhm, Citylimits School will not give me the mental kick that my other life gives me outside, 'cos my outside life, I am in full control of and that will stimulate me. (pause) I am in full control of that.'

Pete's outside life, referred to above (what might be termed his 'side-bet', Becker, 1960), consists of a small, private old people's home which he runs with his wife. Pete borrowed a large sum of money, initially with the intention of starting his own school (at this point, Pete's story closely resembles that of one of the teachers in Bell 1986.) However, the planning regulations proved insurmountable, so the old people's home was started instead - 'more money, lots more money, but not so creative as a school'. Pete is proud of the initiative and of the risks he was prepared to take:

'I took things on, and I have always wanted kids to take things on and kids really appreciate that, you know, I see P.E. as being competitive and, you know, I treat everything as a competition.'

Importantly, the business outside teaching has given Pete the economic freedom to make his own decisions about his future. It has freed him from the necessity of convincing others in the education system that his view of learning has any merit:

'At the end of the day, most people work mostly for one thing - two things, uhm, job satisfaction, job satisfaction comes into it, so much (laughs) that they'd never do it without the money, so money is the main motivation - and I don't need that money, because, when I saw the writing on the wall, rather than just lying down and taking it, I made a different life. I've got more in me, they [other teachers] won't move outside of their environment.'

(See chapter 7 for related discussion on power in this context.)

A summary of Pete's teaching philosophy, as compared to Jane's for example, indicates clearly that Pete holds, overridingly, a 'sport focus' on both physical education and education generally (similar, perhaps, to Sparkes' (1987) 'sporting perspective'). Like Jane, Pete has taken steps to alleviate the tensions between his personal philosophy and that of the school. In both cases, specific action has been taken which leaves personal philosophies intact, although in Pete's case, he continues to make his point by remaining at Citylimits. Furthermore, Pete is convinced that his view will prevail in the long term, as schools seek to enhance their status by using sporting excellence in the 'opted-out' framework. (As was noted in the methodology, although the head denied any intention at the time of the fieldwork, Citylimits has since 'opted out'.) It was particularly with Pete in mind that I suggested, at the beginning of this chapter, that individuals could equally be described as 'intractable'. Although unable to see his version of physical education validated against the wishes of the rest of the physical education department, he has neither changed his teaching philosophy or his views. He is, simply, waiting for his time to come again.

3. ARNOLD: 'LOOKING FOR SOMETHING MORE GLAMOROUS'

Arnold had great difficulty in obtaining a first teaching post. After 80 applications and 10 interviews, he decided to move to London where he found supply work almost immediately. After 'about three months of childminding', he took a temporary contract at one of the supply schools and then a one-year post at the same school. His next post was at Citylimits High School, where he has been for the last 12 years. Initially he was appointed as second teacher in the boy's P.E. department, however, within 6 months of starting the job, the head of department had a road accident and Arnold took over in an acting capacity.

Shortly after, he was appointed Head of Department:

'Since then I've always had one or two other jobs within the school [in addition to Head of Department] which has made my commitment very great. There will be lots of people who have said that you can't do both, and I continually try to prove them wrong, and, continually try to prove to other members of my department that I can do it. And, er, whether it's been successful, it's certainly been hard work for me.'

Currently, Arnold is Head of 4th year and has an expanded role in careers and work experience organisation. Thus, it is, that Jane is Head of Physical Education.

During the fieldwork, it was apparent that Arnold was rarely, if ever, in the staffroom. He seemed to have little contact with other teachers and, on the brief moments when

he did enter the staffroom he looked rather ill-at-ease. He explained the difficulty he faces:

'I used to be there. But now I'd be struggling to find anybody to talk to, other than for points of information. I just havn't got time. Uh, too many things go wrong down this end of the school [senior block] that I could have diffused if I'd been here. Uh, which is very regrettable in lots of ways and I miss it, and I've made all sorts of resolutions that I must find more time down there, but it just doesn't seem to work. Invariably there's somebody who I have to see...or make phone calls to.'

It was stated earlier, in the chapter based on initial interviews, that Arnold seemed to have little enthusiasm for physical education. It becomes clearer in this chapter that this is partially a 'time' problem. However, Arnold's response to my question about high and low points in teaching is revealing:

'(long pause) No, I really don't think there is a time, uh, well (pause) maybe a few times when I taught English, when I thought I had a very successful lesson, it went very well, uhm, but I wouldn't have thought that any of my P.E. lessons were particularly - where I felt 'that was really good, that was - I achieved a great deal in that time'. Uhm, there may have been a few pastoral situations where I may have felt that I did the right thing but, overall, I don't know. I'm fairly self-critical, so I don't think anything was excellent. Like work experience at the moment, it's all a little bit too late, things are going wrong now, they should have been going wrong a couple of weeks ago, so, uhm, I couldn't really pinpoint any particular time when I was successful.'

And the low points:

'Oh there's plenty of them, oh yeh. I think it's just the stress of actual amount of work, uhm, you feel you're just doing too much, and not able to be part of the staff...and you get to the point where somebody does something, a child or, or, then you just feel 'why

bother?', and you get a parent ringing up that's not very supportive and, it makes you feel miserable, I suppose. You think 'there must be something better than this'. And, obviously, getting home and doing more work, and not really living at all. My wife teaches too and she's more committed than I am which makes it, er, increasingly difficult. So, uhm, I think that's probably why we always try to have a long holiday away somewhere, without any work. But, er, I quite often get miserable, or depressed, well not really depressed, but depressed with the teaching situation, fed up with the teaching situation. Yeh, all the way through, right from when I started, there's always been an eye on the look out for something else, looking for something more glamorous, attractive, with more money and less hassle...The whole problem with teaching is everything is attached to your teaching subject. Uhm, if I could just have a pastoral role, it would be O.K. and, er, the sooner I rationalise that the better. But it all comes down to money in the end, which is the great driving factor and what you can't do without.'

Arnold made a similar point in his initial interview:

'I'm actively trying to get out, I have been trying to get out for a number of years by keeping an eye on things outside - er, but, uhm, on my present salary, it's difficult to get out onto an equitable salary. If I go any higher, as in head, deputy head, it would be even more difficult to get out. So my next move is to sit pretty, sit tight until the right thing comes.'

(from chapter 4)

Arnold's teaching philosophy is, perhaps, best described as an 'education focus' upon both physical education and sport. Thus, he is willing to devote much time to pastoral work and careers advice, even though this impinges upon his availability and energy for physical education. Arnold's interest in physical education is, in fact, minimal, and this was also evident from the fieldwork observations and casual conversations. Contrast this with the positions of Jane and Pete who, in different ways, have built their

teaching careers around their perceptions of their subject base. Significantly, Arnold appears to have less room for manoeuvre, in career terms, than either of the other two. He feels that he should take a further qualification, as was noted in chapter 4, but he is not considering such a course:

'it's always seen to be that P.E. staff are good disciplinarians, good with kids, and that's how they've moved up through the system. But most of the people who have done it have had to go out and get M.A.s and M.Ed.s and that sort of thing to actually show that they have some academic knowledge as well. [will you do this? int] If I was to stay in education, I think I would probably need to - I have looked into various courses, but, uhm, the way things are going, and with the initiatives that are coming in [National Curriculum] er, I need to move out - and quickly.'

Fundamentally, Arnold does not seem to have resolved the tension which exists between his teaching philosophy, the career moves which it suggests as most appropriate, and his niggling belief that he might be able to find 'something more glamorous'. Thus, it is, that he embarks upon no particular course of action, and feels constrained in everything that he does. It is difficult to see how Arnold can progress and begin to enjoy his job unless he can address this tension. He certainly feels that there is a 'system' which is preventing him from achieving his goals - and, yet, these goals are not identified clearly, even to Arnold himself.

4. DIANE: 'YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE IF YOU'RE YOURSELF'

Citylimits High School is Diane's first teaching post, and she has just completed her probationary year. It became apparent, during the fieldwork, that Diane enjoys her job in all its aspects. In Arnold's view, Diane's enthusiasm is merely due to the fact that she is 'early into the system'. He predicted that she would, inevitably, become 'worn out with the system or beaten by it, or whatever' (initial interview. See also Sikes, 1988). Although this may be the case, Diane is already active in the construction of her career, and she gives the impression of someone who will succeed in the goals she sets for herself.

Diane describes her most enjoyable moments in teaching in enthusiastic terms:

'In tennis, for example, all of a sudden they've [pupils] got it. They've turned and done it properly and I've found myself shouting 'yeh! that's brilliant!' (laughs) and they look at you and they're really grinning, and you think 'aah, I've done something here, I've won, this is it, it's really good'. And when my team started to be successful this year, my 4th year team. I mean, I took them and I had to throw some kids out of the team, and they've hated me ever since. They [the new team] were O.K., I could see they had potential, but it needed a lot of work and this year, all of a sudden, it clicked. They worked so well together, and they were runner-up in the borough tournament, they won their section of the county tournament and went to the finals, which is the first time this school's ever been, and they won, and they were just over the moon, they got these gorgeous gold medals and they all came up afterwards, jumping around, hugging me and everything and that was superb. I mean, I was standing there talking to Jane and the final whistle went and I just jumped up in the air, I mean, it was such a good feeling to have a winning team, you know, that I'd worked with and they'd improved so much. I feel

I've done more than my friend who works at X school, uhm, she's taken on teams that have always been successful, so I don't think with them winning it's all necessarily down to her, whereas here, I had to start right from scratch. It was really good.'

Low points in teaching centre around unco-operative pupils and Diane herself being in the wrong mood:

'Oh when you get a group of kids together and you're not particularly feeling too wonderful and they don't listen to you and I think, then, 'Oh my God, what am I gonna do?' But when they really are so dim, and some of them really are, and you can't get through to them and they show no improvement whatsoever, and they don't seem to be trying. I find that really hard to motivate myself, let alone to motivate them. I find that really frustrating.

It is very difficult to characterise Diane's teaching philosophy - she appears to embrace all of the philosophies of the other physical education teachers. For example, she works closely with Jane, and both share the same enthusiasm for physical education. She shares Pete's enthusiasm for sport, although not his crude emphasis on elitism. She admires Arnold's ability to use educational terminology and she respects his perspective - although not his lack of enthusiasm for physical education. She throws herself wholeheartedly into broader school initiatives, particularly if they gain her some visibility within the school hierarchy. To restate and expand one of the interview comments in chapter 4, Diane describes her personal goals as:

'To be good at what I'm supposed to be doing. To get some success out of the children that I can see, uhm, always to be very enthusiastic, very, wanting to help out all the time - always involved, to be seen to be doing something, like in the staffroom, always to be involved. In education as a whole, trying to get more involved with the pastoral work and also equal opportunities. I try and do lots of things. I'm very involved with the first year.'

In many ways, Diane can be viewed as a 'New Entrepreneur', as described by Mac An Ghaill's (1992) research:

'..adopted a pragmatic pedagogical approach with eclectic selection of ideas...strong commitment to expanding own department/faculties and promotion of new courses, supporter of enterprise culture...overtly ambitious with a strong commitment to career advancement, projected high self-profile within the school..' (p.180)

Thus her teaching philosophy is summed up as 'pragmatic' and 'eclectic' in its focus. As an example, Diane applied for, and was awarded, one of the incentive allowances advertised internally in her second year of teaching. The payment was to be made for organising bookings and other administrative duties relating to the school mini-bus. Diane would have preferred an allowance for physical education, but as this was not on offer, she took the mini-bus incentive because:

'I felt I had to get on an incentive this year, some way or other. I wouldn't have been happy staying on in the main grade for another year. I don't mind 'cos I'm quite used to doing that sort of work. All my holidays from college I worked in offices, so I'm quite used to that.'

Finally, and yet centrally in terms of developing confidence, Diane suggested that the most significant thing she had learnt about teaching so far, was that it was not necessary to put on an act in front of pupils:

'I used to think you had to act if you were a teacher, it was some sort of acting role, but, being in it, I think I prefer myself, being myself with children. And I find they relate to somebody better if they know what you're like and they know that's the real you. I wouldn't feel secure. You know where you are if you're yourself.'

Looking ahead, Diane prefers not to teach her second subject for at least another year. However, she stated quite categorically that she would not consider any future post that did not offer her some geography teaching. Again, this was in the interests of broadening her career prospects. On past evidence, there seems little reason to doubt her, although it is worth remembering Arnold's earlier comments - perhaps she has yet to become, in his words, 'worn out with the system or beaten by it, or whatever'.

FOUR TEACHERS: FOUR STORIES

At this point, it is appropriate to attempt to summarise elements from this and previous chapters, by comparing the lives and personal philosophies of the four physical education teachers. This is done most effectively in tabular form, and it presents a clear base upon which to

identify the intricacies of the agent/structure relationship in this context.

The tables below are a summary of only the most striking influences/issues pertinent to the teachers at each phase in life.

JANE
Family influence
Teaching-parents
Sport-parents

School influence
P.E. teachers

Why college?
To play sport

College was...
'Absolutely superb'

Teaching philosophy
P.E. focus

Role model
P.E. teacher

Important knowledge is..
Theoretical

Level of job satisfaction
Medium-Citylimits
High-new job

ARNOLD
Family influence
Teaching-sisters

School influence
P.E. teachers at 6th form

Why college?
To play sport

College was...
'Whale of a time!'

Teaching philosophy
Education focus

Role model
College lecturer

Important knowledge is..
Holistic

Level of job satisfaction
Low

PETE	DIANE
Family influence	Family influence
Teaching-brother	Sport-parents
Sport-brother & father	
School influence	School influence
	P.E. teachers
Why college?	Why college?
To teach P.E.	To teach P.E.
College was..	College was..
'Good times'	'Brilliant! Brilliant!'
Teaching philosophy	Teaching philosophy
Sport focus	Eclectic/pragmatic focus
Role model	Role model
Brother	P.E. teacher
Important knowledge is..	Important knowledge is..
Practical	Theoretical & holistic
Level of job satisfaction	Level of job satisfaction
Low	High

To restate a point made in the previous chapter, attempting to identify reproducible patterns in individuals' life histories is fruitless. The evidence from Citylimits High suggests that Connell, (1985) was not exaggerating when he criticised attempts to define 'the' teacher role as 'a bit sick' (see chapter 3). There are, however, similarities in individuals' stories at different stages in life; as Templin et al (1988) noted in their research: 'Both commonalities and differences appeared to exist as I analysed their careers' (p.77). Furthermore, elements of the evidence from Citylimits are mirrored in other studies.

Sparkes (1987), for example, describes a physical education department meeting at his research school, Branstwon. He noted that it became quite clear that: 'this particular subculture was not an undifferentiated epistemological community sharing similar knowledge values' (p.44). He goes on to identify the two broad categories into which these values fell:

'Borrowing from Ball and Lacey's (1980) terminology, Alex and Monica may best be described as holding an 'idealist' perspective which was child centred, egalitarian, concerned with personal and social development, and meeting the needs of the children. In contrast, the rest of the department to a greater or lesser degree held an 'academic' perspective, which when translated into the world of the physical educator becomes the 'sporting' perspective, which is subject centred, elitist, concerned with standards, sporting excellence and the gifted pupil based upon the development of physical skills.' (p.44)

It is apparent that some of Sparkes' comments are applicable to members of the department at Citylimits High School. For example, Pete can be said to hold a 'sporting' perspective, whereas Arnold might be characterised as 'idealist'. The problem with Sparkes' work, however, in the light of evidence from this study, is that it oversimplifies the perspectives of the teachers - much as is indicated by Mac An Ghaill (1992) (see, also, next chapter). A comparison between Jane and Pete illustrates the case. The crude distinction between 'sporting' and 'idealist' perspectives is immediately found wanting as Jane cannot really be described as either. A comparison between Arnold and Diane makes a similar point. Furthermore, the use of the term 'idealist' is misleading if it is attached to one perspective. It would be inaccurate, for example, to describe Pete as having a 'sporting' perspective, but not also to recognise the idealism inherent in his position.

A further reference to Sparkes' study is interesting. He noted the use of 'rhetorical justification' as a means whereby P.E. staff could promote physical education within the wider school context. Such a strategy enabled teachers to create an 'illusion' of change, to satisfy the demands of the new head of department, and yet to continue to teach in the same ways as before. Some of the reasons for this lack of change beyond the 'surface level' are, perhaps,

attributable to the approach taken by the head of physical education, Alex. The following example is illustrative:

'Through departmental meetings I have tried to get the department to understand my views. First of all, I'll give them my opinions on what I think is right and wrong, and said that I don't want to change anything immediately, I'll change it slowly, and try to put over the fact that they have the opportunities to offer opinions and discuss anything. I will accept their opinions even if I don't act upon them. I try to make it as 'open' a department as possible. (Interview Transcript)' (Sparkes 1987 p.44)

Leaving aside the obvious questions about Alex's definition of an 'open' department, it may be that he failed to give 'sufficient respect' (see chapter 3) to the teachers in his department. He felt that his perspective was 'correct' and he proceeded accordingly. Thus, his initiative was 'teacher proof' in the same manner as some theory has been described as teacher proof in previous chapters. (His approach could also be characterised as 'macho'.) Evidence from Citylimits High School highlights the complexity of individuals' teaching perspectives, or philosophies, which are focussed in different directions as a result of innumerable events and influences throughout life. If change is desired, and it is not to be implemented with the force of law (see, however, Ball and Bowe's (1992) research on the National Curriculum) or, perhaps, sheer authoritarian force, it may be more forthcoming from a policy of 'sufficient respect' which recognises the originality of each individual. (But

see, also, next chapter.)

Another study which raises interesting issues is that by Woods (1990). In his analysis of 'teacher, self and curriculum', he makes a plea for sociologists to pay more attention to questions such as 'How far is a 'subject' as practised in the classroom, a realisation of an individual teacher's self?' (p.145) As a result of extensive interviews with a retired teacher, Woods makes the following claim:

'The case of Tom shows that a teacher's self, in part at least, both finds expression in, and gives expression to a curriculum area. The dialectic involves persistent and complex strategies, trade-offs, gains and losses.'

(p.172)

Woods' point can be further illustrated by the teachers at Citylimits. Each had developed a different teaching philosophy; a focus, as was suggested earlier. With the benefit of life-history insight, it became apparent that the focus had resulted from a plethora of experiences and events. The principle, therefore, that the teacher 'finds expression in, and gives expression to a curriculum area' (p.172) is endorsed. Furthermore, Woods suggests that 'if we are to understand correctly the origin and nature of teacher strategies, then we must investigate their type and range of commitments' (p.142). This point, again, can be endorsed by reference to the teachers at Citylimits. The question must arise, however, about the length of time it

has taken for these principles to become established.

Keddie (1971) made a fundamental point, the consequences of which may not, until recently, have been fully realised.

Although already quoted in chapter 3, it is worth restating here:

'We can only learn what they [subjects] are by learning what teachers and pupils who are involved in defining that knowledge claim to be doing: subjects are what practitioners do with them' (p.44)

If this principle is accepted, it makes a clear demand for a focus upon the teacher (and pupil) in more detail.

A final point from Woods' research introduces the last part of this discussion. Woods summarises the agent/structure debate in his study as follows:

'What this study of two teachers has shown, I hope, is not only how the constraints and pressures....impinge on action, but also how they can be recognised and grappled with. The results may not be revolutionary, but where there is recognition, there are possibilities.' (p.144)

Pollard (1982) would support Woods' general position, whilst placing even greater emphasis upon the complexity of the agent/structure relationship. He highlights the importance of pupils in the equation, and further suggests that an understanding of teachers requires an understanding of 'teachers' cultural resource' and that the school institution must be considered as a workplace - 'both

constraining and enabling'. Denscombe (1980) stresses the exigencies of the structure. Thus, different teaching philosophies are 'not the product of pedagogic choice so much as a response to the environment within which teachers find themselves' (p.280). Gitlin (1987), however, would appear to refute the determinism in Denscombe's position, whilst retaining the notion of the powerful influence of structures: 'teacher behaviour reflects a compromise between teacher values, ideologies, and the press of the school structure' (p.107).

Taken together, these theoretical positions, those presented at the beginning of this chapter and the evidence from Citylimits High School can be viewed as a positive contribution to the agent/structure debate. My analysis points to a complex and intricate agent/structure relationship which can be better understood through individual teachers. Importantly, teachers are individuals, and they respond differently to the constraints and opportunities they experience. Thus, for Arnold, the structures are perceived as stifling - 'the system' is grinding him down. For Jane, the weight of the education perspective upon her subject has caused her to find a post where she can follow her own inclinations. She is, currently, both happy and successful. Pete has been disappointed by the education system, so he has made himself financially independent. He remains in post,

however, partially to make a point, and partially in the certainty that, one day, his view will prevail. And Diane, who values her work and who appears to manage the education system confidently; even effortlessly. Her self belief may carry her through. In the kaleidoscope of shifting patterns which emerges, the individual nature of each teachers' position can be identified as the one constant factor.

To summarise, therefore, the importance of the **dynamic** nature of Giroux's three concepts, ideology, hegemony and culture, can be seen. Some evidence has been presented, for example, to indicate how 'individuals negotiate, resist or accept' ideologies within the culture that is Citylimits High. In addition, I have hinted at the difficulty of understanding 'power' in this context, given its complex nature (as described by Foucault). The related question of 'freedom', in Wright Mills' terms, was raised at the beginning of the chapter and, if his definition is accepted at face value: 'the chance to formulate available choices, to argue over them, and then the opportunity to choose', this would seem to point to a high degree of 'freedom' for Diane, Pete and, possibly, Jane. Arnold, however, would probably characterise himself as having very little choice and, given the tensions identified earlier in his position within the education system, he is probably right.

Further discussion on these issues is required, however,

and this is undertaken in the next chapter, as the threads of the research are drawn together in the broader context of the 'life' of a physical education department.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE 'DRAMA' OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT CITYLIMITS HIGH SCHOOL

In the original proposal for this research, and throughout its conduct, the term 'ecology' was used as an organising concept, as indicated in the title:

THE ECOLOGY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

An investigation into the 'life' of a Physical Education Department and its impact upon the identities and opportunities of pupils and teachers.

In the research proposal, the metaphorical use of the term 'ecology' represented an attempt to summarise the research problem by encapsulating an amorphous set of questions about the 'life' of a Physical Education department in a secondary school employing, also, the related concepts of 'survival' and 'adaptation'. These concepts seemed entirely appropriate for a study which sought to focus upon both the micro-culture of a physical education department, and macro issues of school (and wider) culture (see research proposal, appendix A). There is no doubt that, as an organising concept, 'ecology' proved to be most helpful in the early stages of the research.

Reflecting upon those early stages, I recall that the term 'ecology' seemed particularly useful because it implied a certain dynamism in the relationships between individuals, groups and the school culture (see also, related discussion on Giroux's (1981) work in the previous chapter). At the same time, an element of stability was implied, and this appeared to reflect the inherent conservatism (the enduring 'traditions', Ellsworth (1989)) of institutions such as secondary schools. As I reach the final stage of the research, however, and in the final analysis of the fieldwork method and findings, I find the term 'ecology' is too limited. At one level, this can be attributed to its base in the natural sciences, and the attendant suggestions of positivism. In the specific case of ecological science, there is the further suggestion of functionalism. Centrally, however, the problem with the term 'ecology' is that it is too clinical to encapsulate some of the essential elements of social life - in this case, the 'life' of the physical education department at Citylimits High School. 'Drama', and 'the dramatic' are terms which appear to have more potential for the analysis, and this is more than an exercise in semantics.

At the outset, it must be recognised that 'drama', and related concepts can also be viewed as essentially functionalist, particularly when considering the term 'script', which I employ later. However, in another sense,

'the 'drama' of physical education' is a description which can be understood as prioritising concepts related to the quality and 'colour' of life, in place of stark notions of 'survival' and 'adaptation'. 'Drama' and 'the dramatic' seem to place emphasis upon people and their personal responses to, or interpretations of, roles and structures. In the previous chapter, I pointed to the work of Woods (1990) and his suggestion that

'...a teacher's self, in part at least, both finds expression in, and gives expression to a curriculum area.' (p.172)

In the context of the 'drama' of physical education, this suggestion makes sense. It makes less sense in an ecological context.

A range of concepts related to the term 'drama' are helpful in explaining my meaning, particularly as they resonate with the fieldwork as it was conducted and is presented in this thesis. Thus, it is feasible to consider notions of 'comedy' – for example, Pete, and his episode of singing in the staffroom; 'tragedy' – the break-down of Jane's second relationship; and 'farce', or 'melodrama' – the 'incident', as described in the methodology chapter. There are countless other examples at countless levels of relevance and importance. As Ball (1987) points out, his interest in the micro-politics of the school stemmed from a desire to 'give priority to the social actors as the basic

constituents of the organisation' (p.27). Similarly, an understanding of 'social actors' is central to this research and to any understanding of physical education at Citylimits High School: here again, the sterility of the original ecological metaphor is exposed.

Importantly, employing dramaturgical metaphor allows me to introduce the concept of 'script'. In reflecting upon the research process, specifically the interviews with a range of teachers, the notion of script in a dramatic context seems to represent, most accurately, the way in which teachers developed a set of personal principles for education. These were usually based upon their perception of pupils' needs, and they would draw upon the scripts, as required, to guide actions and responses. For example, my analysis of the interviews suggests that the core features of these 'scripts' were quite firmly set for that moment in time; thus, teachers could 'read off' responses to my questions about physical education. The 'script' was intensely personal in nature, and a variety of life and job related experiences might prompt the teacher to revise - or even radically change - the script; it is certainly far from immutable, and is open to both interpretation and discussion. As Hornbrook (1989) notes:

'As individuals we are inescapably committed to a complex network of social relationships taking place against a background of culture and history. Such a network...can itself be described as a form of dramatic text, one which enables us to participate intelligibly

in social life...' (p.111)

The central point to be made is that for each teacher, the 'script' for education could almost be described as 'predictable' in its impact on actions at an individual level. What is more difficult to assess is the way in which individuals' 'scripts' will change, and will interact within any school framework: the complexity of social encounters is thereby intimated. As Ball (1987) notes, the differences between teachers and their approaches to education 'often rest on ideological foundations' (p.14) and, it therefore follows that 'the struggles over divergent objectives really are struggles, not the playing-out of some preordained script' (Hindess, 1982 in Ball, 1987 p.25). In this research, I have identified differences in perceptions of the concept of knowledge and conflicting views of knowledge in physical education, as key factors impinging upon the 'life' of the physical education department at Citylimits High. 'Ideological foundations' have, therefore, featured prominently, as have real 'struggles' to legitimate preferred views. The end result of such struggles could be described as the 'discourse' of physical education which prevails at Citylimits High School.

With that in mind, it is the task of this chapter to draw together the evidence from the fieldwork and the

discussions which have accompanied each section. In the methodology chapter, I pointed to the strength of qualitative research in its ability to provide data that is both interesting and accessible to teachers. I made the further claim that, in one sense, research projects of this genre have the morbid fascination of 'soap operas'; real issues are explored but at the safety of distance. In drawing together the findings, therefore, an emphasis upon dramatic elements of individuals' lives, of events and of interactions is used to enhance an understanding of the 'life' of a physical education department, particularly in the development of competing perspectives on the nature and purpose of the subject. The work of Erving Goffman, where appropriate, informs the analysis and theoretical discussions from earlier stages of the thesis, particularly those related to the analysis of knowledge in physical education, the agent/structure debate and the issue of power are developed further using this framework. Some of the conclusions from the methodology chapter are revisited, briefly, at the end. There is no intention, at this late stage in the research, to reject, entirely, the original organising concept of the ecological metaphor. Rather, the discussion is, in the final analysis, set to expand beyond its logical boundaries.

GOFFMAN'S CONCEPT OF THEATRE

'All the world is not a stage - certainly the theatre

isn't entirely.' (Goffman 1959 p.1)

'Metaphors are two-sided: they provide insights into those aspects of social reality that are like the metaphor, and conceal those that are not.'

(Manning 1980 p.278)

Perhaps the first task of this discussion is to accept the limitations of the dramatic metaphor. Goffman used it extensively in his earlier works, but described it as nothing more than a 'scaffold' to be 'dropped' as it became obsolete:

'Scaffolds, after all, are to build other things with, and should be erected with an eye to taking them down.'

(Goffman 1959 p.246)

(This might constitute a sound argument for moving beyond the ecological metaphor at this stage in the thesis.)

Similarly, Goffman (1959) made it clear that the 'dramaturgical perspective' was only one of five possible perspectives to be used in the study of social establishments. Thus, the technical, political, structural and cultural perspectives can also be considered:

'It is to be noted that all the facts that can be discovered about an establishment are relative to each of the four perspectives but that each perspective gives its own priority and order to these facts.'

(p. 233, my emphasis)

The dramaturgical perspective can be studied in isolation, or in its intersection with the other four perspectives.

Goffman (1959), for example, points to the intersection of the political and dramaturgical perspectives as illustrating 'the capacities of one individual to direct the activity of another' (p.234). In turn, he relates this to the concept of power:

'Power of any kind must be clothed in effective means of displaying it, and will have different effects depending on how it is dramatized....Thus the most objective form of naked power, ie., physical coercion, is often neither objective nor naked but rather functions as a display for persuading the audience; it is often a means of communication, not merely a means of action.' (p.234)

At a micro level, the 'incident' at Citylimits High, as is described in the methodology chapter, and the responses of both the new governing body and the staff, can be cited as an example of a 'display' of power. (See, also, later discussion on this issue.)

In the case of the intersection of cultural and dramaturgical perspectives, Goffman (1959) suggests that:

'The cultural value of an establishment will determine in detail how the participants are to feel about many matters and at the same time establish a framework of appearances that must be maintained, whether or not there is feeling behind the experience.' (p.234)

The potential of a Goffmanesque style of analysis for this study becomes clearer as 'intersections', such as those identified above, are explored. Some of Goffman's many dramaturgical concepts will be utilised where they are

appropriate, particularly his emphasis upon 'theatre'. However, it is the intention of this analysis that the 'drama' of physical education will draw upon a broader framework than the face-to-face analysis which is the central subject of Goffman's work. Goffman is quite specific in the definition of his task:

'I shall consider the way in which the individual in ordinary work situations presents himself and his activity to others, the ways in which he guides and controls the impression they form of him, and the kinds of things he may and may not do while sustaining his performance before them.' (preface 1959)

My task, on the other hand, is to attempt to present a deeper and more faithful insight into my data from Citylimits High School by employing a dramaturgical metaphor. Thus, I apply the concepts to a broader range of social life than is the case in Goffman's work. In addition, my choice of terminology is different.

Goffman is both praised and criticised for his idiosyncratic style. Hepworth (1980) points out that even critics agree he is 'an extremely sensitive and acute observer of human interaction.' (p.80) Lofland (1980) goes further and suggests that many people have been moved by Goffman's work as they gain:

'an exhilarating sense of their own possibilities for personal freedom, the existential vision that social order is after all constructed and can therefore be dealt with like other constructions.' (p.48)

(In one sense, this interpretation is in accord with the claims of Terkel (in Lawn and Barton 1981) which is referred to at several stages in the thesis.)

Central criticisms are those which point to his tendency to develop sociological taxonomy, rather than sociological theory (Lofland 1980); the specificity (and sheer number) of his concepts (Psathos 1980); and a comprehensive critique by Gouldner (1970) on the grounds that Goffman's actors are disengaged from social structures and that the concept of power is inadequately addressed. However, Rogers (1980) accepts that Goffman's characters can seem ahistorical, but refutes Gouldner's charges that Goffman's actors are unattached to structures and that power is inadequately theorised. On the contrary, Rogers employs some of Goffman's key concepts to conclude:

'In sum, social structures set the effective parameters on individuals' degrees of felt self-determination and on their range of effectively available modes of maintaining face; self-image and social structure are complexly and dynamically intertwined as the notion of moral career so aptly suggests.' (1980 p.115)

'Moral career' is described by Goffman as:

'..the regular sequence of changes that career entails in the person's self and in his framework of imagery for judging himself and others.' (1978 p. 119)

It is in these areas that the value of Goffman's perspective becomes apparent for this work. He seems to

encompass the complexity of social life in a way which I see as essential for an understanding of physical education at Citylimits High School. For example, at one point in an earlier chapter, in summarising the data from teachers' life-history interviews, I observed:

'In the Kaleidoscope of shifting patterns which emerges, the individual nature of each teacher's position can be identified as the one constant factor' (chapter 6)

Similarly, in the literature based analysis in chapter 3, I drew upon the work of Ellsworth (1989) which refers to the 'multiple social positionings' of social agents and the resulting complexity of social interaction; and in the methodology, Donmoyer (1990) describes human action and interaction as 'a hall of mirrors that extends to infinity' (p.178). Lofland's (1980) analysis of Goffman seems apt in this context:

'When one watches the performance of any official self, he will see not only the performance of that official self, but the juggling of a whole range of selves within the context of the officially activated self.' (p.44)

In Goffman's terms, one would be witnessing 'a dance of identification' (1961 p.144).

Accepting that level of complexity as the starting point, and what I have described as the 'dramatic' nature of social interaction, the final analysis of the 'life' of the physical education department at Citylimits High School, as

it has been presented in this research, is undertaken in four sections. Thus, issues which have been raised from literature and fieldwork data are revisited in the following four areas:

1. Knowledge and physical education: knowing the scripts.
2. Agent/structure: the drama of the interacting scripts.
3. The elusive character that is 'power'.
4. Final thoughts on the methodology.

1. KNOWLEDGE AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION: KNOWING THE SCRIPTS

One of the most striking memories I have of the fieldwork, was the moment when it became clear just how interested the physical education teachers were in certain of my research activities. Specifically, they were fascinated to know the outcome of my interviews with the senior management team. They showed a degree of interest in the pupil interviews and parent questionnaires, but they felt they could have predicted many of the outcomes: their **enthusiasm** was reserved for the data from senior teachers. (As is detailed in the methodology chapter, I had agreed to share information with respondents on an anonymous basis.) Therefore, it is to this issue that I turn first.

A summary of senior management team perspectives on the essential knowledge of physical education (presented, in

full, in chapter 4) is as follows:

- 'provide everybody with some sort of physical activity...gain some benefit from being physically fit...enjoy social benefits of sport...encourage people to work together rather than to compete against each other...games or P.E...breaking down discriminatory barriers within the school' (Head Teacher)
- 'education through the physical...taking up challenges...Corinthian values...can expand it into the examination world' (Deputy Head, Joseph)
- 'P.E. as broader than sport...make sure that everybody appreciates that exercising the body just generally contributes to physical health...P.S.H.E...successful teams...personal success' (Deputy Head, Karen)
- '...a good socialising tool...[related to] a person's own image of themselves...[sport as] a performance area of physical education' (Deputy Head, Wendy)
- 'social development of pupils beside the physical...certainly the social side...it is the social side I can see as being important...And definitely the physical side...I don't think we do enough on the physical health side...[mixed P.E.] a massive issue...lowered standards' (I/C Lower School, Roy)
- 'develops psychomotor skills...release of aggression...creativity...' (I/C Upper School, Jez)
- 'you can't work well unless you're reasonably fit...I regard P.E. as the building block of sport...a G.C.S.E. in sporting activities...an academic side to P.E. now which was perhaps lacking in the past' (I/C Cover, Julian)

Each perspective on physical education is woven into individuals' current 'scripts' for education and, as I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the formulation of these 'scripts' can be traced back through events in personal history. Four examples are illustrative.

The headteacher based his views of physical education upon his distaste for competitive sport, games and 'macho

sportsmen'. His personal involvement in competitive sport was described as 'virtually nil frankly' and he related a series of incidents in his younger life which had left him feeling antagonistic towards a highly competitive sports-oriented curriculum. Similarly, Joseph gave a perspective which was wholly in tune with his personal history. He made it clear, at the start of the interview, that he had been a head of physical education, but that he had never excelled at sport. His perspective on physical education was, therefore, based on the need to 'be prepared not to be the best but to give of your best and that being a reward in itself'. Karen prefaced her interview with her belief in the importance of exercise in her own life. She felt it gave her 'more control and more energy'. Her personal background in sport was extensive and she, unlike the head teacher, had little difficulty in embracing success in competitive sport as part of her vision of the essential knowledge of physical education. Her career advancement prior to Citylimits High had been in the field of P.S.H.E. and, in assimilating this with her personal success in and enjoyment of sport, a script for education had evolved. (This encompassed a role for physical education which was quite closely aligned to the perspectives of the physical education teachers.) A slightly different picture emerges in the case of Roy. Having been a keen and successful sportsman, injury has curtailed his involvement and he appears unable to find

fulfillment in a lower level of participation. As a result, his 'script' for education has evolved reflecting, simultaneously, the highly competitive nature of his past and his current pre-occupation with pastoral issues and pre-vocational work. The confusion in his position is evident from his perceived role for physical education. He makes it clear, on several occasions, that he values 'the social side...Kids relate to other kids'. Yet, he is very antagonistic towards the concept of mixed P.E., particularly as it affects the standards of the boys' work. The paradox is easier to understand in the context of his personal history.

In some senses, my suggestion of individuals' 'scripts' for education both mirrors and contradicts Goffman's concept of theatre. Goffman (1959) presents the notion of a stage with front and back regions. Individuals are performers; essentially performers of characters. In my analysis, I see more continuity between the individual, personal history, and the script for education which evolves over time and through experience. Thus, in using the dramatic metaphor in a broader framework, I find it hard to accept Goffman's implied split between character and performance. Perhaps my view is closer to that of Woods' (1990 - quoted earlier) notion of teachers both giving expression to, and finding expression in, a curriculum area. And yet, at another level, my analysis seems to resonate with Goffman's (1961)

concept of human life as a 'moral career', as was suggested earlier. In particular, Goffman's description of 'career' is pertinent:

'One value of the concept of career is its two-sidedness. One side is linked to internal matters held dearly and closely, such as image of self and felt identity; the other side concerns official position, jural relations, and style of life, and is part of a publicly accessible institutional complex. The concept of career, then, allows one to move back and forth between the personal and the public, between the self and its significant society.' (1978 p.119)

It is in this context that the 'moral career' is set, the definition of which is repeated here:

'..the regular sequence of changes that career entails in the person's self and in his framework of imagery for judging himself and others' (1978 p.119)

It seems clear that the examples from Citylimits High School, as presented above, can be viewed most helpfully in this framework of a 'sequence of changes'. This analysis would seem to further reinforce points made about misleading terminology in chapter 2. For example, in quoting a job advertisement for a physical education teacher, I drew upon the work of Pring (1976), Carr (1988), Hirst (1974) and Wilson & Cowell (1982) to question the validity of claims for 'child-centredness' in education. Hirst's (1974) comment seems particularly apt in this context:

'Saying what children need is only a cloaked way of

saying what we judge they ought to have.' (p.16)

Senior teachers at Citylimits High appeared to base their prescriptions for physical education upon their own personal needs and expectations. Furthermore, these had changed over time in response to changes in their personal circumstances. Thus, C. Wright Mills' (1959) comment on the need for social researchers to possess a 'sociological imagination' is apt in this context:

'The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise.' (p.6)

The responses of senior teachers were all the more interesting given that none of the management team had recently observed physical education lessons in any depth. Developing further the concept of 'script' in the context of this research, the next stage of the interviews with the management team sought to explore how the management team could (or do) define the success of the physical education at Citylimits High School. The responses about ways in which they might (or do) measure success were particularly interesting:

- 'the degree of enthusiasm [with which pupils participate]...whether they have managed to persuade boys and girls to spend more time with each other' (Head Teacher)

- 'the attitude the children bring to their physical education...an attitudinal thing...the feel' (Deputy Head' Joseph)

- 'skill development...successful teams...personal success in activities which lend themselves very easily to measurement...qualitative and quantitative research'
(Deputy Head, Karen)

- 'whether the children look happy when they're going into the changing rooms, whether they go there quickly or dally...I s'pose enthusiasm more than team achievement because it depends on your intake...whether the staff are happy' (Deputy Head, Wendy)

- 'whether pupils and staff are 'happy'' (I/C Lower School, Roy)

- 'it is a feel; what I'd observe going in and out of form groups...the feel...one could pin it down to the incidents that would emanate from the P.E. department...sensitivity.. a lot of it is subjective' (I/C Upper School, Jez)

- 'I should think relationships and involvement of both pupils and staff in sporting matters and a measure of success in external games.' (I/C Cover, Julian)

The emphasis upon 'happy' pupils and staff is interesting, and unsurprising. As Burgess and Carter (1992) point out:

'the 'good' classroom is quiet, orderly and full of children willing to learn; the 'real' teacher has the well controlled classroom.' (p.357)

(See also Seidentop (1990) Hendry (1975) Nias (1984, 1989)).

At Citylimits High, all respondents were aware of the conflict between Jane and Pete in the physical education department, and Jane saw this as an indication of personal failure (see chapter 5). Based on the above, she may be correct in assuming that a united (happy) department is essential if it is to be perceived as successful. Clearly,

for those who hold the most senior positions at Citylimits High, their scripts for the successful running of the school do not include any significant level of conflict in the case of pupils or staff. They may even feel that conflict is a challenge to their ability as 'managers'; for as C. Wright Mills (1959) points out:

'To make the worker happy, efficient and co-operative we need only make the managers intelligent, rational, knowledgeable.' (p.92)

Certainly, there would appear to be little support at Citylimits High for Giroux's (1991) suggestion that education should seek to provide students with: 'Knowledge, capacities and opportunities to be noisy, irreverent and vibrant' (p.508).

Apart from Karen and Julian, none of the management team mentioned achievement in sport or physical activities as a criterion of success. Wendy spoke of 'enthusiasm more than achievement' and Joseph felt that it would be wrong to look at pupils' skill level because 'it depends what you're starting off with doesn't it?'. And yet, this is no different than for any other subject area. Pupils in physical education, it seems, should be happy, occupied, enthusiastic - yet not too aggressive or striving too hard. Presumably, this reflects the other prevailing notion that physical education is a form of relaxation from 'real work'. It also explains why Pete is so unpopular: Wendy

(see chapter 4) went so far as to claim he was 'unintelligent', because he failed to share her vision of physical education in the context of the 'whole school curriculum'. Achievement in sport alone, in Wendy's script, is trivial.

The central point to be made in drawing together this part of the analysis is the one made at the outset. Physical education teachers were unaware of the expectations of the senior management team for their subject. Thus, they were unable to challenge those views which did not accord with their perceptions of their task. They had little idea of the measures of success and failure which were being applied and were amazed, yet resigned, to hear that so many respondents were basing their impressions of the department on the rather doubtful criteria presented above. Arguably, only by 'knowing the scripts' of significant others can physical education teachers accept, challenge or refute the roles assigned to them and their subject. This may be one more illustration of the concept of 'sufficient respect' (chapter 3): by taking the care to fully consider (understand) the position of others, it may be possible to challenge those positions more effectively. Forbes and Street (1986) made a similar point, in chapter 3 of this thesis (see critique on critical theory and the notion of 'teacher-proof' theory). The quote is worth repeating here:

'The transition to socialism must start from the analysis of people as they are (and concomitantly must be sensitive to existing forms of thought and behaviour) not as they might be. Whatever particular vision of the future that socialists might adopt, their first step has to involve them in linking the world as they find it with the world as they would like it to be' (p.17)

It may be the case that physical education teachers will have a fairly sound knowledge of, what might be termed, the 'official scripts' for education and physical education; ie, they can obtain access to government documents, National Curriculum materials and official school policies. At the micro-political (Ball 1987) level of implementation, however, they may lack essential information about expectations and pre-conceptions which could prevent them from achieving their own objectives. L. Evans (1992) suggests:

'Researchers should focus, first and foremost, on individuals and only then search for commonalities and emerging patterns which may lead to generalisation.'

(p.170)

This would seem to be sound advice for teacher/researchers, particularly where they seek to enhance the status of their own subject area. There is no suggestion that 'knowing the scripts' will solve all the problems or lead to change by itself; merely that it is information which will be helpful in addressing problems. The next two sections of this discussion provide sound examples. (See, also, discussion on 'power' later in this chapter.)

Fitness for Life: the impossible dream

If the parent, pupil, teacher and governer respondents are to be believed, health/fitness is a major, if not the major, component of (and justification for) physical education at Citylimits High School. All members of the physical education department offered it as a justification for their work, eg:

'fitness for life' Jane
'the importance of staying fit and consequently healthy'
Pete
'to promote a healthy lifestyle' Arnold

Examples from other respondents can be found in chapter 4, and it is worth noting again the prevailing view that a fit and healthy body is predominantly valued for the success it can bring pupils in the academic curriculum. Parents, particularly, seemed to imply a belief in the organic interaction of the mind and the body, and the benefits for the more highly valued mind (see, also, chapter 2 for a literature-based analysis of this issue from a philosophical perspective). The physical education teachers seemed to go further than this in their desire to promote long-term health; an aim in which they, inevitably perhaps, felt frustrated. As Arnold said:

'Tend to meet them [pupils] in bars and pubs in a few years time and they're a gigantic size and not doing any sport at all...I think in some ways the fifth year

being a recreational type of period, then the health aspect is lost.'

Clearly, for the majority of respondents, 'health' is a worthy, attractive and highly popular knowledge claim for physical education at Citylimits High. It seems to provide a unifying principle for physical education which cuts through the conceptual confusion illustrated both in the literature in chapter 2 and, in practice, from the interviews with physical education teachers. It has links to high status science knowledge (see discussion in chapter 3), and it seems to provide a serious rationale for the playing of sports in curriculum time. And, yet, physical education teachers at Citylimits High are almost bound to fail in their attempt to promote 'lifetime fitness': success in the lifetime context is impossible to quantify. For example, at which point in a pupil's life are they deemed to have succeeded - or failed? And it would seem inappropriate to expect significant health benefits to accrue from a 'health-related fitness' programme which, by definition, is narrow and often, as was the case at Citylimits High, exclusive to the physical education department. Moreover, as was discussed in chapter 3, 'health-related fitness', as a concept, might be viewed as reinforcing a fairly rigid dualistic version of both physical education and health - unhelpful in both areas; and it would appear to be in conflict with the more holistic concept of 'personhood', as was outlined in chapter 2:

'The idea of the person is the touchstone of all our appraisals of the world...The idea of person precedes the idea of mind and body: a person is both, for both these ideas are subsumed in that of the person which is prior' (Aspin 1976 p.112)

Thus, there is some support for the views of those sociologists of physical education (cited in chapter 3) who criticise health related fitness for its narrowness and consequent failure to address broader social issues. At the same time, as I suggested in that chapter, my knowledge of the intentions of physical education teachers at Citylimits High suggests it may be more fruitful to consider the possibility that motivating pupils to have an interest in their own health, may stimulate a concern for broader health related issues.

At Citylimits High, physical education teachers supported the widely shared assumption that physical education is, or should be, fundamentally concerned with health/fitness. However, that this level of agreement exists, seems to point to both an opportunity and a problem for physical education teachers. Fawcett (1991) makes the suggestion that:

'where Direct Health Related approaches are happening in schools there may be justification for P.E. itself to be re-appraised and re-titled..' (p.18)

Fawcett proposes that physical education should seek to

take a more active role in health education in its broadest context – or even to be re-titled as ‘health education’. Having undertaken this research, and given the responses on health/fitness, I would be interested to investigate whether such a suggestion has any support within the wider physical education profession. The problem, of course, lies in the difficulty of achieving tangible outcomes in the sphere of health. As it currently operates, however, the physical department at Citylimits High could be criticised for engaging in health and fitness activities almost at the level of ‘tokenism’; employing health-related ‘strategic rhetoric’ (Sparkes 1987) to enhance the status of physical education within the wider school community.

In some ways, the National Curriculum has been quite conservative in its claims for health in the context of physical education. However, ‘Health Education’ is identified as one of five cross-curricular ‘themes’ and it is noted that, although all five can be taught through physical education, ‘health education (in particular the effects of exercise on health) is most prominent.’ (p.G1 Non-Statutory Guidance). At the same time, in its explanation of the contribution physical education can make to health, the document states:

‘1.4 A good physical education programme can have a significant influence on long-term health, attitudes and behaviour. It can:

–promote healthy growth and development;

- motivate pupils to participate in a range of physical activities;
- encourage the development of a lifelong commitment to a physically active lifestyle, thereby reducing the risk of future disease and infirmity;
- assist in the management of existing conditions, e.g. asthma;
- promote mental well-being, good mood and positive self-image;
- provide knowledge required for safe participation in and effective planning of individually appropriate exercise programmes.'

(p.G1 Non-Statutory Guidance. My emphasis)

Taken together, the statutory statements on health in the programmes of study and end of key stage statements, and the non-statutory guidance present a strong case for the place of health/fitness within the physical education curriculum. Teachers at Citylimits High would, presumably, given their earlier interview responses, feel quite comfortable with the statement quoted above. And yet, it is unlikely that more curriculum time will be made available for physical education, and one is left to wonder how they can achieve any more than they have done in the past. Thus, they are likely to be left endorsing the worthiness of the principle of 'fitness for a lifetime', in agreement with pupils, parents and other teachers, but continuing to bemoan the fact that they can't achieve it. Furthermore, if Ball and Bowe (1992) are correct in their judgement that teachers are creative in their responses to the National Curriculum, basing their 'interpretations' on particular ideological concerns (see, also, later discussion) then the central place of health/fitness in the physical education 'discourse' of Citylimits High is assured.

What can be stated, with some certainty on the basis of this research, is that physical education teachers would do well to consider the practical implications of their claims to teach health/fitness. The starting point might be an analysis of their own perceptions of success, and the perceptions of significant others ('knowing the scripts' and having 'sufficient respect' might be helpful concepts in this respect). 'Fitness for life' (Jane) and 'significant influence on long-term health, attitudes and behaviour' (Non-statutory Guidance) are principles which might sound impressive, but which descend to the level of 'strategic rhetoric' (and 'failure' according to Arnold, at Citylimits) if practical implications are avoided.

Sport: a key player

There is no question but that sport is a prominent feature of physical education knowledge at Citylimits High; particularly for parents in their expectations of the subject and pupils in their experience of it. (See chapter 4 for full details.) My reading of the data suggests, however, that few parents or pupils appeared to be describing a highly elitist version of sport - many specifically stated that the curriculum should be for everybody (see also Hendry 1975). This is further reinforced in those parents' responses which placed

emphasis upon the criterion of 'relaxation' as a benefit of physical education. Furthermore, and following on from the previous discussion, the shared assumption about the purpose of physical education in developing health/fitness is pertinent. In a sense, these combined responses amount to a vision of sport in the curriculum where it is central - and yet it is subsumed in the broader needs of the individual. Almost effortlessly, it seems, a large number of parent and pupil respondents have articulated a position which avoids a sport/physical education conflict. This is particularly interesting as they approached the questions in the research from the perspective of 'consumers'.

Within the teaching staff at Citylimits High, the issues were less clear. For example, Jane saw physical education as learning, and specifically knowledge about fitness. Sport, on the other hand, was: 'just doing it'. Similarly, Diane described sport as, predominantly, an out-of-school activity and, again, 'just doing it'. In contrast, Pete viewed learning how to be successful in sport as the cornerstone of physical education. For the head teacher, the greater the distance he could find between physical education and sport the better, whereas for Karen, the two areas were closely related, with physical education simply being broader. The reverse of this was suggested by Julian who saw physical education as: 'a sort of building block of sport'. In an interesting comment, Wendy described sport as

a 'performance area of physical education'.

The National Curriculum for Physical Education (1992) is unhelpful in resolving the debate (see chapter 2) and it is worth restating here the difference between physical education and sport as is presented in that document:

'In physical education the emphasis is upon learning in a mainly physical context. The purpose of the learning is to develop specific knowledge, skills and understanding and to promote physical development and competence. The learning promotes participation in sport.'

Sport is the term applied to a range of physical activities where the emphasis is on participation and competition. Different sporting activities can and do contribute to learning.' (H1 N.S.G.)

As I suggested in chapter 2, this distinction is unlikely to help those physical education teachers who wish to articulate their belief that physical education is of greater value in the school curriculum than merely 'playing sport'. Three of the teachers at Citylimits High held this view, but struggled to make either their meaning clear or the impact on practice explicit (let alone visible to an observer). A suggestion from this research, following the literature based discussion in chapters 2 and 3, and the fieldwork responses in chapter 4 would be that physical educationists might do well to accept that much of what they do centres on teaching pupils how to play sporting activities (and dance). It is certainly experienced as such by pupils and, if it is accepted that we are entering a

postmodern era (see discussion in chapter 3), then sport as a mass cultural form is implicated and may assume even greater prominence. Gilbert's (1992) reminder, that postmodern styles are essentially the styles of the young, is worth reiterating. As he points out: 'Educators ignore this life world at their peril' (p.56). Perhaps it is, as parents and pupils seem to have implied, that by taking sport in its broadest context, in conjunction with the shared assumption that part of the essential knowledge in physical education is health/fitness, that the tension between the two concepts of sport and physical education can be reduced.

The remaining difficulty is that related to dualism and the higher status accorded to 'know that' knowledge in education (see chapter 2). It may be the case that this is the fundamental conflict which must be resolved. The National Curriculum for Physical Education (1992) privileges physical activity: 'performing', as the central core of physical education. Furthermore, competing perspectives on knowledge in education and physical education, and accompanying questions of status, have been identified as central issues impacting upon the 'life' of the physical education department at Citylimits High. Therefore, rather than seeking to justify the subject in other terms perhaps, after Ryle (1949) and Pring (1976) (see chapter 2), a suggestion from this research could be

that it would be more helpful to develop and refine the case for practical knowledge.

This is a logical point in the discussion to move to the second major area in this chapter. Until now, I have concentrated on the responses of various groups at Citylimits High, and I have identified their intensely personal perspectives as 'scripts' for education. However, in order to develop the discussion, it is necessary to move to an examination of the way in which these 'scripts' interact in the structure of the school - essentially in a further examination of the agent/structure issues raised in chapters 5 and 6.

2. AGENT/STRUCTURE: THE DRAMA OF THE INTERACTING SCRIPTS

In the introduction to chapter 5, I detailed points made by a number of theorists whose views appeared to accord with that of Giddens (1979) in his elucidation of 'the duality of structures'. I noted the earlier contribution of C. Wright Mills (1959), and highlight here again his suggestion that individuals both shape and are shaped by society. I have sought, throughout this study, to place an emphasis upon greater understanding of the actions of agents, and it is in this context that I draw together the analysis of fieldwork and literature-based data on this

issue. To reiterate Fullan's (1982) point: 'Educational change depends on what teachers do and think - it's as simple and complex as that' (cited in Sparkes 1991 p.16).

In turning to dramaturgical metaphor to organise analysis in this final chapter, I have signalled my interest in the dynamism of interaction. To facilitate an understanding of the actions of agents, I have defined individual perspectives on education as intensely personal; as 'scripts'. Thus, I suggest, within the structure that is Citylimits High School ('the contextual features of institutions' Ball and Bowe, 1992), the discourse of physical education emerges from the interaction of such scripts. In addition, macro-cultural structures of, for example, national government, and historical/traditional factors at both macro and micro cultural levels impact upon individual teachers, challenging their scripts, in numerous ways. Such a model seems to explain the complexity of my fieldwork at Citylimits High. Thus, it is, that the physical education observed was both similar to, and different from physical education at any number of other schools: the broad macro-script is comparable at any given point in time, whereas the scripts individuals bring to the situation are all different - as I have demonstrated. Furthermore, the unpredictability of the interaction of those individual scripts will inevitably result in a different situation pertaining in each school, and that

interaction will, of course, be both colourful and 'dramatic' at times.

(See, also, discussion on 'power' below)

A recent study by Ball and Bowe (1992) is supportive of my position. In discussing 'Subject departments and the 'implementation' of National Curriculum policy', Ball and Bowe suggest that rather than seeing the National Curriculum as a : 'fairly straightforward...example of the increasing state control of education' (p.97), it should instead be recognised that: 'policy process is a great deal more complex than this' (p.98). They point, for example, to individual and departmental 'readings' of the intention of politicians and bodies such as the National Curriculum Council:

'As a result the Act, and its attendant texts, are in one respect an expression of sets of political intentions and a political resource for continuing national debates, and in another a micro-political resource for teachers, LEAs and parents to interpret, reinterpret and apply to their particular social contexts.' (p.100)

Thus it is that the 'intended policy', becomes the 'actual policy' and, finally, the 'policy-in use', ie:

'the institutional practices and discourses that emerge out of the responses of practitioners to both the intended and actual policies of their arena, the peculiarities and particularities of their context and the perceptions of the intended and actual policies of other arenas.' (p.100)

These sentiments echo, very accurately, what I found at Citylimits High School, and the complexity which I am trying to represent. Like Ball and Bowe's research schools, Citylimits High had a strong subject-based departmental bias, and the process of planning and interpretation at any level was made more complex by the presence of 'several different agendas' (p.104). Perhaps my only comment is that 'several' may be too conservative a description! Similarly, Ball and Bowe make the point that:

'Some teachers may be oppressed by the National Curriculum text but we find considerable evidence of creative responses.' (p.105)

Thus, they would seem to reaffirm issues raised in chapters 5 and 6 of this research where I point to the different perceptions physical education teachers had of 'the system' as constraining or enabling.

One of the most interesting comments from Ball and Bowe is that they would describe the introduction of the National Curriculum in their research schools as: 'governed as much by serendipity, ad hocery and chaos as by planning.' (p.106). Thus, the authors conclude:

'we are arguing that change in the school is best understood in terms of a complex interplay between the history, culture and context of the school and the intentions and requirements of the producers of policy texts...Similar variations to those in schools can be identified between different subject departments. In terms of a rough generalisation, it is even possible to talk about different interpretational stances in

different departments...[The National Curriculum] is not so much being 'implemented' in schools as being 'recreated', not so much 'reproduced' as 'produced'... This leaves us with a strong feeling that the state control model is analytically very limited. Our empirical data does not suggest that the state is without power. But, equally it indicates such power is strongly circumscribed by the contextual features of institutions..' (p.113/4)

The extract is lengthy because it resonates so clearly with my own findings. However, Ball and Bowe appear somewhat surprised to find different interpretational stances within departments: from the evidence at Citylimits High, this is to be expected.

Progressing from the above, and returning to issues raised earlier in the thesis, I introduced Giroux's concepts of 'ideology', 'hegemony' and 'culture', and made some links with the fieldwork in chapter 6. It is possible, at this stage, to elaborate upon the notion of hegemony, drawing upon the dramaturgical metaphor. Thus, Giroux (1981) suggests that hegemony is 'riddled with contradictions and tensions' thus allowing space for 'counter-hegemonic struggle'. Referring back to the 'scripts' for education of different teachers, summarised in an earlier section of this chapter, those spaces become readily apparent. This, combined with the findings of Ball and Bowe (1992) which question the validity of a state control model for understanding social life, seems to place even more emphasis upon seeking to understand the perspectives of

individual teachers. Mac An Ghaill (1992) makes the point:

'Starting with the teachers' experiences, meanings and descriptions of their working lives, it may be suggested that the sociology of education provides a rigorous and critical framework, within which to analyse the social relations of the school. This might enable teachers to move beyond the level of appearance to the deeper reality of what is going on in their work place.'

(p.195)

In this research, I have suggested that 'knowing the scripts' of significant others in the school context may be one way in which teachers can begin to develop this understanding of 'deeper reality'. Mac an Ghaill (1992) makes the further suggestion that this may enable us to:

'move beyond a search for teacher typology and construct a grammar of modes of challenge, which accounts for hegemonic and counter-hegemonic tendencies' (p.195)

From this research, I would suggest that it is from the drama of the interaction between the many and various teacher scripts for education, themselves the product of many and various life experiences, that such understanding can emerge. As was made clear earlier in this chapter, 'knowing' will not, on its own, solve problems. But as Woods (1990) notes: 'where there is recognition, there are possibilities' (p.144).

There is, however, a further - possibly a deeper - level of understanding which may also be required in order to exploit, most successfully, the spaces for

counter-hegemonic struggle. And it is here that Goffman's particular level of micro-analysis has potential. Manning (1980) describes the possibilities in the following terms:

'Social life contains available frames or definitions, ways to organise experiences; they are real because we both display for each other and recognise them when others produce them for us. We do mirror each other to a degree...since we mirror each other, but unlike mirrors do not produce faithfully all that is reflected/deflected towards us, social life is both problematic and reflexive...Goffman is concerned with the fact that the world always involves the production of performances. These performances, for example, lying or truth-telling, are different at the epistemological and ethical level, but ironically, they present the same problem with regard to displaying a performance. Each demands the successful display of conduct judged by an audience to be a credible performance.' (p.256)

Centreing on the concept of the 'encounter', Goffman's analysis of social life is at a level of micro-complexity which serves to foreground, even more forcefully, the requirement to focus on individual teachers in educational research. My use of dramaturgical metaphor has, as was stated at the outset of this chapter, focussed on a broader level of analysis - that of individuals and their scripts. However, the issue of face-to-face interaction becomes more relevant as this type of analysis progresses and, although not advocating it in isolation, there would seem to be potential for further Goffmanesque type research in physical education.

3. THE ELUSIVE CHARACTER THAT IS 'POWER'

Without consideration of the issue of power, the full dramatic impact of the interaction of individuals and their 'scripts' for education, and physical education, is missed. Referring back to chapter 3, the work of Young et al (1971) was considered, particularly for its suggestion that what counts as worthwhile knowledge is not immutable but, rather, is a reflection of the viewpoints of those who have the power to define what is to be valued. Developing this further, and from the tradition of critical theory, a series of questions from Giroux (1981) were viewed as important for this study:

"whose reality is being legitimated with this knowledge?"; 'why this knowledge in the first place?'; 'whose interests does this knowledge represent?'
(p.132)

In a challenge to the critical theorists' organising concepts of 'empowerment', 'voice' and 'dialogue', the experience of Ellsworth (1989) was detailed, at some length in chapter 3. Of particular significance, at this point, is her suggestion that individuals occupy multiple and contradictory social positionings:

'..Yet social agents are not capable of being fully rational and disinterested; and they are subjects split between the conscious and the unconscious and among multiple social positionings.' (p.316)

This view seems to link, and go some way towards supporting Foucault's description of power cited in chapter 6:

'Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is localised here, or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or a piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised as a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application.'

(p.98 in Gordon 1980)

Taken together, the points made by Young (1971), Foucault (in Gordon, 1980) and Ellsworth (1989) seem to illustrate why it is that the life of a physical education department can be best understood in terms of 'the drama'. There would appear to be little support, in current literature, for explanations of social life which rely upon determinism and the rule of 'the structure' over the lives of individual 'dupes'. Ball and Bowe's (1992) research, cited earlier, is an example of a perspective which sees a creative role for teachers in response to structural constraints.

The essential point to be made from this research, is that an understanding of the nature and variety of individual's scripts, drawn from an understanding of the life experiences which have culminated in those scripts, makes clearer the complexity of 'the multiple social positionings' (Ellsworth 1989) of teachers. It also mitigates against placing too much faith in 'teacher typologies' such as that devised by Mac An Ghaill (1992).

As he admits:

'..nor is it possible simplistically to allocate teachers to one or other of the categories. Social reality is far more complex.' (p.179)

This, perhaps, explains his later comment:

'..no one ideology held exclusive control; rather competing ideologies interacted with a dominant position emerging, which at the time of time of the research was that of the New Entrepreneurs' (p.179)

Similarly, in chapter 6, I argued that each physical education teacher in this research appeared to warrant a personal category. At the same time, I was able to identify elements of Mac An Ghaill's 'New Entrepreneur' in Diane's story.

That the head teacher at Citylimits High School was a 'critical reality definer' (Burgess 1983) is not in doubt. His vision of physical education, for example, can certainly be described, particularly in the case of Pete, as performing 'a major organisational role in structuring the self-experience of those who work in schools' (p.182). However, even here, Pete's response to his perceived marginality can be viewed as creative. As was described in chapter 6, he made himself financially independent of his teaching job and remained in post to enjoy teaching on his terms. At the same time, although he found himself in opposition to Jane, the head of department, and to the other physical education teachers to varying degrees, he

was able to command enough support among pupils and parents to continue to organise numerous teams in his two favourite activities: Rugby and Cricket.

His is just one example which makes it impossible to define 'power' in any simplistic, or deterministic terms. Pete's response also provides a clue to the source of the 'drama' of physical education. His 'script' for physical education, and the process towards its development, was described in chapters 4, 5, and 6. It is clear that it had evolved over time, rejecting some initiatives and assimilating others; ie, health related fitness. In its interaction with the equally complex and highly developed scripts of the other physical education teachers, the stage is set for a multitude of battles, victories, defeats; uplifting, demoralising...and, inevitably, many just plain uninteresting experiences: 'Everyday talk and interaction is centred on the routine, mundane and, for the most part, uncontroversial running of the institution' (Ball 1987 p.20). Centrally, Pete's script for physical education was based on his perception of pupils' best interests, as were the scripts of all other teachers in the research. Thus, it is, that teachers are highly motivated to legitimate their vision of their subject area. That they identify pupils' needs differently is, of course, a central source of conflict.

Finally, in chapter 6 I pointed to C. Wright Mills' (1959) definition of 'freedom':

'Freedom is not merely the chance to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the chance to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, to argue over them - and then, the opportunity to choose' (p.174)

The data from Citylimits High School would seem to point to the difficulty of identifying freedom for teachers in any generalised form. For example, the very same 'structures' which enable some teachers appear to constrain others. L. Evans (1992) makes a relevant point in relation to teacher morale:

'I interpret morale as primarily an attribute of the individual, which is determined in relation to individual goals.' (p.163)

and

'Fundamentally morale is related to the individual's pursuit of goals requisite for the realisation of self-concept. Indeed, this is the only frame of reference which ultimately matters.' (p.167)

In the same way, recent research by Ball and Bowe (1992) and Mac an Ghaill (1992) indicates that teachers vary so considerably in their responses to initiatives such as the National Curriculum, that generalisations are of limited value. Connell (1985) went so far as to describe such attempts as 'a bit sick' in the light of evidence from his research into teachers lives and careers.

However, Wright Mills' (1959) definition of freedom is helpful in one respect. I have made the claim that physical education teachers at Citylimits High School would do well to 'know the scripts' of at least those in positions of managerial/organisational power in the school. It would seem to be most helpful, for example, to understand what measures of success are being applied to them and their pupils - if only to be in a position to challenge those measures. In a sense, it is only by 'knowing the scripts' that physical education teachers can properly 'formulate the available choices' and 'argue over them' (Wright Mills 1959 p.174). It would seem to be unsatisfactory to rely on an outside researcher to provide that information, and for it to be 'news' to the teachers it affects. Furthermore, in a departmental context, it might be necessary to apply the concept of 'sufficient respect' to fully understand the scripts of those within the department. Armed with that information, informed debate can begin and the drama of interacting scripts is played out.

4. FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE METHODOLOGY

The methodology chapter of this thesis is long and detailed. There is no intention here to expand that discussion beyond a short summary in the light of the issues raised in this chapter.

I made it clear, in the methodology chapter, that I found it difficult to accept the position of researchers such as Gitlin (1990) who seek to transform practice in the context of a 'critical' research agenda. I can claim, instead, to have helped physical education teachers at Citylimits High to ask questions about the nature and purpose of physical education, about the practicability of their own knowledge claims and about the 'scripts' of significant others in the school. I can also claim to have achieved rich data about the four physical education teachers and to have generated theory within the constraints and possibilities of qualitative research. However, two issues raised in that chapter are particularly significant to conclude this discussion.

Firstly, the link between qualitative research and the popular drama form - the soap opera - could be investigated further. Hornbrook (1989), in a criticism of Goffman, introduces the concept of character:

'we will require a model of social agency which will enable us to regain a sense of active moral life as something more than the competition between the wills and preferences of role-playing individuals. For this I am suggesting that we should turn to the idea of the character' (p.114)

In a sense, the physical education teachers in this research have been portrayed as agents in Hornbrook's terms

- as having an active moral life. Thus, they are interesting, different and, at times, absorbing, as they elucidate their scripts through my interview and observation process. The resulting stories, although based more literally on 'real life' than is required in soap-opera drama, could have a similar fascination for the 'audience'. (Perhaps their fascination is enhanced for just this reason.) Certainly, on the issue of accessibility, I would suggest that accounts from qualitative research offer the 'audience' opportunities to engage with difficult issues from a distance, identifying with the characters in innumerable (and unpredictable) ways. In this respect, the objectives of the two forms could be viewed as remarkably similar.

Secondly, and closely related to the above, is the issue of generalisability. I made the point in the methodology chapter that teachers would, in the final event, judge the quality of this research project. Given my claims for the dramatic nature of teachers' interacting scripts for education, and for the individual nature of teachers responses and actions, it is worth reiterating here the claim that generalisability will be 'teacher-controlled'. In essence, teachers will probably employ - or reject - my work on the basis of their perceptions of its usefulness and its truthfulness. On this issue, as on so many others, the responses will be many and varied and, once I have

disseminated the research through various channels, I am rendered almost powerless as to its uptake. As a final indication of the difficulty of ascribing power simplistically, this is an excellent example.

CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to make any firm conclusions from this research. On the one hand, to conclude that the 'life' of a physical education department is dauntingly complex, would be almost trite. On the other hand, the identification of just that level of complexity is a central finding from the fieldwork and explication of the issue forms a major part of the discussion. Perhaps, therefore, it is a useful starting point.

In the introduction to the thesis, I pointed to the work of C. Wright Mills (1959) and his suggestion that social science should seek:

'a set of viewpoints that are simple enough to make understanding possible, yet comprehensive enough to permit us to include in our views the range and depth of human variety' (p.133)

In concluding the research, therefore, I will point to concepts I have developed through this thesis, which help to make 'understanding' of the fieldwork data possible. Whether they are either 'simple enough' or 'comprehensive enough' is, of course, debateable.

Furthermore, in the introduction, I highlighted the point made by Evans and Davies (1988) about the 'interplay of

self, biography and social structure' (p.10). Given my stated interest in understanding more about the actions of agents; in this case, the physical education teachers at Citylimits High School, conclusions from the research seek to accommodate the notion of 'difference' (Giroux 1991) whilst, at the same time, identifying commonalities which emerge. Clearly, there is a tension inherent in this task.

In the context of those comments, however, I draw conclusions in four categories: general conclusions with a potential for application beyond physical education; subject specific suggestions; final comments on the research method and some closing thoughts upon the whole research process.

Firstly, at a general level:

1. In the introduction to the thesis, I commented on the research by George and Kirk (1988) which identified teachers as 'likely front-line defenders of orthodoxies' (p.154). In the conclusions to their research, George and Kirk suggest:

'On the basis of this study we have little cause for optimism that a critical pedagogy can be practised through current physical education programmes in Queensland High Schools' (p.152)

They cite a number of reasons for their pessimism, centred

on the characteristics of the teachers in the study: the prevalence of 'anti-intellectualism'; a 'celebration of physicality' which accepted the separation of mind and body; the unquestioning acceptance of 'health' and 'physical activity' as 'good'; the emphasis upon 'recreationalism' and a tendency to endorse the 'spurious academicism' of examinations (p.152/3).

Undoubtedly, similar characteristics can be found in the teachers at Citylimits High School, as is detailed in this thesis. The broad similarities are both startling and reassuring. The similarity ends, however, in the way in which teachers are viewed as a result. Rather than seeing it as a cause for pessimism, the central thrust of this research has been to seek to understand how such viewpoints arise (without the constraints of a 'critical' agenda, such as that which underpins George and Kirk's comments).

It is from this perspective, therefore, that two concepts central to the research have arisen: the notion of 'sufficient respect' for teachers and their viewpoints, and the related concept of 'teacher-proof theory'. (See chapter 3 for full details.) I have made the case that researchers might do well to proceed from a position of 'sufficient respect' for the views of respondents; that teachers could possibly be 'empowered' by seeking detailed information about the viewpoints of significant others in the school

context; and that theorists (and I have used the example of critical theorists) might more readily achieve their ends by adopting such an approach, generating, perhaps, 'teacher-friendly' rather than 'teacher-proof' material. (At the very least, they could gain a greater understanding of why teachers are so 'unaccommodating'!)

2. The focus on life-history reflections has highlighted the complexity of life patterns and events which culminate in teachers' understandings of the nature and purpose of physical education. Refuting elements of Giroux's earlier work (eg 1981) but affirming some of his later ideas (1991), I have suggested that any attempt to exhort individuals to 'escape' their biographies is unhelpful and, quite possibly, threatening. I have described such attempts as 'macho theory' and it is related to another concept: the 'function gap'. Thus, visions of teaching, and of education, which are markedly different from that which individuals have built-up through their life experiences is likely to result in the advent of a 'function gap' in understanding. Taken in conjunction with a 'macho' approach to analysing personal history, it seems likely that teachers will continue to be resistant to change in the manner described above by George and Kirk.

3. Following on from the above, in the final chapter, and reflecting upon the wealth of data from the range of

research instruments, I have suggested that the 'colour', and the dramatic unpredictability of the 'life' of the physical education department at Citylimits High School is undersold within the confines of the ecological metaphor. Data from interviews has led me to conclude that individuals develop a broad 'script' for education which is based upon, and grows out of, life experiences. As the latter change, (in response to a myriad of structural and personal influences) so the script is amended. Importantly, teachers appeared to 'read off' responses to my interview questions such that their views on physical education resonated with their personal experiences. Their responses could, perhaps, be described as 'self-centred' rather than 'child-centred'. The dramatic, somewhat unpredictable (yet not chaotic) nature of the 'life' of the physical education department is, therefore, the result of the interaction of individuals' scripts for education within the context of Citylimits High School. As Ball (1987) notes (citing Hindess, 1982) such interaction results in real 'struggles over divergent objectives'.

In summarising this category of conclusions, therefore, it can be seen that the various concepts identified are closely linked. If the requirement of 'sufficient respect' in order to seek to understand teachers is accepted, it implies that individual teachers' 'scripts' for education will be a central focus of interest for both researchers

and teachers. In addition, it is the complexity of the life experiences which culminate in a teacher's current script, and the teacher's belief in that script at that time, which mitigate against the adoption of a 'macho' approach to the analysis of scripts. (It is also in this context that the 'elusive character that is power' is described in chapter 7.) Finally, ignorance of either the script, or the process which has culminated in the script, may lead theorists and researchers to produce 'teacher-proof' theory. Inherent in such theory is the notion of a 'function gap' where, for example, the role of the teacher presented in theory, is in conflict with experiences the individual has had to that point. Perhaps the over-riding conclusion, therefore, is that there is no 'short-cut' either to understanding or changing teachers' views and actions.

The second set of conclusions are those of a subject specific nature:

4. Differences in teachers' understandings of the nature and purpose of physical education at Citylimits High School, have formed a central focus of this research. It is the identification and analysis of this factor in the 'life' of the physical education department which has given rise to the general concepts identified above. Of particular interest for physical education, however, is the way in which senior teachers (managers); those who have a

degree of official control over physical education teachers and their careers, may envisage the subject and its success in the school, or otherwise. Evidence from Citylimits High points to two related issues in this respect; firstly, that the measures of success applied to physical education were rather arbitrary and; secondly, that physical education teachers were unaware of them anyway. I have suggested, therefore, that physical education teachers might do well to 'know the scripts' of others in the school. I have not claimed that this alone will change anything; rather, it is to be seen as a starting point in the process.

5. Many respondents cited the development of pupils' health and fitness as a central purpose of physical education. In chapter 7, however, I have described this as 'the impossible dream'. A finding from Citylimits High is that physical education teachers were united in their intentions on this issue, but they were also agreed that they could achieve very little. In one sense, they appear to have set themselves up to fail. Notwithstanding the introduction of the National Curriculum, the possibilities of gaining more time for the subject, particularly for older pupils, would seem to be remote. What might be of significance is to understand more clearly why it is that 'health/fitness' is such a popular knowledge claim for physical education and what the implications for the subject might be. Some suggestions have been made from this research (see chapter

7) but they are tentative. This is an area I would identify for further research.

6. The issue of 'sport' in/and physical education was a source of conflict in the 'life' of the physical education department at Citylimits High. It highlighted differences in individuals' philosophies on knowledge and on the differential status of practical and theoretical knowledge in education. Here again, physical education teachers appeared to be in an invidious situation. On the one hand, they were spending much of their time visibly teaching essentially practical activities which could be described as 'sports': netball, hockey, etc. At the same time, three of the four physical education teachers and many of the senior teachers suggested that physical education was somehow more 'worthy' than sport, highlighting particularly, for example, where it appeared to draw upon 'know that' rather than 'know how'. In chapter 2, I analysed the concept of knowledge and pointed to the work of Ryle (1949) and Pring (1976) which made the case for the value of 'know how' in education. A suggestion from this research is, given the essentially practical nature of physical education - reinforced in the National Curriculum - the development of the case for the value of practical knowledge, and the particular contribution that physical education has to make, may be one of the most pressing tasks facing the physical education profession.

In considering the fieldwork process, some final comments can be made on the value of this form of research:

7. A personal preference for reading research which is presented in the context of identifiable characters was, of course, a strong motivation for undertaking research of this nature. As I, personally, have found such accounts to be interesting, memorable and useful, so I have sought to present this research. My analysis of the methodology in chapter 1, highlights what I perceive as two key guiding concepts: the notion of 'rigorous subjectivity' and the centrality of 'judgement' (Wolcott 1990) in both conducting and appraising qualitative research. Addressing the issue of generalisability from this perspective, has led me to make the suggestion that, from the reader's perspective, ethnographic research may have the attraction of a 'soap opera'. What is worth repeating here is the case made in chapter 1, and then developed in chapter 7, that, given the emphasis which this research has placed upon individuals, it is logical to extend this understanding to the process by which this research will be received by teachers. Thus, perhaps, the final point to be made is that the notion of 'sufficient respect' for teachers extends to any consideration of the fate of this research: In 'teacher-controlled' generalisability, the success of the research may well, ultimately, depend upon the success of

my endeavours to write in an interesting and accessible manner, about interesting and realistic 'characters' with whom (some/many) teachers can identify. Furthermore, all this occurs in an unremarkable setting as individuals undertake their day-to-day activities. In these respects, at least, the comparison with soap-operas is compelling.

Finally, in reflecting upon the complete research exercise there is evidence, in the thesis, of a clear developmental process:

8. Parts of this thesis (specifically chapters 2,3, and 4) were written three years ago and, although they have been updated in the light of later analysis, I would still describe them as of slightly poorer quality than some of the later work (for example the methodology). Yet, unless I had been through the process of writing those early chapters, I could not have reached the later stages. Inevitably, perhaps, there is a sense in which I would like to start all over again - but then completion would be, ultimately, an impossibility. The thesis is, therefore, presented not, as I had originally envisaged it, as a perfect work, but as an improving study which demonstrates, quite clearly, the processes through which I went to arrive at my final analysis.

Chapter 2, the philosophical perspective on knowledge, provides a good example. In my first consideration of the data from Citylimits High School, philosophical questions seemed most pressing. As I worked through the data, refining the analysis with more detailed reference to the individual teachers and their responses, I seemed to need to draw upon sociological perspectives to a greater extent. Finally, as the emphasis upon 'difference' became more prominent, the philosophical perspective appeared to be almost invalidated because it implied that knowledge could be a more 'tidy' concept than was supported by the fieldwork. However, this issue is addressed, to a certain extent, by reference to the underlying notion of 'difference' taken in conjunction with the appreciation that 'similarity' was also a feature of the practice of physical education teachers - as was demonstrated in chapter 4. Perhaps the most apt final comment, therefore, is that, just as 'difference' and 'similarity' were features of the 'life' of the physical education department at Citylimits High School, so they are presented in this thesis. Although the tension between two different theoretical paradigms has not been resolved, I would argue that each has contributed to an understanding of the fieldwork: whereas it would have been 'safer' to have remained within the analytical boundaries of one or the other, the complexity of the 'life' of a physical education department warranted both.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

REGISTRATION FOR Ph.D AT SOUTHAMPTON UNIVERSITY

1. Proposed Title: THE ECOLOGY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

An investigation into the 'life' of a Physical Education Department and its impact upon the identities and opportunities of pupils and teachers.

2. The research problem: The metaphorical use of the term 'ecology' in the title of this research represents an attempt to encapsulate an amorphous set of questions about the 'life' of a physical education department. In accepting a working definition of ecology as:

'The study of organisms in relation to one another and to their surroundings' (Pocket Oxford Dictionary)

it can be seen that the intention of this research is to focus on the physical education department as it 'lives': exists, survives, adapts, in its assigned culture; the secondary school. More specifically, the questions (or foreshadowed problems) to be investigated can be identified at this stage as follows:

-How does the physical education department work with/relate to other departments, to pupils, parents, the head/senior management, governors and non-teaching staff?

-How is the physical education department perceived by all these significant members of the school culture?

-How do individuals in the physical education department work with/relate to each other?

-How does the physical education department negotiate the power/political structure of the school and how does this impact upon the social construction of opportunities and identities?

Axiomatically:

-How does all of the above translate into pupils' enduring images/perceptions of physical education and physical activity? My interest is at two levels; professionally: pupils' images of themselves, each other, and their involvement in school and post-school activity and, secondly; sociologically: the nature of the culture of physical education and issues concerning the social construction of status and of ideology, power and control.

Having used ecological references, it might be assumed that this research is to be, essentially, an anthropological

study; thus concentrating on the cultural context in which the school operates. However, although these macro issues will form part of the study, the micro issues; ie, those relating to the department as a sub-unit of the school will be the major focus. This type of approach seems to find favour with some authorities whilst being criticised by others. Lutz (1986) reproves education researchers for concentrating upon micro-cultures, suggesting that in failing to shed light on the broader cultural context, understanding is, necessarily, somewhat limited. Hammersley (1986) however, points to the need for qualitative research at both macro and micro levels and Evans reinforces the exigency of micro research in the field of physical education:

'There is little doubt that an understanding of the socialisation of physical education teachers...in their departmental sub-cultural communities, hardly yet developed as a line of enquiry, is essential to our grasp of physical education practices' (1986, p.20)

Ball (1987) points to the futility of the micro/macro debate and highlights, instead, the failure of existing studies to illuminate the experiences of teachers as they are involved in the day to day running of schools. He classifies research on 'work group and organisation' as research at the 'meso level'.

In taking on board these organisational considerations, this research is attempting to span the anthropological/sociological divide identified in qualitative research by Delamont and Atkinson (1980). The methodologies are to be mixed to reflect these two traditions and the chosen research category is ethnography.

3. Rationale: The need to study school departments in-depth is illustrated by Ball (1987). He identifies subject sub-cultures as 'complexes of epistemological, pedagogical and educational values and assumptions' and suggests that 'the department, as the organisational vehicle of the subject, is the major focus of the group interests of most teachers in the secondary school' (p.41). Shipman (1973) adds another dimension when he identifies 'culture' as a design for living and states that cultures have a set of shared symbols 'which, when learnt, determine what to perceive and how to interpret it' (p.25, my emphasis). If the same can be said of subject sub-cultures, this would seem to relate directly to the foreshadowed problems identified in the previous section of this proposal.

A desire to study physical education departments in-depth was prompted by a series of interconnected realisations:

-The results of theis author's research into primary school

physical education which pointed to the significance of the teachers' perceptions of physical education and sport gained during their secondary schooling. The impact of secondary school experiences was constantly cited as a major influence on perceptions of sport, sportsmen/women and general physical activity. (Howarth, 1987)

-A realisation that qualitative research was lacking in the field of physical education; a view shared by a number of writers. For example, Evans:

'Our knowledge of children within the physical education context is largely confined to the findings of large scale surveys of participation' (1986, p.12)

and Ball:

'The dark recesses of workshops, domestic science rooms, gymnasiums and needlework rooms have rarely been penetrated by the fieldworker' (1984, p.77)

Both writers would seem to be in support of small scale, in-depth research such as that proposed in this paper, particularly as the intended focus is one of understanding how physical education departments give rise to their own subject culture and, crucially, how the resulting images affect pupils' perceptions of sport and different forms of physical activity.

The marginal position of physical education and physical education departments in schools is likely to be a central issue in a study of this nature. Both Bell (1986) and Whitehead and Hendry (1976) identify this as a problem, leading Bell to suggest that physical education departments may be viewed as semi-autonomous within larger, relatively anarchic organisations. Furthermore, this perceived marginality indicates a rather ambivalent role for physical education teachers within the organisational structure of the school:

'The relative autonomy of sub-units within the organisation of departments, houses, year groups, special units, the 6th form, produces what Bidwell calls 'structural looseness'...[that is] a lack of co-ordination between the activities and goals of actors in separate functional units and the existence of multiple and overlapping areas of interest and jurisdiction, and complex decision making processes.
(Bidwell, cited in Ball 1987 p.12)

The significance of the status of departments is, therefore, reinforced and it follows that the key concepts of power, conflict and control (Ball 1987) must be seen as crucial to an holistic picture and understanding of the

'life' of a physical education department. The requirement to span the sociological/anthropological divide in ethnographic research is clearly indicated.

-The drop-out rate in post school physical activity is well documented (Sports Council, 1987); an understanding of the causes is not clear. The incidental findings of a study by Salmon and Claire (1984) may, however, give some fascinating clues. In their research on pupils' perceptions of the characteristics of some school subjects, physical education was consistently rated as quite enjoyable, but not at all useful in comparison with other areas of the curriculum. The image problem identified earlier is obviously compounded by a communication problem in that if physical education teachers are convinced of the worth of their subject, they are somehow failing to convince pupils.

The three paragraphs above summarise the origins of this author's interest in the research problem and point to some of the justifications for doctorate level study in the area. However, it is important to restate the most obvious reason for the study; that our understanding of a number of fundamental issues affecting physical education is somewhat limited (see earlier).

4. The research design: As has already been stated, this research is to be qualitative in nature and is to be conducted in the ethnographic tradition. It is felt, however, that within the confines of the chosen sub-culture, a mix of qualitative and small-scale quantitative methods of data collection will serve most usefully. That an ethnographic study is most suited to the research problem is clear, and is illustrated by the following description of the process:

'The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in peoples' daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned.' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p.2)

There are a number of issues to be resolved in conducting research of this nature, particularly for the inexperienced researcher. The range of books edited by R.G. Burgess have been particularly helpful in this respect as they document the experiences of researchers who have already completed ethnographic fieldwork. Issues which, it is envisaged, will require a great deal of attention, are those concerning the ethics of the fieldwork situation; my role in the school, the involvement of pupils, the 'obstinate familiarity' of what is being observed (Edwards and Furlong, 1985) and the ordering of the considerable body of field notes. Analysing and presenting the data are related concerns and the

writers such as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), Woods (1985), Sharp (1986) and Lutz (1986) emphasise the importance of generating theory in ethnographic work to avoid the danger of presenting endless descriptions. However, at this stage in my research, it is only possible to be aware of these issues. Similarly, the validity question must also be addressed although it is sufficient, perhaps, for the purposes of this document, to refer to the large body of research typified by that of Simons (1980) which makes a case for the value of single case research and the possibilities for generalisation. A. Hargreaves also offers advice in his advocacy of linked micro-studies - beyond the scope of this research but worth investigating when the study is complete.

Within the ethnographic paradigm, the following research tools are to be employed:

- participant observation in the 'observer as participant' model, to include unstructured or semi-structured interviews
- small scale questionnaires
- personal constructs and the repertory grid (Kelly 1953, Bannister and Fransella 1980)
- life histories of the physical education teachers.

Initially, the research will be concentrated on one school in the local area. The choice of a school is problematic in that a 'typical school' is almost a contradiction in terms. However, in my attempts to choose a representative school, the following criteria are to be applied:

the school will be co-ed, comprehensive, 11-18; known as a school willing to adopt new ideas but not characterised as an exceptionally innovative establishment. The physical education department, similarly, will be relatively well-known in the locality, and will be defined as 'reasonably successful' by the advisor and other teachers in the area.

The aim is, therefore, to choose a school which is 'unexceptional' in as many areas as possible. However, as the fieldwork progresses, it may prove beneficial to extend the fieldwork to a second school to add a further dimension to some aspects of the data. The practical issue of time available in part-time research will obviously be pertinent here, but if this action is taken, the range of schools can be extended accordingly. Even at this stage, the potential to seek clarification in different settings is an attractive prospect.

5. Proposed Timetable:

Jan-Sept 1988: Reading in the general research area with specific emphasis on methodology. Identification of, and

preliminary day visits to the fieldwork school to refine the research problem.

Sept-Dec 1988: Regular day-visits to the school. The focus will be upon developing relationships, establishing my role within the school and gaining practical experience in recording, analysing and, importantly, organising data for storage.

Jan-July 1989: During this period, I hope to negotiate an extended period of time in the school. This may be for a whole term or for several blocks of 2/3 weeks.

July-Dec 1989: Organisation of data. Further visits to the school/schools if necessary. A more specific focus on the presentation of data.

After this stage, the preparation of the thesis will be the major task, although there may be a necessity for further fieldwork. As the final direction of the research will be dependent on the findings as they emerge, it would be futile to attempt to propose even a loose timetable for the next stages.

6. Bibliography: see bibliography for main thesis.

APPENDIX B

Ph.D RESEARCH AT CITYLIMITS HIGH SCHOOL...SOME DETAILS

1. Title: THE ECOLOGY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE 'LIFE' OF A PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND ITS IMPACT UPON THE IDENTITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF PUPILS AND TEACHERS.
2. Research Area: The focus is upon the physical education department as it 'lives'; exists, survives, adapts in the secondary school culture. Areas of investigation include:
 - how does the physical education department work with/ relate to other departments; and to pupils, parents, the head/senior management, governors, non-teaching staff?
 - how is the physical education department perceived by all these significant members of the school culture?
 - how do individuals in the physical education department perceive their roles and careers?
 - how does the physical education department negotiate the power/political structure of the school?
3. Purpose of the research: To discover how all of the above translates into pupils' enduring images/perceptions of physical education, sport and general exercise. The interest is at two levels: professionally; pupils' images of themselves, each other and their involvement in school and post-school physical activity and, secondly, sociologically; the nature of the culture of physical education.
4. Research Method: Qualitative research in an ethnographic framework. A range of specific methods will be employed:
 - participant observation to include unstructured or semi-structured interviews
 - small-scale questionnaires
 - personal constructs
 - personal constructs and the repertory grid
 - life histories

Essentially, I will seek to become fully involved in the whole school to obtain the required data. All staff will be asked to offer views at different stages in the research.
5. School Visits: The following framework is envisaged:

Nov-Dec 1988. Single day visits to become familiar with the organisational features of the school.

Jan-Feb 1989. Further single day visits to focus on the research problem and methods of data collection/analysis.

March 1989. An extended block of observation (2-3 weeks)

Summer term 1989. Main block of fieldwork - as much time as I can negotiate with my employers.

Autumn 1989. Further day visits if necessary.

6. The researcher: I am a lecturer in the School of Physical Education and Sport at the West London Institute of Higher Education. I teach on vocational and non-vocational degree courses and I work with students on teaching practice. Prior to this post, I taught for six years in both primary and secondary schools. During my last two years of teaching, I completed a part-time Masters Degree in Curriculum Studies at London University, Institute of Education. I am currently registered at Southampton University, with Dr. John Evans, for a part-time Ph.D.

7. Publication: The results of this research will form the basis of a Ph.D thesis and, at a later stage, various articles. I undertake to do all possible to preserve the anonymity of the school and all individuals related to it.

Kathy Armour
November 7th 1988.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRES. Each questionnaire is presented in full, although most of the data was not, in the final event, used in the thesis (see methodology chapter). The purpose of this appendix is to show the content of the questionnaires. The lay-out of the originals used in the fieldwork was identical in question ordering, but was much expanded in spacing to allow for full 'open ended' responses.

QUESTIONNAIRE - GOVERNING BODY:

General Educational Issues

7. Summarise your personal goals for the education of pupils at Citylimits High School.
8. Do you identify any barriers to the successful attainment of those general goals?
9. Any other comments?

QUESTIONNAIRE - MEMBERS OF STAFF:

2. How does physical education contribute to the process of education in secondary schools?

4. From your contact with pupils, would you say that physical education is a popular subject with some/most pupils at Citylimits High?

5. What are your impressions of the physical education department at Citylimits High? Are you aware of any particular strengths/weaknesses?

6. How would you define success for a physical education department?

7. Outline, briefly, your personal involvement in physical education and/or sport:

at school-
post school-
current activities-

General Educational Issues

8. Summarise the main goals of education as you see them.

9. Summarise your personal career goals within education.

10. Are there any barriers to the attainment of those goals?

11. Any other comments?

QUESTIONNAIRE - PARENTS:

I am an independent researcher working at Citylimits High School. I am interested in your personal views on education and physical education, both generally and more specifically at Citylimits High. I have taken a random sample of parents from across the school.

Your responses will be completely anonymous - please do not put your name on the questionnaire.

NB. Once you have completed the questionnaire, seal it in the envelope provided and it will be collected at school.

Thank-you very much for your co-operation.

Kathy Armour
West London Institute of Higher Education.

1. Circle as appropriate: Mother Father Guardian-male
Guardian-female
Age: 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+

2. What do you want your child to learn in physical education?

3. In your opinion, is physical education an important subject? Explain your answer.

4. Are you happy or unhappy with the physical education at Citylimits High School? Give reasons for your answer.

5. Did you enjoy physical education at secondary school?

6. Are you involved in sport/physical activity at present?

And looking at education as a whole:

7. In your opinion, what should be the most important goals for a secondary school? What do you want from Citylimits High for your child?

8. Any other comments on any of these issues?

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