THE BROSCHEK SYNDROME: A STUDY OF THE DUAL ROLE OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL HEAD OF DEPARTMENT AS CLASSROOM TEACHER AND DEPARTMENTAL MANAGER

Graham Severn

Doctor of Education

April 2002

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

THE BROSCHEK SYNDROME: a study of the dual role of the secondary
school head of department as classroom teacher and department manager

Graham Severn

Doctor of Education

Faculty of Social Science
Research and Graduate School of Education

April 2002

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

<u>ABSTRACT</u>

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

RESEARCH AND GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

<u>Doctor of Education</u>

THE BROSCHEK SYNDROME: A STUDY OF THE DUAL ROLE OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL HEAD OF DEPARTMENT AS CLASSROOM TEACHER AND DEPARTMENTAL MANAGER

by Graham Severn

The role of head of department in secondary schools has developed considerably since the mid 1980's. Alongside this remains the individual's principal role of classroom teacher. Research work in recent years has concentrated on the management role of the head of department. The current research acknowledges the importance of this and its increasing volume and complexity. It concentrates, however, on the dual nature of the role, with particular reference to the head of department as a classroom teacher. The research draws on a study of teaching heads of small primary schools whose position is seen as similar to that of the secondary school head of department.

Data are collected firstly by means of a postal questionnaire survey involving heads of modern foreign languages (MFL) and a range of other subjects. This is followed by a group interview and a series of individual interviews with heads of MFL. These are supplemented by interviews with three secondary school headteachers.

Key findings are that the heads of department behave in a manner led by teaching and interpersonal considerations rather than those of management. The individuals see themselves primarily as teachers but are keen to succeed in both aspects of their role. The lack of time continues to be an obstacle to fulfilment of the management role. As the overall role has grown, however, it also impacts upon the individual's ability to remain an effective practitioner in the classroom.

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank all members of the teaching and administrative staff of the Research and Graduate School of Education, University of Southampton, who taught, helped and encouraged me along the way. In particular I must thank:

Dr J. V. Hemsley-Brown for her kind support and advice as supervisor over four years.

Dr A.J.C. Kelly for his skilful and cheerful advice, guidance and encouragement during the final stages of the work.

Dr T.J. Martin, who gave me the encouragement and self-belief to start the work in the first place.

Mr M.D. Erben for his kindness and understanding at a particularly difficult time in the process.

I would like to thank all friends and colleagues who gave practical assistance. I owe particular thanks to those colleagues who gave their valuable time to take part in my research. Finally, I would like to thank all my family and close friends for their encouragement over many years. Among them, two people deserve particular thanks:

My dear mother, Connie Severn, for her support and prayers. In thanking her, I also remember my father, the late Albert George Severn.

My partner, Pamela Haywood, for her love and encouragement, and putting up with me when I was frequently stressed, overworked and pre-occupied.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ROLE OF HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

> *Broschek was sitting at his desk. In each hand he had a telephone*
> *receiver. In his mouth was a biro, with which he was making notes*
> *on a writing pad, while with his bare feet he operated a knitting*
> *machine under the desk.* (Böll, 1963, p.57, my translation from the
> original German)

Introduction

This chapter presents the background to the research and my motivation for
carrying it out. Terms used in the research are then defined, followed by a
discussion of the historical background to the role of secondary school head of
department as it is understood today. Attempts by academic researchers to
describe and provide a theoretical framework for the role are then briefly
introduced. I will then turn to recent attempts to re-define the role in terms of
competencies made by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE –
since renamed DfES, Department for Education and Skills), through The Office
for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA).
Finally, the aims of the research will be set out and reasons given for the choice of
emphasis on the head of department's own classroom teaching.

Historical background and motivation for the research

This study was inspired by my personal experience as a head of modern
languages in three different secondary comprehensive schools in southern

England. As will be detailed below, the role of the head of department has changed and grown considerably in that time, bearing little comparison to the way it was in the mid 1980's and practically none to the role that existed when first identified in 1956 (Turner, 1996). The role has been the subject of gradually increasing attention since HMI Wales identified its growing importance to school effectiveness in 1984 (HMI Wales, 1984, see below). In more recent times, three particular issues have been raised which have thrown the head of department role into greater focus than ever before. Firstly, the role has been defined in terms of national standards by the TTA (DfEE, 1998). Secondly, the importance of the subject area team itself, both as a part of, and independent of the school framework within which it operates, has been identified (Harris et al., 1995; Sammons et al., 1997; Harris, 1998). Thirdly, heads of department have been made more accountable for the outcomes of their subject areas, notably in terms of examination results (Harris et al., 1995). These factors have increased the pressure on heads of department to perform as managers and leaders in addition to their functions as teachers and administrators. The position is summed up by Russell and Metcalf (1997), who state:

> *The expert middle manager will need to be a multi-skilled*
> *professional taking in subject(s), pedagogy, leadership,*
> *management and administration and the ability to work as a*
> *member of a team* (Russell and Metcalf, 1997, p.18).

Within this multi-skilled approach, however, heads of department retain the main professional role (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989) of classroom teacher. In addition to teaching their classes effectively, heads of department are also expected to be the 'leading professional' (Harris et al., 1995; Brown and Rutherford, 1998), capable of modelling effective teacher behaviour. The head of department's role in these two areas is linked to departmental effectiveness just as are her/his administrative, management and leadership skills (Harris et al., 1995, Harris, 1998). Research suggests that a department is unlikely to be effective as a

unit when the head of department is not respected and regarded by colleagues as a highly competent classroom practitioner (Harris, 1998). Both the research reported in this study and the practical 'handbooks' (e.g. Bell, 1992; Gold, 1998) concentrate on the administration, management and leadership aspects of the head of department's role. This is to be expected, as they are largely a response to the reluctance shown by heads of department over the years to embrace the management and leadership role (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Turner, 1996; Schmidt, 2000), a reluctance which has only recently begun to be addressed (Wise and Bush, 1999). The aim of my research will be to shed light onto the head of department's role both as a leading professional and an effective classroom teacher.

Terminology

I will use the terms 'head of department' and 'subject leader' to describe a teacher with the joint responsibilities of a teaching timetable and the management and leadership of one or more other teachers within the same subject area. Different terms are employed in different schools but 'head of department' in particular is a widely understood term and 'subject leader' is employed by the DfEE in recent circulars relating to national standards (DfEE, 1998). In stipulating the existence of at least one other colleague within my definition I am aware that it is still possible to find teachers with the designation head of department who are the school's only teacher in that subject. The term 'middle manager' has also found its way into secondary education in recent years, being used by writers (e.g. Kemp and Nathan, 1992; Bennett, 1995) to encompass those with a joint teaching and managing role. I will use this term in my research, although I will be concerning myself with heads of subject departments rather than others who come under the middle management heading, such as pastoral heads. I hope, however, that my research, while focused principally on heads of modern languages departments,

will be of use in broadening the understanding of the role of all teachers who take on a position which places them:

> ... *between the senior management team and those colleagues whose job description does not extend beyond the normal teaching and pastoral functions* (Kemp and Nathan, 1992, p.7).

Finally, for convenience I will use the term 'management' to encompass the three major aspects of the head of department's role other than teaching. That is, management, administration and leadership.

The research will encompass individuals working in secondary schools in one county in southern England and focus on those leading teams of modern language teachers and themselves teaching one or more modern foreign language. The reasons for these choices in terms of research methodology will be discussed below.

Changes in the role of the head of department

The role in its early years

The role of head of department was officially recognised in 1956 in England and Wales, when extra responsibilities outside the classroom were first rewarded with extra pay (Turner, 1996). Marland (1981a) describes the role in a grammar school as follows:

> *There were few chores involved, curriculum innovation was an unnecessary term, and teachers were friends (or perhaps enemies) rather than "colleagues". An experienced teacher with a good*

qualification in his subject could be dubbed "Senior Mathematics
Master", the examination arrangements could be fixed up over
coffee, and the new chap would probably learn from the
atmosphere and a few friendly bits of off-the-cuff advice
(Marland, 1981a, p.1).

The head of department would frequently be an experienced teacher with a
particular responsibility, in the grammar schools, for A level teaching. Many
would teach only O and A level classes and have little contact with younger
pupils (Marland, 1981a). Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) quote Lacey's
study of a grammar school, which found the role of the department, and by
extension the head of department, to be limited in scope:

Curriculum and pedagogy were traditional, relatively static and
largely unquestioned, and motivation and discipline mainly
regarded as external to departments rather than embedded in the
curriculum (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, pp.4-5).

The emergence of the head of department as a middle manager

With the advent of comprehensive education in most areas of England and Wales
during the 1960's and 70's, the role began to change. Marland (1981a) notes the
emergence of the importance of the middle management role:

It has gradually become apparent that the understanding, skill and
energy of what might be called the "middle management" are vital
to a reasonable level of success (Marland, 1981a, pp.2-3).

Marland identified that, under the new regime, the putting into practice of any
innovation in education, most notably in terms of curriculum, was '*nearly always*
best answered in departmental terms' (Marland, 1981a, p.3). Referring to the time

elapsed since the first appearance in 1971 of his handbook for heads of department, he states '...*the role has become more important and if anything more demanding*' (Marland, 1981b, p.*ix*).

Through the 1980's the role of head of department became not only more intricate in terms of administration and management tasks but was being identified ever more with the concept of leadership (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell 1989). Opinion on the key role of the middle manager within the hierarchical system of secondary education was forming in government related circles, notably expressed by HMI Wales (1984):

> *It can be argued that schools rely more for their success on the dynamism and leadership qualities of the head of department than on any other factor* (HMI Wales, 1984, p.3).

The time to manage?

HMI Wales' statement, echoed by many secondary headteachers involved in the 1987 NFER study (Weindling and Early, 1987), prompted the major study of the roles and tasks of the head of department published by the NFER in 1989 under the title '*The Time to Manage?*' (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989). This title contained a deliberate double meaning, suggesting that, on the one hand, the time had arrived for middle managers to view their role as that of a *manager*, not just an administrator. On the other hand the authors called for heads of department to be given more time within their contracted hours to carry out this role as manager and leader. Not unsurprisingly, given its motivation, this report concentrated on the management role. The report makes only a passing reference to the head of department's role as a *teacher*. It is this passing reference, however, which gives the focus for my study and to which I will return in greater detail below.

In the ten years since the NFER report the responsibilities of the head of department have continued to increase (Brown and Rutherford, 1998; Brown *et al.*, 2000a). This expansion was anticipated by Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989):

> *Departments and their heads increasingly need to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate new content, new courses, new pedagogic methods, new forms of assessment and, not least, new types of relationships between teacher and taught.*(Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.8).

The 1990's – the pace increases

The pace of change in the ten years since this was written has been ever-increasing, with the management of change occupying a central place in the role of the middle manager. Fundamental to this has been the requirement of heads of department to offer effective leadership to their team and to take responsibility for the effectiveness of teaching and learning within the subject area (Turner, 1996). The consequent requirement to monitor regularly and systematically the work of colleagues threatens to change radically the relationship between middle managers and their colleagues and has introduced new sources of stress for both managers and managed (Dunham 1984; Turner 1996). More recently the increased emphasis on the use of statistical data in benchmarking and target setting is adding to the head of department's workload.

Recent attempts to re-define the head of department role

The OFSTED report – aspects of good practice

A consequence of the growth of the middle management role and its importance
to the goals of school improvement and the 'standards' debate has been an
attempt to define and quantify in some way just what that role is and what are the
skills and attributes required to be able to carry it out effectively. Most recently
attempts have been made by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED,
1997) and the Teacher Training Agency (DfEE, 1998) to distil the role into a
series of digestible statements which reflect the competencies required for success
in the current climate.

The OFSTED report, '*Subject Management in Secondary Schools*' (OFSTED
1997) begins by reminding middle managers of their shortcomings. It suggests
that overall improvements in management and leadership in schools have not
been matched by middle management and lists criticisms of heads of department
contained in the 1994/5 annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of
Schools. It goes on, however, to reiterate the views expressed by Marland (1981a,
1981b), HMI Wales (1984) and Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) that:

> ... *the management role of the subject head of department in*
> *secondary schools is crucial if the quality of teaching is to be high*
> *and pupils of all abilities are to make progress.* (OFSTED, 1997,
> p.1)

The writers state ten points which they regard as '...*key characteristics of well-managed subject departments*' (OFSTED, 1997, p.4). These are quoted in full as they help to build up a picture of what is currently expected of teachers who take on a departmental management role. The characteristics that subject leaders must make sure are in evidence in their departments are:

leadership which is strong but consultative;

effective and equitable delegation of responsibilities;

regular and well-managed departmental meetings which enable all staff to contribute to planning and policy making;

departmental development planning guided by and contributing to whole school priorities, and identifying training and resourcing needs;

a comprehensive departmental handbook carrying forward school aims and policies, available for all teachers and including suitable schemes of work for pupils of all ages and abilities;

systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and observation of lessons, accompanied by debate about good practice;

optimum deployment of staff and effective organisation of classes;

regular monitoring of the assessment of pupils and moderation of assessments to maintain consistency;

systematic monitoring of the achievement and progress of
individual pupils and classes, linked to target setting and
the evaluation of teaching;

identification of in-service training needs and
opportunities; appropriate support for inexperienced and
non-specialist teachers and others with identified
weaknesses. (OFSTED, 1997, pp.4-5)

The national standards for subject leaders - 1998

Hard on the heels of OFSTED's 'characteristics' followed the *National Standards for Subject Leaders*, drawn up by the TTA and published by the DfEE as part of Circular 4/98. To quote this in full (the document runs to twelve pages) would require more space than is available for this study, but I will summarise the main points below, once again to show the sheer volume of expectations placed on the head of department (designated subject leader by the TTA).

Section 1 sets out the '...*core purpose of the subject leader*', emphasising the role of '...*leadership and direction*' (DfEE, 1998, p.4) within the overall aims of the school as defined by its governors and senior managers. It emphasises the need for heads of department to play '...*a major role in the development of school policy and practice*' (DfEE, 1998, p.4) alongside their responsibilities within the subject area and to understand the place of the area within the wider school context. The role of '...*supporting, guiding and motivating teachers of the subject, and other adults*' (DfEE, 1998, p.4) is given prominence along with the evaluation of '...*the effectiveness of teaching and learning, the subject curriculum and progress towards targets for pupils and staff*' (DfEE, 1998, p.4).

The second section concentrates on the effect of good subject leadership on pupils, teachers, parents, heads and other senior managers, and other adults within

the school community. Pupils are to show '...*sustained improvement in their subject knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to prior attainment*' (DfEE, 1998, p.5). Other evidence among pupils that a department is being led effectively include: improvements in literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, an understanding of why they are doing a particular activity and its place in the sequence of things, good preparation for tests and examinations, enthusiasm and motivation, and good behaviour in class.

With regard to teachers, effective leadership by the head of department should result in good teamwork, support for the aims of the department and an understanding of its relation to the school's aims, involvement in the making of policy and consistent application of that policy. Well-led teachers will be '...*dedicated to improving standards of teaching and learning (and) have an enthusiasm for the subject which reinforces the motivation of pupils*' (DfEE, 1998, p.5). Further evidence that teachers are part of a well led department include: good subject knowledge enhanced by guidance, training and support, awareness of and action upon relevant research findings, effective selection and use of resources to '...*meet subject specific learning objectives and the needs of pupils*' (DfEE, 1998, p.5). Such teachers also set '...*realistic but challenging targets*' (DfEE, 1998, p.5) for pupils within a framework of high expectations.

The well-led department will also make sure that parents are aware of their child's progress, achievement and targets for further improvement. They will also '...*know the expectations made of their child in learning the subject (and) know how they can support or assist their child's learning in the subject*' (DfEE, 1998, p.5).

The effective subject leader will further ensure that headteachers and other senior managers will be fully informed of the department's achievements and development priorities as a basis for decisions affecting the '...*whole school's development and its aims*' (DfEE, 1998, p.5). Finally, non-teaching staff will also

be '...*informed of subject achievements and priorities (in order) to play an effective role in supporting the teaching and learning of the subject*' (DfEE, 1998, p.5).

The Teacher Training Agency then offers fifteen further points, which should be understood by subject leaders. These range through such issues as the understanding of whole school aims, statutory requirements relating to curriculum, assessment, recording and reporting, recognition of high quality teaching, a knowledge of how to use data such as research findings and inspection evidence to inform action, and ways in which a subject can develop ICT skills, literacy and numeracy and promote '...*pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development*' (DfEE, 1998, p.6). Further to this the subject leader should have knowledge and understanding of management issues such as employment law, equal opportunities, finance, careers, ICT as an aid to teaching and management, the role of school governors, the special needs code of practice, health and safety and '...*the implications of guidance documents from LEAs, the DfEE ... and other national bodies and associations*' (DfEE, 1998, p.6).

The next section sets out the skills and attributes to be found in a head of department with regard to leadership, decision making, communication, self-management and personal attributes. It begins with the simple sentence: '*Subject leaders should have expertise in the teaching of the subject*' (DfEE, 1998, p.7).

It immediately, however, returns to its main thrust, the management / leadership role. However, within the list of eleven leadership skills is contained:

> *(Subject leaders should be able to) prioritise and manage their own time effectively, particularly in relation to balancing the demands made by **teaching**, subject management and involvement in school development.* (DfEE, 1998, p.8, my emphasis)

The essential difference between these two documents and middle management handbooks (Marland 1981a; Morris 1984; Kemp and Nathan 1992; Bell 1992) is that, whereas the latter are offering guidance and advice and raising awareness of issues relating to the middle management role, the former are firmly staking out a position. These are the skills, knowledge and attributes expected of effective middle managers.

The aim of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the dual role of the head of department as teacher and manager. Within this the following questions will be asked:

i.   What are the behaviour patterns adopted within the dual role and does the head of department act principally as a manager or a teacher?

ii.   How do heads of department perceive their dual role, in particular their ability to operate as effective classroom teachers, while engaging with the demands of departmental management?

The emphasis on the head of department as a classroom teacher has been chosen for the following reason. Although the management and leadership role of the head of department has not been heavily researched (Turner, 1996), the effects of the dual nature of the role on the individual as a classroom teacher have received still less attention. This is in spite of the stipulation of job descriptions and government agencies that subject leaders should be leading practitioners within their subject area. As mentioned above, the 1989 NFER report (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell 1989), devoted only a tiny fraction of its 245 pages to the head of department as a classroom teacher, and that in the context of the stresses of successfully running the department. The authors note '...*the difficulty of running a department or faculty well and yet remaining an effective teacher*' (Earley and

Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.218). Furthermore, some respondents pointed out that giving quality time to their teaching commitment was unpopular with senior managers:

> *If teaching was given first priority and departmental concerns*
> *second, then it was likely that they would be perceived as*
> *inefficient and as "poor" department heads* (Earley and Fletcher-
> Campbell, 1989, p.218).

As noted above, this was regarded in terms of the ratio of teaching and non-contact time:

> *The dilemma of how to be a good manager and yet ensure that this*
> *did not have a detrimental effect on one's teaching was, for some,*
> *difficult to resolve and would be helped considerably by a greater*
> *allocation of non-contact time* (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell,
> 1989, p.218).

Earley and Fletcher-Campbell offset this to an extent by suggesting that more time spent by the head of department on management tasks rather than her/his own teaching would '...*in the majority of cases*' (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.219) lead to improvements in both her/his teaching *and* that of colleagues. It is not the aim of this research to question the departmental system, which has become the norm in secondary education in the UK and countries such as the USA (Siskin, 1994) and Canada (Schmidt, 2000). Nor will the role of heads of department as middle managers within the school be questioned (Hannay and Ross, 1999; Witziers *et al.,* 1999). However, while recognising the importance of the management and leadership functions in terms of raising achievement across the board, I will concentrate on the quality and effectiveness of the classroom teaching of the head of department. Even when teaching a reduced timetable, the individual head of department can have responsibility within a 25 hour teaching

week for over two hundred children. Their education is the reason why the school exists and if their languages teacher is not performing consistently to her/his potential, for whatever reason, those children are not being well served by the system. Similarly, where heads of department have a pastoral responsibility as a form or group tutor, with its attendant demands on time, energy, patience and tact, the effect of under performance on the members of the group, though difficult to quantify, is likely to be negative.

Chapter Two will consider the published work in the field of departmental management, mainly in England and Wales. The starting point will be the 1989 NFER Research (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989) and work will be considered up to the year 2001.

Chapter Three will discuss the research methods chosen for data collection in this study both in theoretical and practical terms. It will consider the merits and demerits of the postal questionnaire, group and individual interviews. My reasons for choice of method will be discussed along with issues of reliability and validity.

Chapter Four will begin with a presentation of theoretical issues with regard to data analysis. The data from the postal questionnaire and the group interview will then be presented and discussed.

Chapter Five will present and discuss data from the individual interviews with nine heads of department and three headteachers.

Chapter Six will summarise the research and discuss the main themes emerging from the data. Recommendations for policy, practice and further research will be made on the basis of the data. Finally, the achievements and limitations of the research will be noted, along with a justification for its title, " The Broschek Syndrome".

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE SURVEY

Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of theoretical issues underlying the research. I have chosen to take the NFER research of 1989 (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989) as a starting point. Although writers had begun to deal with the issue of the head of department prior to this time (e.g. Busher, 1988), the NFER research was the first large-scale robust research into the role. As such it set an agenda, which was taken up slowly at first (Turner, 1996), but with increasing vigour in recent years. Literature published from 1989 up to and including the year 2001 will be taken into consideration. Although the focus of the research is on heads of department in the secondary sector in England and Wales, I will briefly refer to appropriate empirical studies relating to the UK primary sector and will also make reference to a small number of articles from foreign countries. In doing so, I am aware that there are practical differences in these sectors, but also that there are generic issues common to all.

There are several ways in which this chapter could be structured. I have chosen to begin with a short discussion of the praxis of departmental management, reflecting attempts to provide a theoretical framework for the head of department's activities. The aim of this will be to show the multiplicity of demands made on the head of department in the managerial role. I will then briefly consider the role of the middle manager in primary schools, following which I will discuss the literature relating to the role of head of department under five headings:

- Issues relating to restricted time
- Heads of departments' perception of their role

- The head of department as a classroom teacher
- Role conflict and the head of department
- The head of department's training needs

Finally, I will discuss the situation of teaching heads in small primary schools and introduce the research into their situation, which serves as a starting point for this study.

Much of the available literature concentrates on the role of the departmental structure and the head of department in bringing about school improvement. My research concentrates on the dual role of the head of department as teacher and manager. I will not, therefore, dwell on school improvement issues other than where they reflect the demands made on the individual by the management role and the individual's perception of that role. Harris (2001) stresses the importance of the department in bringing about school improvement:

> *The department level within secondary schools is an underutilised*
> *but important means of mobilising and sustaining school*
> *improvement* (Harris, 2001, p478).

She quotes a teacher taking part in her research into the potential for school improvement emanating from the level of the subject department: '*the leadership of the head of department is critical in departmental improvement*' (Harris, 2001, p.478). Busher and Harris (1999) state that if '*... the department is regarded as the unit of change, then the role of the head of department is of major importance*' (Busher and Harris, 1999, p.315). With this in mind, it is to be hoped that a better understanding of the dual role will itself make a meaningful contribution to the school improvement debate. I will now consider three attempts at describing a theoretical framework for the role of the head of department.

The praxis of department headship

Turner (1996), stressing the importance of the head of department's role in school improvement, notes the small amount of work done up to that time in explaining it in a theoretical context. There had been, and have been since, numerous attempts at explaining the head of department's role in practical texts (e.g. Marland 1981a, Kemp and Nathan 1989, Bell 1992, Gold 1998) but, with the exception of the NFER project (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989), little empirical evidence and even less of a theoretical nature. Turner (1996) ascribes this to the difficulty of making generalisations, given the wide variety of types and size of both schools and departments. This view is echoed by Busher and Harris (1999):

> *The very fact that departments vary in size, configuration, status, resource power and staff expertise make the job of each head of department contextually different from that experienced by other heads of department either within the same school, or in other schools* (Busher and Harris, 1999, p.308).

Turner (1996) offers a model of the head of department's role in effective school management which he adapts from a model devised by Bolam with relation to school management structures perceived to be effective by those subjected to them (Turner 1996). The model combines factors relating to the school context, for example '... *the backgrounds and beliefs of all teachers in the school, LEA policies, pupil backgrounds, school size and budget and parental support*' (Turner, 1996, p.206) with those relating to the school itself. These include '*management and leadership, ethos, aims and vision, professional working relationships, structure, decision making and communication, monitoring and evaluation*' (Turner, 1996, p.206). To these Turner adds what he terms '...*the head of department's factors and processes*' (Turner, 1996, p.206), which

combine with the aforementioned two categories to have an effect on teaching and learning within the subject area. These head of department factors relate to the formal and informal roles played by the head of department which impact upon the department's effectiveness. Turner notes the difficulty that Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) found in '... *differentiating between individual leaders and their attributes and the department and its characteristics*' (Turner, 1996, p.206).

This is further discussed by Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) in terms of the relationships between the individual effectiveness of the head of department, the collective effectiveness of the department and, on a different level, the school as a whole, The view from LEA advisers interviewed by NFER suggested that good departments could exist within schools with weak senior management. This was perceived to be as a result of the large measure of autonomy which subject department heads had. To have successful departments with weak heads of department was, however, thought to be unlikely:

> *The success of an organisation depends on the quality of*
> *leadership. You can find very good leaders in poor schools who*
> *run good departments ... but it's very much harder to have an*
> *effective department with a lousy head of department and a good*
> *headteacher* (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.102).

A theoretical model for the head of department's role in school improvement

Turner and Bolam (1998), following on from Turner's earlier (1996) paper, attempt to provide a theoretical framework for the head of department's role in improving teaching and learning (see Appendix 1). They note the assumption that:

... the head of department is an expert practitioner, well respected

by departmental colleagues. If this is not the case, then any

attempts to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the

department are likely to be seriously undermined (Turner and

Bolam,1998, p.374).

They justify this remark by reference to Harris' (1998) research into under-
performing departments, which found that heads of such departments were rarely
seen as '...*good or outstanding*' teachers (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.374). This
relates to the leading practitioner role (Brown and Rutherford 1998) in which the
head of department is able to model good practice in the classroom.

Turner and Bolam note the types of leadership '... *which reflect its complex
multi-dimensional nature*' (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.374). They quote
Immegart's review of leadership styles which concludes that '... *style is related to
situation both context and task*' (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.375). Thus a head of
department will make use of a style of leadership which is relevant to the
situation, perhaps finding:

... himself / herself leading the department team in one way and

working with individuals in quite different ways (Turner and

Bolam, 1998, p.375).

Turner and Bolam (1998) are therefore suggesting the use of contingency theory
as a basis for analysis of the head of department's role. This relates to the
variation of leadership style depending on the context. As each context or issue is
unique '... *effective performance requires a match between external requirements
and internal constraints*' (Turner and Bolam, 1998, quoting Hoyle, p.376). Turner
and Bolam adapt the work of Hanson in order to relate the latter's assumptions on
contingency theory to the role of the head of department. These are given under

six headings: middle ground, goals, performance, best way, approaches and information (Turner and Bolam, 1998).

Middle ground relates to the balance between:

> *... on the one hand, the recognition that there are certain universal principles governing the management of all departments and ... on the other hand, the realisation that all departments are unique and need to be studied as separate entities within a particular set of circumstances prevailing in any school at any given time* (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.376).

Goals relates to the match between external requirements and that which organisations deliver. Thus TTA standards on subject leaders' performance and effective classroom teaching, or OFSTED requirements are externally set requirements.

Best Way reflects the suggestion that '... *there is no one best way to manage a department*' (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.377). It refers to differences between departments both within schools and between schools, irrespective of subject area (Harris *et al.,* 1995; Sammons *et al.,* 1997; Brown *et al.,* 2000a; Harris 2000). Not only are there differences between subject areas, there are also '... *differences between departments teaching the same subject in different schools*' (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.377).

Approaches refers to the notion that no one approach can be taken to department management and leadership. Rather a variety of 'approaches' need to be taken '... *reflecting the particular context in which the department operates*' (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.377).

Information relates to the assumption that '... *no head of department can know everything that is going on in his/her subject area*' (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.377). This relates back to the two previous assumptions, given that it is '... *a function of size and departmental location*' (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.377).

The model (see Appendix 1) follows a pattern of '*input-process-output*' (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.378). It shows input factors at national, local and school level and attempts to demonstrate how the head of department, using knowledge, skills and personal characteristics, employs methods to carry out tasks in order to achieve educational outcomes. Turner and Bolam (1998) present this model as provisional and admit that it is a simplification of a complex issue. I would add that it is difficult to fit aspects of such a multi-faceted role into neat boxes. This is evidenced by the slightly confusing nature of the links between the boxes. However, the model is a useful contribution in so far as, from a practical point of view, it attempts to draw together the different components which make up the head of department's role and describe how they fit into the complex jigsaw of the practitioner's daily life. The model is a compromise between '... *accurate description and simplification*" (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.379), but as the writers note, the simplification allows an explanation of this highly complex set of factors: '... *making the model more complex would undoubtedly be more accurate, but restrict its usefulness*' (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.379).

A further attempt to achieve a theoretical framework for the head of department's activities is that of Brown and Rutherford (1998)

A typology of heads of department

Brown and Rutherford (1998), stressing the key role of middle managers in '*developing successful departments and successful schools*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.75), report on a small scale project which attempts to define

the head of department's role in terms of a typology based on the work of Murphy in the USA.

This typology '... *posits four inter-related leadership and managerial roles which reflect best practice*' (Brown and Rutherford,1998, p.78). This is adapted by the writers to suit their aim of describing the head of department role, including the addition of a fifth element which reflects the current foregrounding of the head of department's responsibility in improving standards of teaching and learning (TTA, 1998, Brown and Rutherford, 1998): The five roles of the head of department are as follows: servant leader, organisational architect, moral educator, social architect and leading professional (Brown and Rutherford, 1998)

As servant leader, the head of department leads from within the team, serving its needs via a '... *web of interpersonal relationships*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.78). As organisational architect, the head of department creates a departmental structure leading to the sharing of leadership and the promotion of ownership. In the moral educator role, the head of department is '... *motivated by a set of deep personal values and beliefs (and demonstrates) the care ethic to all*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.78). This is a person centred approach, embracing teaching colleagues, ancillary staff and pupils. The head of department as social architect develops links with parents to '... *address the worsening conditions confronting many of their pupils and their families*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.79). This role also requires '... *sensitivity to issues of race and to goals of equal opportunity*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.79). Finally, the head of department as leading professional is the role added by Brown and Rutherford (1998) to reflect the head of department's '... *developmental role that focuses on improving teaching, learning and achievement*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.79). This requires the head of department to '... *be up to date with current developments and be a more than competent teacher*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.79). These final two points call to mind the findings of Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) in terms of the

lack of time to perform the management and leadership function, vital if curriculum developments are to be followed, and the tensions between the head of department's role as a manager, leader, administrator and virtually full time teacher.

Brown and Rutherford (1998) produce data from structured interviews with eight heads of department which show evidence of those five roles being carried out. The validity of their data is reinforced by a variety of approaches which complement their interviews. They examine documentary evidence such as department handbooks, prospectuses and inspection reports, shadow the heads of department for a half or full day and elicit the views of deputy heads on the head of department's role in facilitating school improvement. The servant leader is also evoked by Flecknoe and Sutcliffe (1997), who describe the subject leader as '... *a servant whose task is to make the task of other staff meaningful and effective*' (Flecknoe and Sutcliffe, 1997, p.30).

Evidence of the servant leader role collected by the researchers tended towards the mundane and every-day. This included setting work for absent colleagues, taking account of individual wishes and needs in timetabling and even picking up litter in order to maintain a pleasant working environment for both staff and pupils. To this, I would add the disciplinary role of the head of department, in terms of assisting colleagues with discipline problems in their classes. While linked to the moral educator role, I would suggest that it is seen mainly by teachers as one of serving the team, allowing them to do their job with the minimum of hindrance from disruptive pupils.

Brown and Rutherford (1998) report evidence of the organisational architect role in, for example, the way in which a head of department had designed a departmental staff room with effort made to furnish it in such a way as to provide an enhanced environment.

The moral educator role was seen in the form of a head of department arguing against the employment of a licensed teacher as this was against her principals. Another was modelling her preferred practice in inviting a SEN assistant into her classroom rather than having special needs children withdrawn:

> *This, we felt, was a very obvious example-of a head of department exercising leadership through the modelling of deeply held values* (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.82).

The social architect role was seen, for example, in a head of department supporting and counselling a stressed colleague and taking the opportunity to talk to pupils in a supportive manner about their behaviour as he moved through the school:

> *The picture of caring heads of department which emerged from our observations was that of individuals with whom pupils and staff could talk and discuss, who did not dictate and who were accessible and sensitive to the needs of others* (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.83).

The leading professional role relates to the main professional role (Brown and Rutherford, 1998; Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989) of classroom teacher. The heads of department in this study '... *spent at least 80% of their time actually teaching*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.83). The leading professional role leaves '... *little time ... for initiatives to improve teaching, learning and achievement*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.83). They categorise an example of using GCSE examination data under this role along with the production of detailed department handbooks based on OFSTED inspectors' feedback. I would regard these as belonging more to the organisational architect role. I regard the leading professional role as grounded in classroom practice. The head of department, as mentioned in Chapter 1, is expected to be a highly effective

classroom practitioner. As such, the leading professional role rests in the modelling of good classroom practice, both formally and informally. Although Brown and Rutherford (1998) make their point, as mentioned above, that the head of department is essentially a teacher, they fail to provide evidence of the head of department taking this role as a tool in the improvement of standards across the board. Brown and Rutherford state that they had difficulty at times '...*in distinguishing between the roles of servant leader (i.e. the maintenance role) and leading professional (i.e. the developmental role)*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.86). The key issue, as they state, is that, '...*the five roles are mutually supportive and interconnecting*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.86).

Brown and Rutherford (1998) conclude, as had Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) nine years previously, that time, or the lack of it, is an obstacle to the head of department's hopes of contributing to the improvement of educational standards. They note that '...*little has changed*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.86) since the earlier research. Their second observation, the lack of curriculum stability, links to the first, in so far as the lack of time to innovate, coupled with the increasing demands for innovation, brings about a vicious circle of dissatisfaction for the head of department. This issue is further identified by Brown *et al.* (2000a) as a key issue for the heads of department involved in their research into school improvement.

Brown and Rutherford (1998) further cite the lack of opportunities for professional development as an obstacle to the improvement of standards. This, in terms of the head of department's personal development has been cited as a necessity (Early and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Russell and Metcalf, 1997) but it emerges here more as a plea for subject leaders and their departments to develop together: This is another issue foregrounded by the heads of department in Brown's later research into school improvement issues (Brown *et al.*, 2000a):

Inset days, we were repeatedly told with a degree of frustration and resentment, were mainly used for whole-school issues (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.86).

This issue, seen from the other side, is a further obstacle cited by Brown and Rutherford (1998). This is that heads of department are reluctant to involve themselves in whole school issues. Again this echoes the NFER research of nine years previously, which found senior managers bemoaning the lack of whole-school awareness and interest of heads of department who were, however, judged to be effective in their departmental situation.

Finally Brown and Rutherford (1998) note four initiatives observed in their research which they feel contribute to raised standards. These are, firstly, the production of department handbooks. Secondly, the recognition of the importance of departmental collegiality is cited as a means for improvement. This is an issue highlighted by Busher and Harris (1999) and Harris (2000), which is seen in my research in terms of teamwork. This recognition suggests that heads of department are aware of the need for effective change management principles involving ownership of initiatives and leaders' ability to take others along with them (Whitaker 1992). Thirdly, they cite the organisation of teaching groups on the basis of ability sets as a move towards improvement, but do so without discussion of this issue which is contested (e.g. Taylor, 1993; Benn and Chitty, 1996). Fourthly, perhaps less controversially, they cite the move towards greater involvement of parents '... *as partners in the process of learning'* (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.87). A third theoretical framework for the head of department role is the division of the role into four dimensions (Harris, 2000).

Four dimensions of the head of department role

Harris (2000), drawing on the work of Glover *et al.* (1998) and Busher and Harris (1999), presents the head of department role in terms of four dimensions.

Firstly, the head of department has a key role in translating '...*the perspectives and policies of senior staff into the practices of individual classrooms*' (Harris, 2000, p82). This relates to the question of how the head of department engages with whole school aims. Glover *et al.* (1999) report efforts by senior managers to achieve:

> *...greater involvement of subject leaders in whole-school as well as subject development including the establishment of aims, strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation* (Glover *et al.*, 1999, p.334)

The success of these efforts depends to a large extent on management structures (Glover *et al.*, 1999), but also on the cultural context of the school (Busher and Harris, 1999, Harris, 2000). Turner and Bolam (1998) regard the head of department's '...*knowledge of the school's particular organisational culture, its espoused values and priorities*' (Turner and Bolam, 1998, p.383) as a key constituent of the 'situational knowledge' used in dealings at whole-school level. Bennett (1995), on the other hand reports six case studies of secondary school middle managers, concluding:

> *Not one of the cases provided here demonstrated a department clearly at ease with the broader culture of the school and in harmony with it* (Bennett, 1995, p.136)

Secondly, Harris (2000) cites the work of heads of department with their departmental teams, encouraging them to '...*cohere and develop a group identity*' (Harris, 2000, p.82). The fostering of a collegial approach to the work of the department is seen as important (Powney, 1991; Glover *et al.*, 1999; Busher and Blease, 2000; Harris, 2000). This highlights one of the difficulties of the head of department role. This is the use of power *over* colleagues in order to achieve

whole-school aims, alongside power *with* and *through* teachers to facilitate progress at department level (Busher and Harris, 1999; Harris, 2000).

The third dimension of the head of department role is '...*the improvement of staff and student performances*' (Harris 2000, p.83). This is again a complicated role for the head of department in that it requires the two kinds of power previously mentioned. Thus targets have to be met but colleagues and pupils must be supported and mentored in order to achieve those targets. This third dimension could be subsumed into the first two as an outcome of the head of department's efforts both on behalf of the school and the team. Indeed Harris (2001) notes evidence of departmental improvement efforts feeding back into whole school development.

Finally Harris (2000) cites the role of the head of department in terms of representing the department and liasing with '...*a variety of actors and sources of information in the external environment of the school*' (Harris, 2000, p.83).

The existence of these four dimensions, which Harris (2000) describes as '...*both complementary and competing in their demands*' (Harris 2000, p.83) serves to:

> *...reflect the complexity of a management role within the middle of a hierarchy and reveal the tensions facing leaders in a middle management position* (Harris 2000, p.83).

Once again, in the context of this research, all of these complex demands are set against the consideration that: '...*heads of academic departments will also be classroom teachers in their own or other subject areas*' (Busher and Harris, 1999, p.307), and this with as little as 1 – 2 hours per week deducted from the normal teaching timetable specifically for management duties (Glover and Miller 1999; Wise, 2001).

The Practical Application of Theoretical Frameworks

Whether middle managers are still some way from defining their role as that of a manager (Earley, 1998) or indeed showing signs of embracing the management culture (Wise and Bush, 1999), theoretical frameworks such as those offered by Turner and Bolam (1998), Brown and Rutherford (1996) and Harris (2000), can help individual heads of department on two levels. Firstly they can conceptualise their role in such a manner as to be able to visualise their position within a highly complex web of activities and influences. To do so allows the individual to be more effective in prioritising management, administration and leadership tasks through a better understanding of where each one fits into the wider framework. Secondly, by feeding specific information into such a framework, heads of department can address their own position in terms of limiting factors and opportunities which characterise each individual subject area within each individual school. Once again, time and energy can be saved by a thorough knowledge of potential opportunities and likely blocks to progress. Thirdly, such frameworks, by breaking this manifold role down into manageable 'chunks', can form a basis for reflection and/or professional development. The usefulness of theoretical frameworks when combined with practical experience is noted by Russell and Metcalf (1997):

> *Inside or outside school the most effective development*
> *programmes are likely to be those which draw on appropriate*
> *theoretical perspectives but which are also rooted in the practical*
> *situations in which teachers find themselves* (Russell and Metcalf,
> 1997, p.18).

Middle management in the primary school

This section presents by no means a full review of appropriate literature relating to the position of middle management in primary schools. To do so would be beyond the scope of this research. It aims instead to draw on a small number of empirical studies of various sizes in order to give an idea of the current situation in primary school middle management. Further to this it seeks information on the primary sector which may help in the understanding of the middle management role of the secondary school head of department.

Bennett (1995) notes that '...*primary and secondary schools present different perspectives on the middle management role*' (Bennett, 1995, p.140). This is because of the structural differences between schools in the two sectors. For example, the organisation of the primary school is less hierarchical and teaching is arranged on a year group rather than a subject basis (Bennett 1995). Bennett (1995) describes middle management as '...*a problematic concept in application to primary schools, although many staff have delegated management responsibilities*' (Bennett, 1995, p.73). He further notes that '...*most writing on primary school management is directed firmly at the head*' (Bennett, 1995, p.73).

A key distinction in primary schools is between the subject co-ordinator and the manager (Bennett, 1995). Bennett (1995) notes, however, that all primary teachers have responsibility for '...*co-ordinating and managing the work of other teachers*' (Bennett, 1995, p.75) and, as a result, defines primary school middle managers as '...*those who hold promoted positions (and) have responsibility for overseeing the management work of main grade ... colleagues*' (Bennett, 1995, p.75). He reports research carried out over four years but finds it difficult to draw

conclusions with regard to '...*the characteristics of a "middle management" post which could be applied to most of the schools which responded to the survey*' (Bennett, 1995, p.83). As such he is perhaps referring to the issue of complexity in the type and sizes of schools and their related management structures and cultures (Harris, 2000).

The measure of responsibility given to middle managers appears to relate to the attitude of the headteacher towards the delegation of authority (Bennett, 1995) as well as the willingness of individual post holders to seek and accept authority (McGarvey *et al.,* 1997). Moore (1992) notes a belief among the majority of headteachers taking part in his survey that subject co-ordinators '...*should not make decisions affecting the classroom actions of their colleagues*'(Moore, 1992, p.14). Bennett (1995) is unable to state clearly from his research how far beyond the confines of the curriculum middle management responsibilities go. He carries out four case studies to investigate this issue (Bennett, 1995) and finds that responsibility for monitoring the work of others does feature in the subject co-ordinator role. This was regarded, however, as '...*difficult to do except at arms' length because of the lack of non-contact time*' (Bennett, 1995, p.97). The question of lack of time is also raised by Moore (1992), who notes that, of his sample of 222 schools, only 12% made regular non-teaching time available to their science co-ordinators.

Bennett (1995) adds that monitoring was also disliked, reflecting the '...*dislike of command and control tasks, which in most cases were rejected*' (Bennett, 1995, p.97). McGarvey *et al.* (1997) finds similar attitudes in their study of differentiation co-ordinators in Northern Ireland:

> *Reluctance to enter colleagues' classrooms to evaluate or to appear to "impose" aspects of a differentiated curriculum was stressed by all coordinators interviewed* (McGarvey *et al.,* 1997, p.2).

Again the issue of time constraints is raised, prompting the question as to whether lack of time or reluctance to judge others is the stronger of the two constraints to monitoring and evaluating colleagues' work.

Bennett (1995) reports an element of role strain (Handy 1993). This manifests itself in so far as:

> ...*individual subject co-ordinators or post-holders exercise essentially enabling and guiding functions as agents of the headteacher, but without the authority to require or direct* (Bennett, 1995, p.98).

If this is the case, it represents an essential difference between the middle management functions of primary and secondary schools. Bennett (1995) does, however, note an element of 'functional authority' (Wise, 2000) derived from '...*knowledge and normative power resources rather than economic resources or physical coercion*' (Bennett, 1995, p.98). In this respect, a similarity can be seen with the way in which Schmidt (2000) observed secondary school heads of department in Canada, who carried out their role '...*viewing their leadership as stemming from their teaching role rather than from a formal title*' (Schmidt, 2000, p.840).

Finally, a key difference between the primary and secondary sectors relates to the issue of subject knowledge (Bennett, 1995). Whereas in the secondary school, the subject lies at the core of the department's and, by extension, the head of department's activities (Siskin, 1994), this is not the case in the primary sector. Moore (1992) found headteachers stressing teaching strategies over scientific knowledge in his research into science co-ordinators. Similarly, Wortley (1993) mentions the expectation that teachers who have undertaken teacher training with mathematics as a main subject will have been taught how to teach the subject,

rather than the subject itself. Referring to the implementation of the Cockcroft Report into primary school mathematics in 1982, she notes:

> *The tradition of heads of department in secondary schools*
> *did not translate easily to primary school teachers*
> (Wortley, 1993, p.45)

In common with West (1996), who advocates a '*task culture*' rather than a '*role culture*' in primary schools (West, 1996, p19), she calls for a co-ordinator role that fits the needs of specialist primary teachers rather than subject specialists:

> *A strategy which emanates from the primary school chalk face – as*
> *opposed to one borrowed from secondary education* (Wortley,
> 1996, p.47)

This would entail questioning the system of subject-based middle management in the school context (Hannay and Ross, 1999; Glover *et al.*, 1998).

Given that the middle management system is retained in both sectors, the situation in primary schools would appear to be different from that in the secondary sector, although generic issues can be identified. Firstly, the style of managing from the middle (Harris, 2000) is largely determined by the type and culture of the school. In the primary sector, this is related to the headteacher (Bennett, 1995), whereas in a secondary school more individuals would be involved, perhaps making the situation more complicated. Secondly, the level of acceptance of the role delegated to the middle manager is a factor in the effectiveness with which it is carried out. Thirdly, the issue of restricted time is a key factor, both as block to the execution of the management role and, perhaps, as an excuse for not engaging fully with it.

These are issues raised both in the literature relating to the secondary school head of department, and in the research on which I will report in Chapters 4 and 5. I will now consider further work relating to the secondary school head of department of both an empirical and descriptive nature, taking as a basis for this, the NFER study of 1989.

The NFER research -the head of department role brought into focus

The role of the head of department was brought into focus in the late 1980's by the NFER project *The Time to Manage? Department and Faculty Heads at Work* (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989). The project was in response to the growing recognition of the importance of leadership and management in schools and the above-mentioned spotlight on the central role of heads of department by HMI (HMI Wales, 1984). The writers recognised that, whereas:

> ...*school philosophies, policies, aims and·objectives ... are formulated by senior management ... it is at the departmental level that these are actually implemented* (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p3).

Attention was also drawn to the multiplicity of the head of department's role:

> *The head of department plays a crucial role in the work of secondary school departments, requiring not only subject knowledge and teaching expertise, but also the ability to manage and lead a team* (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.3).

At the time of the research, which had begun in 1986, schools were seeing through the introduction of GCSE and were beginning to adjust to the event

which was to change radically the way in which they worked, the 1988 Education Reform Act. This Act, '...*the most important and far reaching piece of educational law-making for England and Wales since the Education Act of 1944*' (Maclure, 1989, p.v), began a period of sustained change continuing to the time of writing (2002). This constant change, coupled with the feeling among many teachers that the views of those whose effort and skills would decide the success or failure of the reforms were rarely heard (Sweetman, 1994), has placed great emphasis on the management skills and leadership qualities of middle managers (Ball and Bowe, 1992).

The NFER research represented the first major attempt to collect empirical data on the everyday life of heads of department. It also gave a snapshot of the role of middle managers at the time (1986-89) when workload and accountability were beginning to increase. The project had four principal aims. Firstly to describe how departments were being managed in terms of administration, planning, monitoring and evaluation, professional development of teachers and liaison with other departments (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989). Secondly, to '...*explore the ways in which the role of head of department was perceived by advisers, heads, deputy heads and teachers*' (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.4). Thirdly there was to be a focus on the head of department's role in curriculum management and innovation, and whole-school policy making. Finally, the project aimed to identify training needs for heads of department in the light of its findings.

The title of the report, '*The Time to Manage?*' (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989) reflected the two major issues which, in general terms, emerged from the research. The first was that heads of department had only a small amount of non-contact time in which to carry out their many tasks, the second that many department heads did not perceive themselves as managers with a leadership role and responsibilities for others. (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989).

The issue of restricted time

Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) find non-contact time for heads of department of between 15% and 35% of the weekly timetable (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.216). They differentiate between Heads of Department and Heads of Faculty, claiming that the latter have slightly more non-contact time. They do not, however, differentiate between the two types of middle manager in their research as a whole and this research will similarly make no differentiation. Nor do they give non-contact time relative to other teachers who do not have departmental management duties

Glover and Miller (1999), on the other hand, concentrate on the way in which heads of department – they use the term subject leader – are able to make use of their non-contact time. It is a study, which they themselves admit to be limited in scope but which, nevertheless, gives an insight into the experience of a group of heads of department on one particular day. The research covers twenty-three secondary schools. Of these, eight allow their subject leaders one hour or more extra non-contact time per week, over and above that of other staff. Ten give less than one hour and the remainder no extra time at all (Glover and Miller, 1999).

Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) note the necessity for heads of department to cover for absent colleagues, thus losing some of their non-contact time, but there is no mention of middle managers having to attend meetings in their 'free' periods. It is, however, noted that there are aspects of the head of department's role which have to be carried out during the school day, such as classroom observation. Brown et al. (2000b) also note the concern of the lack of time caused by tasks which have to be done while colleagues and/or pupils are present. This is particularly the case with monitoring and evaluating (Brown et al., 2000b) Glover and Miller (1999) report evidence that time in the school day is further spent by heads of department on:

...low-level administrative and managerial roles which could be

reorganised and delegated to administrative assistants –

photocopying and filing (which) continue to erode time which

might be spent on more developmental work (Glover and Miller,

1999, p.63).

Earley and Fletcher-Campbell suggest that time allocations should ideally be tailored to the individual situation of each head of department. Thus, for example, those with fewer well-qualified colleagues need more time to give support and guidance. This is one aspect of complexity in the head of department role caused by the wide variety of school and departmental structures (Busher and Harris, 1999).

The ever-increasing role of the head of department and the lack of time to carry it out is noted by Brown *et al.,* (2000b). From interviews with a focus group of twenty-four heads of department they find general agreement that:

...they have been asked to take on many additional responsibilities

that were in the past widely accepted as being within the domain of

members of the senior management team. Particular examples

included discipline and finance. However, there was also general

agreement that these additional responsibilities were not matched

with either sufficient authority or adequate time to enable them to

be carried out properly (Brown *et al.,* 2000b, p.249).

Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) further note the necessity of giving wider experience outside the confines of the department to those individuals aiming to progress to senior management level. This makes further demands on time and, as 'person specifications' for deputy headship appointments show, is still the case ten years on. It is, however, not just the time requirement of being an effective

manager, with its implications for the quality of teaching and learning within the department, that matters. There is also the question of the head of department's own teaching, a point made by respondents to the research of Glover *et al.* (1998): '...*they argued that time and effort used in administration and management is time taken from teaching and learning*' (Glover *et al.*, 1998, p.280)

Time management theories offer suggestions as to solutions to this problem (Wilkinson, 1988). Prioritising is one favoured by Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989), but they note from their research that:

> ...*even the more effective managers of time found it difficult to carry out their duties well and, as has been suggested, there were aspects of the department head's job that were not being carried out effectively. There were rarely occasions when practitioners could say that they had done everything and the observed middle managers often listed the things that were "waiting to be done"* (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.220).

Heads of departments' perception of their role

The second major focus of the NFER project relating to this research is that of heads of departments' perception of their role. Having recognised that certain tasks were only partially carried out, if at all, as a result of time constraints, in particular the need to react to issues on a day to day basis, Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) go on to suggest that:

> ...*some responsibilities of department heads were not carried out ... because they were seen as problematical. There were*

some aspects of the middle manager's role that individuals
were reluctant to embrace and this militated against
departmental improvements (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell,
1989, p.221).

The issue was that Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) identified heads of
department who were reluctant to view their role in managerial and leadership
terms. Rather they saw themselves as '*...senior subject teachers*' (Earley and
Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.221). They refer to the earlier work of Straker, who
concluded that:

...even if they were allocated extra non-teaching time, many
department heads would not use this for classroom
observations or to improve the overall performance of the
team (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.221).

Ten years on, Glover *et al.* (1999) find evidence of this same trait in '*...subject*
leaders (who) see themselves in a traditional role limited to responsibility for
organising resources and possibly schemes of work' (Glover *et al.*, 1999, p.341).
Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) link this to notions of classroom autonomy
and teacher professionalism. They also note '*...conflict between the department*
head's leadership and management function, and the notion of developing
collegiality and team spirit' (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.221). They
find some department heads '*...reluctant to criticise or reprimand* (Earley and
Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.222) and a feeling that '*...relationships with*
colleagues would somehow suffer if the management role was fully embraced'
(Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.222). They allude to management and
leadership styles in suggesting that certain heads of department, labelled by them
as '*...more effective*':

> *...were able to foster a collegial climate which in turn enabled the*
> *team to monitor itself and from which observation and appraisal*
> *seemed to arise naturally* (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989,
> p.222).

Finally, Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) identify role uncertainty as a factor affecting performance. Having defined an effective middle manager as:

> *...someone who was aware of the demands that the role made*
> *and had, or was developing, the necessary skills and strategies*
> *to meet these ... (someone who) ...understood what the job*
> *involved and was able to translate this into action* (Earley and
> Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.222).

They note the feeling that many of their research subjects had not, in fact '*...thought clearly about the role and what it involved in its entirety*' (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.222). Schmidt (2000), writing from a Canadian perspective, finds heads of department who '*...lacked any clear definition of leadership*' (Schmidt, 2000, p.833). In this case:

> *...the department head's seemingly antithetical roles of teacher*
> *and administrator were actually folded into the role with which*
> *they were most familiar – teaching* (Schmidt, 2000, p.833)

Wise and Bush (1999) report on research involving middle managers and headteachers in three LEA's and case studies in three schools. They examine the role of the middle manager since the 1988 Education Reform Act, looking in particular for evidence of the acceptance by middle managers of their managerial role. The main outcomes of their research are to ascertain that heads of department profess to give top priority to their teaching, that they are nevertheless embracing the managerial role, and that they are constrained in their efforts by

lack of time. The priority given to teaching is shown by responses to an ordering of priority of twelve tasks selected by the researchers. Teaching ranks first with a mean ranking of 2.56, followed by the development of the curriculum including teaching and learning strategies (3.47). This suggests that the head of department's own teaching and her/his influence on the classroom work of the team has priority. The researchers bracket monitoring of colleagues' work with supervision, which may have the effect of moving it down the priority list (fourth position, average score 5.42). Nevertheless, they take the fourth position of twelve to be evidence that heads of department are embracing this role to a greater extent than they did at the time of the NFER report. This is further amplified by the responses of heads of department to a list of four managerial tasks; monitoring the teaching of the department staff, induction of new staff, informing colleagues of whole school issues and encouraging debate, and professional development within the department. Almost ninety percent (89.7%) of respondents on average regard these as part of their role, with monitoring showing a 91.7% response. It is interesting to note that 96.3% of heads responding to the same question give these as expectations of the head of department's role. In a later paper, however, Wise (2001) notes evidence of heads of department accepting their management role but adds further evidence to show that this acceptance '...*does not mean that it actually happens*' (Wise, 2001, p340). Glover *et al.* (1999) report similar evidence of some subject leaders

> ...*retreating into administration so that they can plead that they have not got the time to undertake additional (monitoring and evaluating) duties* (Glover *et al.,* 1999, p. 341, my bracket).

This echoes Hamlin's (1990) description of:

> ...*a widespread "anti-management" sub-culture within education ... headteachers and heads of department who, for example, reject the "notion and vocabulary of management" (and/or) are*

reluctant to accept management techniques and procedures
(Hamlin, 1990, p.9)

Such heads of department, for example, '*...never or rarely observe their staff teaching, even when opportunities have been made to permit this to happen*' (Hamlin, 1990, p.9)

Wise and Bush (1999) show evidence of the centrality of the subject and its teaching to heads of departments' thinking in the form of the high ranking given to departmental staff in the rank ordering of '*...people or groups considered to be most influential by middle management in four different areas of decision making*' (Wise and Bush, 1999, p.187). Fifty-eight percent of responses put staff at the top of this list against 21.7% for heads and senior managers and 5.5% for pupils. This suggests that heads of department are regarding themselves as managers of departments rather than managers of learning in spite of their claims to prioritise teaching. This is, of course, not a simple question of one versus the other, given that a middle manager's interventions with colleagues should have the ultimate aim of improving children's learning. Departmental staff remain top priority when the researchers define influence in terms of decisions relating to four different areas of the head of department's activity. Colleagues in the department are the major influence in terms of all four; curriculum, resources, professional development and pupil discipline.

It is clear that "Departmental staff" are perceived by a large majority to be the middle managers' most influential group and this is particularly evident in respect of resource management and professional development. The "Head and senior management" are second most significant group in the role set, notably in respect of professional development and pupil discipline. The other groups (students/pupils, advisory / inspectorate service, other

teaching staff, subject association, parents/guardians, governors) vary in their influence depending on the area of decision making being considered (Wise and Bush, 1999, p.189, my bracket).

Wise and Bush (1999) conclude that attitudes among middle managers have changed since the ERA (and the time at which Hamlin (1990) was writing), and differences are shown from the NFER report (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell 1989), particularly in terms of managerial tasks such as monitoring, supervising induction and professional development. This view is, as already stated, not universally held. Glover and Miller (1999) provide a further example of a tendency amongst some subject leaders to use low level administration tasks such as photocopying and filing '...*as a means of retreat from those roles which involve them in evaluative work which might compromise their relationship with colleagues*' (Glover and Miller, 1999, p.63). The language used here, although admittedly taken from a smaller scale study, is similar to that reported by Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989). It is interesting to note that the deputy heads interviewed ascribed this kind of behaviour particularly to colleagues who had been in post for over ten years (Glover and Miller, 1999).

In noting the significance of the influence of department colleagues on heads of department, Wise and Bush (1999) emphasise the importance of the team within the hierarchical structure of the school (Bell 1992; Siskin, 1994) and, at the same time, highlight the complex position of the head of department as team leader, team member and part of the whole school structure. These roles taken together have different aims, which place considerable stress upon heads of department as they attempt to reconcile them with the main professional role of classroom teacher. The final conclusion of Wise and Bush (1999) relates to the issue of time versus non-teaching responsibilities. The researchers note the additional areas of responsibility embraced by heads of department since 1988 and add that the call made by Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) for more time has not been heeded.

Therefore, if heads of department were struggling to fulfil the expectations placed on them prior to ERA, how are they surviving now? One partial answer to this question is the delegation of administrative tasks but support was found for the view that, even with a measure of delegation, heads of department were still simply not able to do all that was expected of them. The question is, therefore, if something has to give, what is it? In addition to the above-mentioned managerial tasks, largely embraced by the heads of department in the research of Wise and Bush (1999), administrative, educational and academic tasks are demanded by senior management (Wise and Bush 1999). Delegation, itself problematic (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Glover *et al.,* 1998) and dependent on so many factors, can provide only a partial answer within an acceptable working week. This leaves the head of department's own teaching as an aspect of the role which may be given lower priority, particularly at times of stress.

The head of department's own classroom teaching

Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) note '...*the difficulty of running a department or faculty well and yet remaining an effective teacher'* (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.218). They continue:

> *...to undertake the full range of departmental responsibilities and continue to be an able classroom practitioner was, given existing contact ratios, not easy. Some middle managers commented that if teaching was given first priority and departmental concerns second, then it was likely that they would be perceived as inefficient and as "poor" department heads* (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.218).

Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) observe the effect of management responsibilities on individuals' work in the classroom and conclude:

> *The extent to which individual department heads' teaching*
> *and that of colleagues within the department would*
> *"improve" if the former was given additional time for these*
> *tasks is unknown. What is more certain however, is that in the*
> *majority of cases improvements would take place* (Earley and
> Fletcher Campbell, 1989, p.219).

The issue of the quality of the department head's own teaching is given some weight by the perceived need of both heads of department themselves and departmental colleagues for the team leader to be a modeller of good practice in the classroom. This is particularly so in subject teams which reflect a collegiate approach (Harris *et al.,* 1995). Referring to the leaders of such departments Harris *et al.* (1995) note:

> *All of them could probably be described as 'leading professionals'*
> *in the sense that their mode of practice was regarded as the model*
> *to follow, particularly in teaching* (Harris *et al.,* 1995, p.288).

Wise (2000) supports the argument for the subject leader as a leading professional. She cites Adey (1988), who '...*detects widespread belief among teachers that the head of department should be a good teacher*' (Adey, 1988, quoted by Wise, 2000, p.61). The ability to demonstrate a high level of competence as a teacher confers '...*functional authority*' (Lambert, 1972, quoted by Wise, 2000, p.60) on the head of department.

Turner (2000) reports further evidence of this. Investigating the influence of previous heads of department on those currently in service, he finds positive influences as a result of subject expertise. One of his research subjects states that

'...*they tended to be ... really on top of what they were doing, subject wise,
curriculum wise*' (Turner 2000, p305).

Similarly, in a study of ineffective departments, Harris (1998) notes that:

> ...*the head of department, in most cases, was not someone who
> was respected by those within the department as an expert
> practitioner. In fact there was frequent criticism of the teaching
> approaches employed by the head of department by departmental
> members* (Harris, 1998, p.273).

The importance of the head of department's own teaching and its effect upon the
department's work as a whole is brought into sharper focus by the desirability of
concentrating school improvement efforts on teaching and learning issues (Harris,
2001).

Turner (2000) sums the issue up as follows: '...*professional credibility with one's
colleagues becomes an essential feature of effective leadership and management*'
(Turner, 2000, p.301).

The question which remains to be asked is therefore this: If giving sufficient
attention to teaching was difficult prior to the ERA (Earley and Fletcher-
Campbell, 1989) and the management role has grown in terms both of the
expectations of senior management and acceptance by heads of department since
then (Wise and Bush, 1999), how are heads of department currently able to
operate as effective classroom teachers? Whereas Wise and Bush (1999) show
results which suggest that teaching remains top priority, reflecting '...*the reality
that their timetabled time is spent with students and also...their background as
classroom teachers*' (Wise and Bush, 1999, p.190), the question can be asked as
to how this 'priority' operates in reality. An insight into this issue can be gained
by investigating further the way in which heads of department view their dual role

as teacher/manager and the extent to which one may be prioritised at the expense of the other.

Role conflict has been noted as a major issue for the head of department (Wise, 2001). As can be seen from the discussion so far, the potential for conflict between the various aspects of the management role is considerable (Harris, 2000). In the context of this research, there is also potential for conflict between the management role viewed as a whole and the head of department's main role (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989) as a teacher in the classroom. I will now present a brief discussion on elements of role theory, which impact upon this research.

Role conflict and the head of department

Buchanan and Huczynski (1985) define role as '...*the pattern of behaviour expected by others from a person occupying a certain position in an organisational hierarchy*' (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985, p.325). In its most extreme form, role conflict means that '...*compliance with one (role) excludes absolutely compliance with the other*' (Katz and Kahn, 1978, p.204). In more common cases, however, it occurs when there are two sets of expectations which interact in such a manner that '...*compliance with one makes it difficult to comply with the other*' (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985, p.331). This is the situation in which secondary school heads of department can find themselves (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989) as a result of the '...*doubly-loaded*' (Dunning, 1993) nature of the role.

Buchanan and Huczynski describe the potential for role conflict (Grace, 1972; Katz and Kahn, 1975; Buchanan and Huczynski, 1989; Handy, 1993) in the position of a trades union shop steward who must be able to argue his/her work

colleagues' case to the fullest extent while, at the same time, being open to compromise and concession. This role is similar to that of heads of department, who must be able to fight the corner for their subject area and simultaneously maintain a balanced view of whole-school needs. It is, however, the final statement of the example given by Buchanan and Huczynski (1985) which has most resonance for this research:

> *As if that were not enough, both of these roles are in effect part time ones. For most of the time his role is also that of a worker who has his day to day job to carry on.* (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985, p.331).

It is not within the restricted scope of this research to consider the issue of role theory in full, nor to report on the wide range of literature produced on this one aspect of it, role conflict. The starting point for this research is the assumption, supported by the NFER study (Earley and Fletcher Campbell, 1989), that role conflict exists for the secondary school head of department. Schmidt (2000) raises the question of '*discrepancies between the two roles and their associated expectations and purposes*' (Schmidt, 2000, p.833). In doing so, she asks a key question associated with my research:

> *When a formal role actually combines two roles into one, such as department headship (i.e., teacher and administrator), what results is the hybrid administrator and raises an important question about role definition: Is the department head a teacher or an administrator?* (Schmidt, 2000, p.833, bracket in original)

Schmidt (2000) quotes Siskin (1995), who, writing from an American perspective, describes the head of department role as '...*hermaphroditic*'. She states that role conflict arises because '...*most (department heads) fit comfortably*

within neither category' (Siskin, 1995, quoted by Schmidt, 2000, p.833, bracket in original).

Handy (1993) classifies role conflict as one element, along with role ambiguity, role overload and role underload, as a factor leading to '...*role stress'* (Handy 1993). In its negative form (for stress can also have positive effects) this is termed '...*role strain'* (Handy 1993).

Handy (1993) suggests that role conflict can be eased in two ways:

> *By reducing the balance of importance of one of the roles so that poor performance is no longer a bother (to the individual).*
>
> *By agreed compartmentalization of (the individual's) life so that the roles do not overlap and by setting up rules and procedures to maintain those compartments and relative priorities.*
> (Handy, 1993, p.69).

Both of these solutions might be applied to the situation of the secondary school head of department. In the first instance, the balance of the two roles can be shifted in such a way that either the teaching or the management role is given overt priority. This would not mean poor performance in either. This research suggests, in any case, that poor performance in either role is not acceptable to the individuals involved. It would involve, however, the acceptance of limitations to performance within agreed parameters.

With regard to Handy's (1993) second statement, the individual's ability to compartmentalise would be all important, for example, in refusing all attempts to interrupt her/his classroom teaching on 'management' business. Again, this would require a measure of negotiation and agreement between all parties in the head of department's role set (Handy, 1993; Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985).

Training needs and provision for heads of department

Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) note the paucity of preparation for heads of department prior to taking up their post:

> *Many new heads of department seemed to be ill-prepared for the*
> *role and interviewees spoke of being "thrown in at the deep end"*
> *and "not being confident in terms of my past experience"* (Earley
> and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.87).

Schmidt (2000), reporting findings from a Canadian study, finds a similar situation:

> *The data from this study indicate that there was little to aid the*
> *transition between roles, from teacher to department head*
> (Schmidt, 2000, p.831).

Harding (1990), on the other hand, reporting on UK secondary sector research, notes that: '...*just over half of all respondents ... had received training, which had specifically helped them in their middle management posts*' (Harding, 1990, p.29). She notes, however, that 92% of her respondents were '...*unreservedly in favour of middle managers receiving training*' (Harding, 1990, p.29), suggesting a large proportion of middle managers who felt the need for training but where not receiving it.

In making recommendations for improving departments, Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) call for the consideration of training needs of middle managers. The research suggests that the transition from managing children to managing adults is high on the list of training needs as seen by senior managers. The heads

of department themselves tend to cite the effective use of time as a major need, thereby supporting the main thrust of the research, that lack of time was the major obstacle to improvement (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989). In addition, the '...*nuts and bolts of running departments*' (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.224), for example resource management, are cited as important training needs, along with '...*generic management issues*' (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989, p.224) common to all staff in management roles. These include team-building, managing change and delegation (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell 1989). Turner (2000) suggests that the call of Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) has still not been heeded when he states that a large number of heads of department have received no '...*systematic formalised training*' (Turner, 2000, p.301). He notes, echoing Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989), that '...*proven classroom competence and the acquisition of sufficient experience of teaching*' (Turner, 2000, p.301) remains the traditional basis on which heads of department are appointed. Glover *et al.* (1998), in a study covering five middle managers in each of seven schools, mention the predominance of '...*school-based "hit and miss management" courses*' (Glover *et al.*, 1998, p.289). They find some evidence, however, of schools engaging with the development needs of their middle managers but conclude '...*the research has indicated a need for (middle managers) to have structured opportunities to reflect on their role*' (Glover *et al.*, 1998, p.290)

Brown *et al.* (2000a), on the other hand, note that '...*the situation is changing rapidly*' (Brown *et al.*, 2000a, p.239) with regard to the training of heads of department, citing the National Standards for Subject Leaders (DfEE, 1998) as a step in this direction.

Whereas the above relates to formal training, Earley and Fletcher Campbell (1989) also note the advantages for a new head of department of having worked alongside senior departmental colleagues who were good role models and aware of their contribution to the development of the next generation of middle

managers. This theme is picked up by Turner (2000), who detects positive effects on practising heads of department of role models with whom they have previously worked. He is also able to note that most of the heads of department taking part in his research '...*recognised the need to be involved in the training and development process of their colleagues*' (Turner, 2000, p.312). Although this relates to continuing professional development in general, it suggests a move in the direction of developing colleagues as potential departmental managers. It further suggests an improvement since the NFER report (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989). Turner's research findings are limited, as to a large extent are those of this study, by being based entirely on the self-perceptions of the heads of department questioned.

Wise and Bush (1999) report on research into the main influences on decision making for heads of department. They do not include formal training or the influence of former senior colleagues among these, nor do they report the mention of these factors by any of their respondents. This tends to support Turner's (2000) assertion that this aspect of the head of department's role, while '...*vitally important*' is still '...*a neglected ... issue*' (Turner, 2000, p.299).

In the context of my research, it is interesting to note that none of the above mentioned authors makes mention of the head of department's needs for training in matters of her/his own pedagogy. Whereas this is unsurprising in the context of the studies being carried out, it further underlines the neglect of this vitally important aspect of the individual's overall professional role. The head of department's teaching skills are taken for granted on appointment and barely mentioned thereafter.

The attempts described above to analyse the role of both the primary school middle manager and the secondary school head of department shed light mainly on the administrative, management and leadership aspects of the role. For the purposes of this study, these are referred to as the management side of the dual

teacher/manager role. They provide a useful framework for individual action, and illustrate the enormous complexity of the management role. They do not, however, go far in explaining the aspect of the role which is the central theme of this research, the extent to which it is '...*doubly loaded*' (Dunning, 1993). I propose to seek further insights into this 'double load' by making reference to research into the role of the teaching head of the small primary school (Bell and Morrison, 1988; Dunning, 1993). The effects of the dual role of the head of department will be compared to those of the headteacher of a small primary school, who has to teach a class in addition to management responsibilities.

The teaching primary head

The role of the teaching primary head has much in common with that of the secondary school head of department. Both are in the position of having to operate within two spheres of the school's activity. The description of a doubly-loaded role (Dunning, 1993) can apply to both sets of individuals, in spite of detail differences in their daily tasks and overall responsibilities.

The difficulties facing primary school headteachers, who have to combine their management duties with those of a class teacher were recognised over thirty years ago. Dunning (1993) refers to the 1967 Gittens Report, which acknowledged '...*the problem of the "double loaded" teaching head*' (Dunning, 1993). He continues:

> *Yet twenty-five years later, the bipartite role remains a*
> *characteristic phenomenon of most small primaries and little has*
> *been done to alleviate the "demanding task" which Gittens*
> *recognised teaching headship to be* (Dunning, 1993, p81).

Dunning points out the considerable increase in complexity which had taken place between the Gittens report and the time at which he is writing, noting that the 1980's in particular had been an era of great change. He describes the role of the teaching head, adding that:

> *...this superficial description ignores the extent and complexity of the accumulation of developments affecting both the teaching and headship elements of the dual role and the teaching head responsible for a small school in the 1990's undertakes a task markedly different from that executed by his or her counterpart as little as a decade ago* (Dunning ,1993, p.81).

He goes on to summarise the role, which he describes as:

> *...a multifarious role involving the constituent elements of leadership of professional development and curriculum, management of organisational resources, public relations and finance, as well as the disparate responsibilities of being general administrator, planner, initiator, evaluator, assessor, appraiser, team builder, problem solver, decision maker and pastoral figurehead; and even this catalogue is not exhaustive* (Dunning, 1993, p.81).

This was, of course written prior to the onset of Key Stage 1/2 testing and the more recent introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours. The roles described are, however, in varying degrees those defined for the secondary school head of department in recent standards documents (OFSTED, 1997, DfEE, 1998). Although the head of department does not carry overall responsibility for an entire institution and is therefore likely to be less proactive in some areas, the demands are very similar and responsibility and accountability for success and failure are very real. In addition to this it could be added that, for example, a head of

humanities or science is responsible for a team of colleagues equally as diverse in terms of factors such as age, experience, subject expertise and motivation as a primary head.

Dunning cites a factor, which adds to the difficulties of the teaching head's role as:

> *...the lack of real freedom to determine an appropriate balance*
> *between teaching and managerial responsibilities with the former*
> *constraining flexibility of approach to the other aspects of the role*
> (Dunning, 1993, p.81).

It is the case that the teaching head, like the secondary school head of department is timetable led, as opposed to the non-teaching head or industrial/commercial manager, who is diary led. Thus the diary led manager who is aiming to introduce a new development or work with a particular colleague can choose the balance between these tasks and routine work. This is not an option for the timetable led manager who can only hope to fit such work into those timetable slots which are available or incorporate them into their schedule by lengthening their working day (Wise and Bush, 1999). Where work with colleagues is concerned, the latter may not be an option and many good intentions founder on this. It must be noted here that the secondary head of department may have more non-contact time than the teaching primary head whereas the latter, using part time teachers to cover her/his class, can choose when in the week not to teach.

Dunning goes on to note that:

> *...few other role holders in the school system will have experienced*
> *such an expansion of responsibilities and such limited change to*
> *the framework of their role as teaching heads in small schools*
> (Dunning, 1993, p.82).

He notes that, in the days '...*when non-teaching commitments were few and largely concerned with routine administration (as distinct from management and leadership)*', the dual role was perhaps '...*relatively undemanding*' (Dunning, 1993, p.82, bracket in original). This could be said for the secondary head of department's role, which was, prior to the 1980's, one of administration. I would contend that the secondary head of department can be counted among the '...*few other role holders*' (Dunning, 1993, p.82) mentioned above. For example, the description of the difficulties encountered by the teaching head given by Bell and Morrison (1988) could be understood with the term 'head of department' substituted for 'headteacher':

> *Theirs is a peculiar problem of reconciling the demands of the non-teaching headteacher's roles and yet being at the same time a class teacher ... Their potential for 'role strain' is stronger, as macro demands on the school become their day-to-day classroom lived experiences ... A level of sensitivity to macro demands and interpersonal working relationships is required in which teaching heads may well have to choose between their own headteacher role vis-à-vis public pressures and negotiating a working consensus with their colleagues ... At a theoretical level the compromise may be ideological whilst at a practical level part of the executive and administrative tasks of the headteacher may receive less than adequate attention, or the classroom aspect of the role may suffer, the teaching head simply having too much to do to fulfil each role sufficiently* (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.294).

If the similarities are great enough for the secondary head of department and teaching primary head to be comparable in this aspect of their role, then the strategies used by teaching primary heads to cope with the role strain (Grace, 1972; Bell and Morrison, 1988; Handy, 1993; Wise, 2001), which is inherent in their job, are relevant to secondary school heads of department.

Bell and Morrison's (1988) study involves twenty-five teaching heads of small schools (< 3.5 staff including the headteacher) and aims '...*to ascertain the ways in which teaching heads perceived their roles*' (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.204). This is achieved via a rating scale of twenty-nine aspects of the headteacher's role (see Appendix 2). These cover '...*professional, managerial and interpersonal qualities*' (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.204) rated on a five point Likert scale from 1= unimportant to 5 = very important (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.205). The headteachers are asked to rate each of the twenty-nine aspects separately, from the headteacher's perspective and the class teacher's perspective. The researchers find a high level of correlation between the two sets of ratings. They consider the possibility that the categories used are not sufficiently subtle to show differences of perception from heads' and teachers' perspectives (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.205) but state also the possibility that:

> ...*the reality of the situation has been fairly assessed – that teaching heads operate in one frame of reference, that they do not see their roles as teaching heads and class teachers as having to cause them to adopt significantly different behaviours* (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.205).

They conclude that, whereas non teaching heads operate within:

> ...*a hierarchical bureaucratic power structure with social distance maintained from class teachers (and move) into a different – teaching – paradigm when the occasion demands, teaching heads on the other hand evolve a different, single paradigm to incorporate their teaching and head roles in one* (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.205).

Bell and Morrison offer further evidence of this by placing the twenty-nine factors in rank order (see Appendix 2). This shows factors relating to '...*good interpersonal relationships and professional qualities*' to be '...*rated more highly than management or administrative roles*' (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.206). Furthermore they find that factors relating to '*accessibility, supportiveness, identification of teachers' interests*' to be rated consistently higher than '*authoritarianism, enforcement of discipline, setting priorities*' (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.206). Finally, they note a high rating for a '*collegial style of team membership*'. Bell and Morrison (1988) triangulate their research by conducting interviews with a random sample of fourteen of the heads. These are semi-structured interviews covering:

> ...*perceived conflicts in the role of the teaching head; problems faced by teaching as opposed to non-teaching heads; advantages and disadvantages of teaching heads; apportioning time to teaching and non-teaching duties; resolution of conflicts between teaching and non-teaching duties; how to cope with irresolvable conflict* (Bell and Morrison, 1988, pp.206-7).

The interviews show the heads to claim that their class is their first priority, an outcome, which accords with Wise and Bush's (1998) research with secondary heads of department. They see their administrative work as '...*interruptions to the real task of teaching the class*' (Bell and Morrison, 1998, p.207). All but three of the interviewees identify role conflict (Grace, 1972) but are able to counteract this in relation to time by the use of part time teachers, the equivalent of the secondary head of department's non-contact time. The question of interruptions to class teaching is addressed as a disadvantage of the dual role. The interviewees profess that they attempt to minimise such interruptions but have to train their class to cope with them when they inevitably happen. In stressing the advantages and disadvantages of the teaching head's role, the researchers note the most important advantages to be:

...greater awareness of, and involvement in school life, better
relationships with staff and pupils and greater influence on the
school atmosphere (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.207).

The chief disadvantages are seen to be:

...lack of time, difficulty of going into other classes and acquiring
an overview of the school. Interruptions and distractions and
greater workload (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.207).

It is interesting to note that '...*closeness to staff*' (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.207)
is perceived as a disadvantage. This relates to the teaching head's lesser ability to
maintain a '...*social distance*' (Bell and Morrison, 1988) from colleagues, thus
making the more managerial functions less ambiguous and conflicting. This is a
difficulty for the secondary head of department who must, as noted above, act as
team leader and team member. The position of the teaching head as a *class*
teacher rather than a *classroom* teacher muddies the waters of comparison slightly
in terms of, for example, the primary head's individual commitment to and
responsibility for the outcomes of her/his pupils, and the secondary head of
department's greater difficulty in training a larger number of children to cope with
interruptions, nevertheless the similarities are strong enough to suggest that the
conclusions of this study that:

...whilst there are clear conflicts and tensions in the role of the
teaching head it is inappropriate to regard their situation from the
perspective of the non-teaching head – they are a different animal
and operate within different paradigms (Bell and Morrison, 1988,
p.208).

might be applicable to the secondary head of department.

The research that follows will therefore be based on an adapted version of Bell and Morrison's (1988) research instrument. The aim will be to explore the perceptions of heads of departments of their doubly loaded (Dunning 1993) role and to ask the question whether the current emphasis on the administrative, managerial and leadership aspects of the role is appropriate.

The next chapter presents a theoretical discussion of the three data collection instruments used in this research. These are the postal questionnaire, the group interview and the individual interview.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH METHOD

Introduction

This chapter discusses the three data collection instruments used in this research.

- ❑ a postal questionnaire
- ❑ a group interview
- ❑ a series of individual interviews

The research is principally qualitative in character and so the chapter begins with a short overview of the nature of qualitative research. Practical issues connected with each of the three methods are discussed, with an emphasis on the effects of these data collection instruments on the data generated by them. Alongside the practical issues will be bullet points showing the action taken in this research.

As noted already, the aim of the study is to investigate the dual role of the head of department as teacher and manager, asking in particular the two following questions:

> What are the behaviour patterns adopted within the dual roles and does the head of department act principally as manager or teacher?

> How do heads of department perceive their dual role, in particular their ability to operate as effective teachers, while engaging with the demands of departmental management?

As the research is essentially based on perception and behaviour, and in view of practical limitations that will be discussed below; a small-scale case study

approach (Yin, 1984) was chosen, based on the heads of MFL departments in one county in Southern England. This approach was also appropriate in view of the nature of the numerous interwoven issues, which the research is attempting to disentangle.

The discussion of the three data collection instruments used in the research will take the form of a presentation of methodological issues surrounding the instruments along with the steps taken in this research to address those issues in practice.

The first tranche of data was collected via a postal questionnaire, sent to heads of foreign language departments throughout a county in the South of England. The second set of data was collected via a group interview involving the researcher and four of the group mentioned above. Thirdly, individual interviews were held, involving nine heads of language departments and three headteachers. Although there is a small element of quantitative data analysis arising from the questionnaire, the research is essentially qualitative.

The nature of qualitative research

Strauss and Corbin (1998) define qualitative research as '...*any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification*' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, pp.10-11). They go on to note that '...*some of the data may be quantified ...but the bulk of the analysis is interpretative*' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.11).

Qualitative research refers to the subjective experience of individuals (Cohen and Manion 1994) and recognizes the:

...socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship
between the researcher and what is studied and the situational
constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p.8).

There are a number of different types of qualitative research, which derive from ethnography, as practised in different cultural contexts over four centuries (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) use the term '*naturalism*' which, they state '*...proposes that, as far as possible, the social world should be studied in its "natural" state, undisturbed by the researcher*' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.6). This requires 'natural' settings, eschewing such artificial settings as formal interviews (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The researcher gives precedence to the phenomenon being studied rather than methodological principles (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). This does not mean that the researcher should stand outside the phenomenon being studied, maintaining distance and objectivity, as is the case with the positivist research paradigm (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Rather '*...the gendered researcher ...speaks from a particular class, racial, cultural and ethnic community perspective*' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p.23).

At the same time, qualitative researchers must recognize their relationship with the subject being studied. In my case, the study is one of a group to which I belong and the main overall motive for the research is a desire to understand better the professional situation in which I find myself. The methodological approach of this study owes something to a grounded theory approach, defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) as '*...theory that is derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process*' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.12).

The aim is not to test a pre-conceived hypothesis but to work towards a better understanding of the area of study via analysis of the data. My intention is, however, not to use the full grounded theory approach, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998). To refer to this research method as grounded theory would leave me open to the criticism of Richards and Richards, reported by Bryman and Burgess (1994), that '...*grounded theory is widely adopted as an approving bumper sticker in qualitative studies*' (Bryman and Burgess, 1994, p.6). The methodology is rather one that seeks to describe and explain rather than generate theory (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The aim is to allow analysis of data to feed into data collection by suggesting the approach for each successive phase.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note the danger of insufficient reflexivity in this kind of research methodology:

> *The data required to check a particular interpretation are often missing; the typicality of crucial items of data cannot be checked; or some of the comparative cases necessary for developing and testing the emerging set of analytic ideas have not been investigated* (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.205).

Olesen *et al.* (1994), describing a team approach to data analysis, remind especially the 'insider' of the danger of losing reflexivity:

> *The enduring necessity to be unremittingly and relentlessly reflexive was borne in on us time and again, as we stumbled through some parts of our analysis, but anticipated others* (Olesen *et al.*,1994, p.126).

The postal questionnaire

The first stage of this research was carried out using a postal questionnaire (see Appendix 3). The questionnaire began by requesting a range of personal details about the respondent. The aim of this was twofold. Firstly, to obtain a feel for the respondents in terms of their age, length of time as head of department, and the extent of their teaching commitment. Secondly, this section helped to ensure that the questionnaire was not returned by inappropriate respondents, i.e. non-heads of department. Although passing reference is made in the analysis to the length of service of some respondents, only the teaching commitment is dealt with in detail. As the research progressed, it became clear that a full analysis of the effects of length of service and department size would not be possible within the limits of a thesis of this length.

The main section of the questionnaire consisted of two identical sets of thirty attributes and role behaviours drawn from the TTA (1998) and OFSTED (1997) 'standards' documents as reviewed in Chapter 1. These attributes and role behaviours were put under three headings, relating to teaching, management and interpersonal behaviour. The three categories were not made explicit to the respondents as I wanted them to rate the items quickly and without considering to which of the aspects of the role they belonged. Respondents were asked to rate the items in the first list from the perspective of a teacher. Following that, the respondents were asked to turn the page and carry out the same procedure from the perspective of head of department. They were asked not to refer back to the previous list while doing this. The aim was to gather data from which judgements could be made as to whether the respondents rated the items in a similar or different way when considering them as a teacher and as a head of department. Further to this the use of three categories was aimed at ascertaining which, if any, of the three categories, teaching, management and interpersonal behaviour, might

be viewed as important by these heads of department. The use of the Likert scale with these thirty items was therefore aimed at collecting data to contribute to a judgement on my first research question: what are the behaviour patterns adopted within the dual roles and does the head of department act principally as teacher or manager?

Following the rating scales, I left a space on which I invited the respondents to write any thoughts about their role evoked by the questionnaire. This qualitative data was used to guide the outline schedule for the semi-structured interviews (see Appendices 4 and 5), and also to contribute to the second research question relating to heads of departments' perception of their dual role.

I will now consider the issue of the postal questionnaire as a data collection method, noting theoretical issues and, alongside them, the actions taken in my research and the effects of those actions on the data.

Practical issues related to the postal questionnaire

There are a number of stages to follow when undertaking a postal questionnaire, all of which have a bearing on the reliability of the instrument and the validity of the data collected using it (Borg and Gall, 1983; Bell, 1993; Czaja and Blair, 1996). These are: selecting a sample; constructing questions and questionnaire items; deciding the format; piloting; distribution and return; dealing with non-response. Practical issues related to these stages are discussed below in relation to the current research.

The selection of the sample - defined as '...*a set of elements selected in some way from a population*' (Schofield, 1996, p.25) - has far-reaching effects on the outcome of the research. In addition to theoretical considerations, there are practical issues, which drive it. The three major practical issues are the

availability of time to complete the survey, the adequacy of financial resources and the accessibility of the right people to supply the data (Bell, 1993).

❑ In selecting the respondents for this research, I had to take into account considerations of time and financial resources (Mason, 1996). These affected the sample size in terms of the time required to carry out the various stages of the survey, in particular the analysis and reporting of the data. The financial considerations included the cost of postage and stationery, and also had a bearing on the geographical location of the second stage interviews.

❑ The respondents in this research represent a proportion of the heads of MFL departments in one English county. Although they may be representative of the available population (Schofield, 1996) they are not necessarily representative of a wider population of MFL heads of department or subject leaders in general (Cohen and Manion, 1994). This inability to claim external validity is a limitation of the research. It must, however, be borne in mind that the researcher was following the advice of Mason (1996) in selecting the sample and analyzing the consequent data. Mason's (1996) example relates to a study of the voting habits of people aged fifty-five:

> *You are expecting the interview with your 55 year old to*
> *provide access to qualitative data which will help you to*
> *make sense of, for example, location and development*
> *within the life experience, biography and so on, of that*
> *person. You are emphatically **not** expecting your 55 year*
> *old to be representative for other 55 year olds simply*
> *because they possess the "characteristic" of being 55*
> (Mason 1996, p.97, emphasis in original).

The sampling unit, defined by Schofield as '*collections of elements which do not overlap and which exhaust the entire population*' (Schofield, 1996, p.27) is the

group of MFL heads of department in one English county. The county selected allows data to be obtained on heads of department from a range of school sizes, types and locations.

The sampling frame has been defined as '...*whatever is being used to identify the elements of each sampling unit*' (Schofield, 1996, p.27).

❑ In this research, the sampling frame consists of a list of heads of modern languages departments in the county, provided by the Advisory and Inspection Service (AIS). As the list is of individuals in regular contact with the AIS, I was confident that it was up to date and that the sampling frame was representative of the population to be described (Schofield, 1996).

The choice of sampling frame leads to a measure of bias in the survey results, as far as the entire population is concerned. Bias is defined by Schofield (1996) as:

> ...*an effect on the sample data from anything that moves the value of a statistic calculated from that sample (such as a mean) further from the true population value than would have been the case if that effect were not present* (Schofield, 1996, p.27, bracket in original).

❑ This research was possibly subject to some bias through the choice of the county in question. Although the county provided a range of school types and contexts, it contained no large cities. Heads of department in a shire county may have different views on their role from those in, for example, London or Birmingham. A head of department's views on role behaviour will be guided to an extent by the cultural context of the school in which s/he works. (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989). One example of this effect relates to staffing issues. The county in this research has fewer problems relating to staff

recruitment and retention than is the case in some other areas. The culture can therefore be expected to be different from that of those other areas.

A further source of possible bias is the sampling method.

❑ The sampling frame, a list of Modern Foreign Language Department Heads in the Local Education Authority (LEA), is to a certain extent a convenience sample in that, as a head of languages within the LEA area, it was easily accessible via the AIS. However, in order to extend the sample to subject areas other than languages, I asked the heads of languages who received my survey questionnaire to hand two further copies to colleague department heads of their choice. In doing so, I was aware that I was putting the reliability of my questionnaire into the hands of others. I felt that the risk was reasonable as I had no reason to doubt that my colleagues would comply with my request to hand the questionnaire only to heads of subject areas. Furthermore, by adding a section to the questionnaire requesting a range of personal information (see Appendix 3), I was able to judge whether or not the respondent was appropriate to my inquiry. This method was successful in that it allowed me to achieve a second sample, in this case a stratified random sample (Schofield, 1996), of heads of department which would, with reasonable confidence, cover a range of subject areas.

A further issue concerns the items on the questionnaire itself. Wolf (1988) describes three basic practical assumptions of a questionnaire as a 'self-report instrument'. These are:

> *The respondent can read and understand the questions or items.*
> *The respondent possesses the information to answer the questions.*
> *The respondent is willing to answer the questions or items*
> *honestly.*
> (Wolf, 1988, p.479).

The second of these assumptions relates to the sampling frame. The other two assumptions merit further discussion. As the researcher and the respondents in a postal survey do not meet each other, either face to face or via an intermediary (the interviewer), it is vital that the questionnaire items are properly understood by the respondent.

Cohen and Manion (1994) point out that:

> ...*where the sample being surveyed is representative of the whole adult population, misunderstandings of what researchers take to be clear, unambiguous language are commonplace* (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.93).

- ❏ This research involved respondents whose jobs were similar to that of the researcher, but care was still taken to restrict jargon and 'academic' language as far as possible, without compromising the meaning.

Where, as in this research, a rating scale using subjective words such as 'important' is employed, particular care must be taken at the pre-test stage to ensure that they are understood by respondents in the manner intended by the researcher.

- ❏ In this research, the respondent was asked to rate role behaviours of heads of department on a scale of one to five, where one was *very unimportant* and five *very important*. However, important to whom and in what manner? When asking the respondent to rate each item from the head of department's and then from the teacher's perspective, it was necessary to adjust the wording to make it as certain as possible that the respondent would know just what was meant by this. For example, looking at head of department role behaviour from a teacher's perspective could mean from *another* teacher's perspective,

i.e. that of a colleague, rather than from the head of department's *own* perspective as a teacher. The misunderstanding of a small point such as this would compromise the validity of the results obtained.

Ease of understanding also plays a role in maximizing response rates, along with the length of the questionnaire (Wolf, 1988). Fifteen minutes has been suggested as a maximum completion time for postal questionnaires (Wolf, 1988):

> *...a lengthy, time consuming questionnaire may cause a respondent to cease to co-operate after a period of answering questions. At best one will receive an incomplete questionnaire and, at worst, the questionnaire will not be returned* (Wolf, 1988, p.479).

Opinions vary on the optimum length for questionnaires (Czaja and Blair, 1996; Cohen and Manion, 1994). Burchell and Marsh (1992) refer to two studies, which suggest that long questionnaires result in lower response rates. At the same time, however, they report on research findings that, in postal surveys, the '...*number of items and not the physical length of the questionnaire puts people off*' (Burchell and Marsh, 1992, p.235). They conclude that longer surveys can be successful in achieving acceptably high response rates but require '...*careful packaging*' (Burchell and Marsh, 1992, p.235).

❑ In this research, the main motivator to keeping the questionnaire both short and easy to understand was the knowledge, both from research findings (Glover and Miller, 1999) and first hand experience, of the long hours being worked by teachers in general and middle managers in particular. So I designed a questionnaire, which I believed could be completed in five to ten minutes, a length of time held to be reasonable in terms of the respondent's interest and motivation. Piloting the questionnaire showed that it could be completed in five to eight minutes.

However carefully a questionnaire is designed and piloted, a measure of non-response can be expected.

❑ This was dealt with in the current research by follow-up letters and, as a last resort, telephone calls. The non-response rate for the questionnaire was 29%.

Finally, Cohen and Manion (1994) suggest that response rates are affected by the time of year, and even the time of the week, in which they are sent out:

> Thursday is the best day for mailing out; in surveys of
> organisations, Monday and Tuesday are recommended. Avoid at
> all costs a December survey (Cohen and Manion 1994, p.97).

❑ In this research the questionnaires were mailed to potential respondents in January 2000. The day of the week chosen was Monday.

I will now consider issues of the reliability and validity of the postal questionnaire as a research instrument, looking at the potential for errors in the data derived from it.

<u>Issues of reliability, validity and errors relating to the postal questionnaire</u>

Reliability. This is defined by Bell (1993) as '...*the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions*' (Bell, 1993, p.64). Swanborn (1996), noting the general agreement of researchers '...*on the fallible and provisional character of scientific knowledge and the theory ladenness of observations*' (Swanborn, 1996, p.20), refers to the notion of '...*intersubjective agreement*', which, he states, is '...*a common generally agreed upon stand in for the regulative idea of striving after truth*' (Swanborn, 1996, p.20).

Swanborn (1996) offers three measures of reliability:

> *Propositions about the empirical world should be, as much as is possible, independent in at least three respects: researcher independent; time independent; instrument independent* (Swanborn 1996, p21).

He notes that replication is very hard to achieve in practice and in many cases '...*reliability can only be assumed*' (Swanborn, 1996, p.22). Reliability based on researcher independence can be tested by the use by different researchers of the same questionnaire items (Czaja and Blair, 1996).

❑ In this research, this would be impossible to attain as it is an individual inquiry conducted in a limited time frame. The only course of action open to me was, therefore, to remain 'meaningfully attentive' (Peshkin, 1988) to my own subjectivity in the choice and wording of questionnaire items. This is particularly important in that I am 'on the inside' with regard to middle management in secondary schools and I had to take care, for example, to choose the items for the rating scale based as far as possible on issues raised in the literature surveyed in Chapter 2.

Swanborn's (1996) second test of reliability is that a research instrument is time-independent, that the same responses would be given by respondents at different times

❑ This was impractical with regard to the questionnaire element of this research but a measure of time independence for the research as a whole was offered by the use of follow-up interviews.

The interviews also enable Swanborn's (1996) third condition for reliability to be fulfilled. This is instrumental independence. Here triangulation (Denzin, 1978), the use of more than one method of data collection and the cross-checking of results from them, can be used to check the data obtained from a questionnaire.

Once the reliability of a research instrument has been thoroughly checked, however, it must be remembered that, as Swanborn (1996) states:

> *Reliable results do not necessarily constitute valid results. Validity means, in a very general sense, that our propositions describe and explain the empirical world in a correct way; in a stricter sense: that they are free from random as well as-systematic errors*
> (Swanborn, 1996, p.22).

Validity. The validity of data collected from a postal questionnaire is subject to a number of possible errors (Scheaffer *et al.,* 1996). These are errors relating to non-observation, non-response, the respondent, and the measurement instrument and question type.

Errors of non-observation. These may arise from problems relating to coverage (Scheaffer *et al.,* 1996). Although I have access to heads of department of modern languages in theory, errors may arise in cases where the head of department is on sick leave and the questionnaire reaches his/her deputy or another colleague. This person may disregard the questionnaire, resulting in non-response, which will be discussed below. They may alternatively decide to fill the questionnaire in from their own perspective. Furthermore, the extra copies may be handed to colleagues who are not, themselves heads of department. This latter error could occur, however, even if the original letter reaches the MFL head of department, in that the intended respondent may delegate the completion of the questionnaire. (Scheaffer *et al.,* 1996)

❑ In this research, the completion of the questionnaire by a teacher who was not a head of department could have compromised validity of the data. For this reason, a biographical section preceded the main body of the questionnaire in order that inappropriate replies could be sifted out.

Errors of non-response. These relate to more than just a practical issue, having an effect on the validity of data that cannot be ignored (Taris, 1996). Not only does non-response lead to a low statistical power, due to small sample size (Taris, 1996), there is also the risk that this non-response is not random and that groups who tend to be under-represented in samples are the ones who opt out of the study. In a multi-wave study, for example, decreasing non-response rates, which may on the surface appear encouraging, could be an indicator that the remaining sample has become unrepresentative (Taris, 1996).

❑ In this research, the heads of department who did not respond to the survey and/or declined to be interviewed may have been the busiest individuals and a useful source of data. Furthermore, data from them may have differed from those generated by the research subjects. As mentioned above, efforts were made to minimize non-response by follow-up letters and telephone calls.

As Scheaffer *et al.* (1996) point out, it is not acceptable to judge the validity of a survey, simply by quantifying the non-response rate:

> *This is a mistake because a small nonresponse rate could still cause a survey to miss an important part of the population ... Data from a survey with a high nonresponse rate could still be informative if the nonrespondents looked like the respondents in all important characteristics. The important consideration is the nature of the nonrespondents. A good. survey must attempt to obtain some information on this group in order to measure how far from the respondent group it may be* (Scheaffer *et al.,* 1996, p.52).

The non-response problem can be addressed by the use of follow-up interviews with non-respondents in order to compare their results with those of respondents (Cohen and Manion, 1994). This, of course, requires considerable skill and patience on the part of the interviewer to secure and carry out such interviews, but it is useful in that, as Moser and Kalton, quoted by Bell (1993), point out:

> ...*non-response is a problem because of the likelihood – repeatedly confirmed in practice – that people who do not return questionnaires differ from those who do* (Bell, 1993, p.86).

❑   In this research it was not practical to use follow-up interviews in view of the lack of time. It is a limitation of the validity of this research that, even after telephone calls and follow-up letters, a proportion of the intended respondents did not contribute to the data.

Errors relating to the respondent. These may arise, as it cannot be taken for granted that accurate replies will be given in all cases. For example, where people regard an aspect of behaviour as negative, they may indulge in 'impression management' (Booth-Kewley *et al.* 1992). This could take the form of under-reporting. Over-reporting may also be possible, for example, teenage boys reporting sexual activity.

❑   In this research, items on the ratings scale may have been accorded importance by respondents with respect to their perceived desirability, perhaps in relation to OFSTED or to perceptions of what colleague heads of department may be able to achieve. This was countered to an extent by the collection of data via other methods, in this case interviews.

The data are affected not only by the respondents themselves but also by the questionnaire and its items. There is, in fact, an overlap between the two categories (Scheaffer *et al.,* 1996).

Errors relating to the measuring instrument and question type. These errors may arise, as the postal survey places great importance on the respondent's ability to understand the questions and to interpret them in the manner intended by the researcher (Czaja and Blair, 1996):

> *We need to think through each question from the perspective of plausible situations to judge whether all or most respondents will be able to answer it in the expected manner* (Czaja and Blair, 1996, p.64).

Confusion relating to the definition of key words may lead to inaccurate responses (Scheaffer *et al.,* 1996). For example, in this research, the use of the word 'important' on the ratings scale. Does it mean important in theoretical or practical terms? What is the expected response to this 'importance'? This reminds us of the difficulties involved in the interpretation of any text (Usher, 1996). Wright *et al.,* (1995) quoting Clark, note that *'the secret of language use lies in the users – the speakers and listeners'* (Wright *et al.,* 1995, p.175).

Molenaar (1991) states that:

> *...responses to survey questions may be significantly altered by apparently trivial changes in the wording, the form and the context of the questions* (Molenaar, 1991, p.172).

He notes how different words, although conveying the same meaning, can elicit different responses. A further example of the effect of question wording concerns the use of intensifiers, which Wright *et al.,* (1995) found did '*...not seem to affect*

listeners in the way intended by speakers' (Wright *et al.,* 1995, p.174). This
suggests the need to take care with the use of adjectives in questionnaire design.

❑   In this research the questionnaire was piloted before the main survey in order
     to try to predict where misunderstandings might take place. The instructions to
     the rating scales were re-worked as a result of this pilot.

The data may also be affected by the question type. For example, how does the
use of open and closed questions affect response? Molenaar (1991) reports the
work of Schumann, who found that '...*any issue was more likely to be endorsed
in the closed question than volunteered in the open question*' (Molenaar, 1991,
p.174). Cohen and Manion (1994) go so far as to advocate the complete
avoidance of open-ended questions in postal surveys.

❑   The questionnaire in this research included an open section for response on
     any aspect of the role. This was felt to be acceptable in view of the perceptual
     nature of the research. The choice is supported by Silverman (1993), who sees
     the open ended question as an effective route towards '...*an authentic
     understanding of people's experiences*' (Silverman, 1993, p.10).

Similarly, the provision of the middle response has been shown to affect replies
(Molenaar, 1991) with respondents about 20% more likely to give a middle
response if it was offered than if it was not.

❑   The ratings scale used in this research featured five possible replies. Although
     the risk suggested by Molenaar (1991) was increased by this, it was felt
     necessary to give the respondent a wider choice of response than would have
     been the case with a four-point scale. This was mainly because of the doubts
     about the subtlety of the questionnaire items raised by Bell and Morrison
     (1988).

The second instrument used for data collection was the interview, both in individual and group form. I will now discuss methodological issues relating to the group interview, with reference to the interview carried out in this research.

The group interview

The group interview for this research was carried out in June 2000. It involved four MFL heads of department and took place at the researcher's home. The interview, which lasted approximately 75 minutes, was conducted by the researcher. A copy of the semi-structured schedule for this interview can be found in Appendix 4.

Issues of validity, reliability and errors relating to group interviews

There are a number of practical and ethical issues affecting the validity of data generated by group interviews. The following issues will be discussed below: costs in terms of time and finance; the size and composition of the group; the physical arrangements affecting the interview environment and the recording and transcription of data. Following that will be a discussion of two further variables affecting the data. These are the effect of the interviewer and interaction within the group.

Time and Finance. With regard to time and finance, the group interview has the advantage of being inexpensive both in terms of time (Lewis, 1992) and finance (Fontana and Frey, 1998). It has advantages for the lone researcher in that an interview with five teachers takes considerably less time than five individual interviews. This gain is offset to an extent by the time spent setting up the 'event'.

Furthermore, the researcher's travelling time and possible stress is transferred to the interviewees. The effect of this will be mentioned below.

❑ In the case of this research protracted negotiations were necessary to ensure that five busy heads of department were in the right place at the right time. Even then, one was lost at the last minute owing to illness, with consequent effects on the data. The reduction in travel for the researcher was also a personal gain in financial terms. However, the interviewees should be, and were, offered travelling expenses.

The size and composition of interview groups. There are no hard and fast rules for these factors (Lewis, 1992). Friendship groups have been suggested as advantageous for children (Lewis, 1992) and this could be the case for adults. For example, a group of colleagues who already know each other represents a group at a more mature stage in its development than one of strangers. The group has passed through the stage at which the actual formation of it plays a strong role in what is done and said (see Handy, 1993 on stages of group development). This kind of group may have reached the 'performing' stage of its development (Handy, 1993) and is perhaps also less likely to contain one individual who dominates the conversation in such a way as to prevent others from contributing to their best effect (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987). With regard to the size of the group, an interview with only two participants is regarded by Watts and Ebbutt (1987) as having constraints which give it more in common with an individual than a group interview. Lewis (1992) finds no consensus of opinion on group size, referring to researchers who have advocated three or four as an optimum number, some who have suggested six or seven as a maximum and others (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987) who interviewed in groups of between nine and fifteen. The suggestion is, however, that the larger the group, the more attention was likely to be '...*diverted from the main task*' (Lewis, 1992, p.418). The size and composition of the group depend on the sampling policy of the researcher, who may regard a random form of sampling as more important in the context of the research than any potential advantage gained by using, say, a friendship group.

❏ In this research, the group interview sample consisted of volunteers who were prepared to travel to my home at the end of a teaching day. These individuals were, by definition, interested in talking about their jobs. A different set of data could have been collected from others who were perhaps not so keen on airing their views. This researcher's choice, although based principally on practicality, is supported by Fontana and Frey (1998), quoting Blumer (1969), who mentions:

> *...seeking participants ... who are acute observers and who are well informed ... A small number of such individuals brought together as a discussion and resource group, is more valuable many times over than any representative sample* (Fontana and Frey, 1998, p.54).

The interview environment. This must be considered, once the size and composition of the group is set. The meeting of a number of people at a particular time and place can affect the data in a number of ways. One is that they are arriving from different journeys undertaken following a different set of experiences through the day. One may have had a heavy teaching day, another a dispute with a colleague and so on.

❏ In this research, this effect was offset to an extent by a preliminary social chat and cup of tea in which the participants were quietly encouraged to talk about their day in the hope that, as far as possible it could be left outside the interview room. This was done in a separate room without recording equipment.

This leads to the interview environment itself. Denscombe (1995) reports on interviews in which '*...there was a deliberate policy of allowing the interviewees to choose for themselves where they wanted to sit*' (Denscombe, 1995, p.134).

Lewis (1992) suggests a seating arrangement, which allows eye contact between individual participants rather than forcing them all to focus on the interviewer.

❑ This advice was followed in the group interview for this research, which took place around a rectangular table with the participants facing each other. This allowed a more natural interchange of views rather than encouraging a question and answer session. At the same time it allowed the researcher to observe the facial expression and body language of the interviewees.

The recording of the interview. Once the physical environment has been chosen, recording must be taken into account. It would clearly be a practical impossibility for the lone researcher to make adequate notes during a group interview. Similarly in an interview of any length, the interviewer could not be expected to remember more than snatches of information. Whereas a second researcher could make detailed notes, to do so would still be very difficult in the context of a group discussion and, in any case, would prevent him/her from fulfilling the role of 'balance' as mentioned below. The only solution is to record the interview either on audio or video tape, a process which is itself not without problems.

Firstly, there are technical problems of positioning microphones in such a way as to be able to record clearly all that is said (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987). Highly effective conference microphones are available but their cost would detract from the economy of the method (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987). The clarity of the recording is likely to be a function of the quality and availability of recording equipment and the acoustic properties of the space in which the interview is taking place. Expert help in the setting up and positioning of the equipment can go some way towards offsetting any intrinsic drawbacks.

❑ In this research, the equipment was set up and tested by a qualified technician following the researcher's requirements. This maximised the effectiveness of

the recording, leading to the production of a tape from which it was possible to transcribe the data without difficulty.

Secondly, the presence of recording equipment and microphones may serve to inhibit some participants and/or make them more self-conscious than they would otherwise be. At the same time, the more outgoing individual may be tempted to 'perform' for the microphone. This can be counteracted by allowing the group time to form and settle, preferably with the tape running, before the data gathering begins.

❑ This was the case in this research, where social conversation continued for two-to-three minutes before I introduced the topic for discussion.

Another tactic is to deflect attention from the microphones by making the context of the interview as natural as possible. The researcher whose work is reported by Denscombe (1995) made available '...*a selection of drinks and food ... which interviewees were invited to have at any time during the interviews*' (Denscombe, 1995, p.134). Although video tape has the advantage over audio of being able to detect non verbal communication, the presence of a video camera can make people, not least the interviewer, even more self-conscious than an audio tape recorder.

❑ In the group interview for this research, refreshments were offered at the beginning and kept on the table throughout the recording, with an open invitation to the respondents to take food and drink at any time.

Transcription of the data. This is necessary if the information gained in the course of the interview is to be used to the full. This in itself is a time consuming task, which, in the case of the lone spare time teacher-researcher, will invariably fall to the moderator. This was the case in this research. Time can only be saved on this

task with careful attention to the points made above with regard to the quality of recording.

A further aid to transcription noted by Lewis (1992) is the use where possible of the names of the participants. In this research names were used early on in order to establish the identity of the voices. Although not critical in this research, such an approach is particularly important in cases where the moderator does not know participants well enough to be able to recognise their voices on tape. Lewis also points out, however, that:

> ...if focus is on group norms, and this is the underlying purpose of
> the research, then it may be unnecessary to try to disentangle
> individual identities on the tape (Lewis, 1992, p.419).

Where the recording equipment fails to deliver a clear tape, there may be the necessity to return to the participants to seek clarification in order to authenticate the data. Following a group interview this can be a more difficult proposition than when only one individual has been involved (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987). This can be circumvented by the use of a spokesperson for the group. In the research reported by Denscombe (1995), the participants were given transcripts of the interviews and given the opportunity to comment on them. This '...proved to be a source of valuable interpretation of the interviews' (Denscombe, 1995, p.140).

❑ This course of action was considered but was rejected for practical reasons. The foremost among these was that the individuals involved had consented only to the one group interview session. To ask them to spend more time reading and responding to the transcript was felt to be unreasonable.

The above issues are essentially of a practical nature. Further validity and reliability issues relate to the effect on the data of the researcher and the group members.

As Scott (1996) points out '...*all types of research involve selective and thus value-laden interventions of different types during their conduct*' (Scott, 1996, p.59). Thus I can only approach my work from the point of view of someone of my age, gender, race and professional and personal experience. Denscombe (1995) notes:

> *...an individual's personal identity and background carry the potential to blind her/him to certain events and heighten sensitivity to others.* (Denscombe, 1995, p.134)

The effect of the interviewer on the group and the data collected can be offset by the use of a second researcher in the interview process. Denscombe (1995) refers to this second person as a '...*balance*' (Denscombe, 1995, p.134). The 'balance' is incorporated in order to '...*offset any cultural bias resulting from the gender and race of the principal researcher*' (Denscombe, 1995, p.134). The intention is that this person will not only act as a 'third eye' picking up, for example, asides and body language which have been missed by the principal researcher but will also add his/her own interpretation of events where possible (Denscombe, 1995). Watts and Ebbutt (1987), although choosing not to use another person in their research, quote Keegan and Powney, who found that the presence of a second person:

> *...took pressure off the moderator, by having someone else who was going to ... pick up points that were missed ... the person who was not actually doing the interviewing could see a person hesitating in the group who was trying to say something but really couldn't bring herself to do so* (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987, p.28).

The success of including the second interviewer or 'balance' may depend on the established relationships between the interviewer and the participants. Some

individuals may find it intimidating to have a second person observing them. They may even then be more likely to put on a performance for that person, again, depending in part on whether they knew him/her or craved his/her attention and/or respect.

- ❑ The use of a second researcher in the group interview for this research was considered but rejected on the grounds of lack of availability of a suitable colleague. To have done so, however, may have had a positive effect on the validity of the data collected (Denscombe 1995).

Having made the decision whether or not to use a 'balance', there remains the question of the role of the interviewer/moderator in the interview.

Watts and Ebbutt (1987), referring to the work of Keegan and Powney, regard the term 'group leader' as inappropriate in this context. This is because the role is regarded not as one of leading a group but of facilitating group discussion, of being a neutral chairperson (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987). This neutrality, of course, must always be viewed with a certain mistrust. As Scott (1996) reminds us:

> *The researcher's time bound concerns serve to structure the*
> *interviews and impose an agenda on them. The role they are*
> *perceived as playing shapes the data which are collected* (Scott,
> 1996, p.65).

- ❑ In an effort to minimise effects on the data, I attempted to view myself not as an interviewer but as a moderator or facilitator (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987). Although this could be dismissed as mere semantics, the avoidance of terms which stress the question-answer nature of the situation can be helpful.

Walmsley (1993) advises the researcher to explain the purpose of the research to the participants. There is an ethical issue here in so far as research subjects should know what it is they are doing. As Walmsley (1993) asks:

...how can you justify asking people to reveal details of their lives without telling them what you are trying to find out?' (Walmsley, 1993, p.40).

She goes on to state that '*...there is a tendency to fudge explanations*' (Walmsley, 1993, p.42), especially in view of the frequent need to find new language in order effectively to explain what you are doing. As Walmsley points out: '*...one finds oneself translating the research into a new language*' (Walmsley, 1993, p.39). Furthermore, Walmsley notes that she found '*...the process of explaining quite uncomfortable*' (Walmsley, 1993, p.44). This researcher's experiences in explaining the intentions of the study support Walmsley's (1993) points, especially in the context of dealing with experienced and knowledgeable 'insiders'.

❑ Walmsley's (1993) advice was followed, and the purpose of the research explained to the group at the beginning of the interview. The discomfort noted by Walmsley (1993) was felt, especially with regard to the need to explain enough of the aims of the research without prompting too much of the ensuing conversation

A further practical issue with regard to the moderator relates to the skill of chairing a discussion, setting the pace and moving it on at the right time while still allowing it to flow (Lewis, 1992; Fontana and Frey, 1998). This includes the question of how to deal with the individual who dominates the discussion (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987).

The task is one of achieving the optimum balance between allowing the dominant individual to express her/his views while not neglecting the quieter members of the group. Watts and Ebbutt (1987) quote Keegan and Powney, who suggest that the moderator should attempt to use the dominant participant as a stimulus to elicit the views of others. At times they would even encourage the rest of the group to '...*gang up against the dominant person*' (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987, p.29).

- ❑ In this group there was one member, Bethan, who tended to dominate, being a naturally forceful character. A tactic used to counteract the effects of this was to deflect the utterances of the dominant individual by asking the group's views on what she had said.

Another challenge for the moderator is to avoid too great a feeling of responsibility for the well-being of the group. Atkinson (1993) states that she '...*felt responsible for the atmosphere in group meetings so that people would feel comfortable, relaxed and valued*' (Atkinson, 1993, p.64). She points out the need to take care that such a feeling as this does not lead to a loss of validity of data through misunderstandings, missed cues or misinterpretations. That said, it is important for the moderator, having begun the interview session properly, to finish it with equal care. As Atkinson (1993) states '...*responsibility for research continues up to and including its ending*' (Atkinson, 1993, p.69).

- ❑ In this group interview, the pleasant surroundings, refreshments and preliminary 'chat' contributed to a relaxed atmosphere. The interview concluded with a request to the group members to offer thoughts on the process. This served in part as a de-brief, allowing issues to be reconciled before the interviewees left the venue.

The task of the group interviewer is not one of conducting different interviews at the same time (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987). It is rather a case of facilitating, as Watts and Ebbutt, quoting Walker, state:

>...*a comprehensive exchange of views in which all participants are able to "speak their minds" and respond to the ideas of others* (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987, p.25).

In this context, the interaction between members of the group assumes a level of importance comparable with that of the interaction between group members and the interviewer (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987). Denscombe (1995) notes one of the advantages of the group interview as its potential to:

>...*expose details about how the participants relate to one another and offer some data on shared perspectives rather than individual views* (Denscombe, 1995, p.137).

This interaction of participants offers, as Denscombe (1995), referring to the work of Burgess, notes, a measure of triangulation, in so far as '...*events, legends, actions and attitudes are subjected to peer scrutiny and evaluation*' (Denscombe, 1995, p.137). The opportunity, as Lewis (1992), discussing group interviews with children, states '...*to challenge one another's views*' (Lewis, 1992, p.413), can counteract the tendency of interview subjects to conceal or modify the truth (Cohen and Manion, 1994). This can be particularly helpful where the data sought concern historical events where the memory of one participant can be checked by others. At the same time, however, individuals may give different answers in the group context from those expected in an individual interview (Lewis, 1992):

>*Group interviews produce statements which are in line with group norms to a much greater extent than may happen with individual interviews* (Lewis, 1992, p.414).

The possibility of discussion within the group, provided that the researcher is not operating a 'no discussion' rule (Lewis, 1992), is a further aid to producing a greater range of data than would be possible from a series of one-to-one interviews. Fontana and Frey (1998) describe the technique as:

> ...*data rich, flexible, stimulating to respondents, recall aiding and cumulative and elaborative, over and above individual responses* (Fontana and Frey, 1998, p.55).

Lewis (1992) points out the risk of interviewees '...*tagging-on to ideas introduced by others*' (Lewis, 1992, p.416). Although Lewis' work is with children, the same may occur in interviews with adults with both positive and negative effects on validity of data. On the one hand, it may indicate that the point being made is of particular importance to that person along with others in the group, or it is something which the individual in question may not have wished, or been able to, articulate in an individual interview. As such, the group dynamic can help the researcher to identify salient points for investigation, both in the immediate context of the interview and at a later time, perhaps on a one-to-one basis. This is particularly relevant when the group interview is being used to '...*clarify research ideas or to verify data collected through other methods*' (Lewis, 1992, p.416). On the other hand it may be a question of a weaker or less articulate individual simply latching on to the views of others and/or wishing to appear to hold a consensus view. In addition to this, the group interview precludes the possibility of individual research subjects conferring when one has been interviewed and the other not (Lewis, 1992).

❑ In this research, the effects of the group dynamic were accepted in the group interview situation. Effects of this on the data were counteracted as far as possible by the use of individual interviews in the subsequent stage.

As mentioned above, a major threat to validity of data collected through any interview, group or individual, is constituted by the interviewer him/herself and the method chosen (Cohen and Manion, 1994). As Scott (1996) points out:

> *The data that emerge are the direct consequences of the method used to collect them, and have therefore been structured by the social activity which constitutes that method* (Scott, 1996, p.65).

Whereas the interviewer has her/his own agenda, it is important to remember that interviewees, both as individuals and groups, may well have their own (Atkinson 1993). Furthermore, there is a power relationship between the interviewer and the research subject(s) which, however hard the former may try to counteract it, always has the balance tipped in her/his favour (Scott, 1996). As Walmsley (1993), quoting Lazerfield, points out '*...the shared contexts and assumptions of daily question and answer are absent from the interview situation*' (Walmsley, 1993, p.37).

The danger of interviewees making untruthful disclosures has been mentioned above (Cohen and Manion, 1994). At the time of writing I can find no research evidence to suggest that group interviewing could lessen this likelihood in the case of adults. Lewis (1992), writing about children in this context states that:

> *...a willingness to give replies to nonsensical questions may be reduced in group interviews because the support of a peer group gives a child the courage to challenge the adult's question* (Lewis, 1992, p.417).

This increases the likelihood that children will '*...question the interviewer, seek clarification or to express uncertainty*' (Lewis, 1992, p.417). Furthermore, the stimulus of the group discussion could well overcome memory limitations, as mentioned above, and, through the dilution of the influence of the interviewer,

counteract any susceptibility to leading questions. In view of the power relations between interviewer and research subject (Scott, 1996), there is reason to believe that the group interview could lead to similar results with adults in certain cases. I will now turn to the individual interview.

The individual interview as a research method

The third and final stage of data collection in this research consisted of individual interviews with nine MFL heads of department and three headteachers. These took place in July 2000. They were conducted by the researcher, who also transcribed the resulting cassette tape. A copy of the semi-structured schedule for these interviews can be found in Appendix 5. I will now discuss methodological issues relating to the individual interview as a data collection instrument, covering issues of validity and reliability. Alongside this discussion will be a note of what I did in relation to the theoretical issues.

Issues of validity, reliability and errors relating to the individual interview

Interviews range from the highly structured, formal kind, in which the researcher is doing little more than administering a questionnaire with the interviewee, through to a non-directive unstructured interview, in which the interviewer's role is subordinate to that of the interviewee. (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Between the two extremes lie interviews of greater structure, in which the interviewer can modify questions, change the order in which they are asked, give explanations or put supplementary questions in response to things said by the interviewee. There are also interviews of lesser structure, in which the interviewer has his/her agenda of items but introduces them in a more conversational style (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Cohen and Manion (1994) quote the definition of a research interview given by Cannell and Kahn:

(The research interview is) a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.271).

This explanation which, as Watts and Ebbutt (1987) note, '*...allows for either structured or very unstructured interviewing*' (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987, p.25), is accepted as the basis for the current discussion.

The interview can form part of a triangulated approach, a set of data gathering instruments where methods are combined '*...for supplementary, complementary, informational, developmental and other reasons*' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.28). In addition to its role in this '*...interplay of methods*' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.33), the interview can also be used, as in this research, as part of a strategy of between method triangulation (Denzin, 1978).

Such a strategy involving, in the case of this research a postal questionnaire, a group interview and individual interviews, allows for a counterbalancing of advantages and disadvantages of the chosen methods. For example, the respondent completing the postal questionnaire has no-one to whom to refer to check items. At the same time, there is no interviewer present to follow up replies and introduce his/her own subjectivity into the proceedings.

Cohen and Manion (1994) express the need for some form of triangulation as follows:

Exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality she is investigating. She needs to be confident that the data generated are

not simply artefacts of one specific method of collection (Cohen
and Manion, 1994, p.233).

Cohen and Manion (1994) go on to state that triangulation is at its most effective
where methods used are contrasting. The similarities of questionnaire and
interview research have been mentioned above and participant observation, for
example, may offer greater claims to validity as a complement to a questionnaire.
There are, however, practical issues involved which necessitate certain
compromises.

□ In this research, time constraints precluded the use of participant observation.
As a practising teacher, I was allowed only three days to carry out research in
the field. It was felt that the individual interview was the most cost and time
effective method in terms of a balance between quantity and quality of data.

Such compromises must, of course, be taken fully into account in subsequent
claims to knowledge. The issue of validity of data arising from interview research,
whether individual or group, is linked to the nature of the interview process. As
mentioned above, the interviews in this research contained elements of both
structured and unstructured approaches. The relative merits of these approaches
are discussed briefly below.

There are a number of issues that suggest weaknesses in the choice of
interviewing as the only data collection method in a research project.

Firstly, where a particular event is being probed, the inevitable time lapse between
that event and the interview means that there is a large element of
'...*retrospective analysis*' (Scott, 1996, p.66). The danger is that interviewees
behave as '...*actors giving accounts of how they feel they should have behaved as
well as how they feel they did behave*' (Scott, 1996, p.66). Where particular
outlooks, preferences or priorities are being investigated, the interviewer must

probe carefully to establish the links between theory and practice. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note:

> *(The formal interview) represents a distinctive setting, and it*
> *follows from this that the participant understandings elicited there*
> *may not be those which underlie behaviour elsewhere.*
> (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.139).

It is not necessarily a question of interviewees simply lying in the interview setting, although this may indeed be the case where certain sensitive issues are being discussed. The individual may wish to protect his/her own interests or put a particular gloss on previous actions in order to justify better what was done. On the other hand, as Scott (1996) states, referring to the work of Mead (1934):

> *No deceit may be involved ... the self is forever evolving and this*
> *both reconstitutes itself at different moments and, more*
> *importantly, reconstitutes reality, both past and present* (Scott,
> 1996, p.66).

❑ The possibility of misreporting may exist in this research as the interviewees were known to the researcher and in similar jobs. This relationship, on the other hand, may make it more likely that colleagues speak openly. The issue was addressed principally by guaranteeing the interviewees as much anonymity as possible. Names used in the data analysis are pseudonyms and the county in question is not identified in the thesis.

Whether the misreporting is intentional or not, the researcher must be constantly aware of its possible effects on the data.

Researchers must also take account of the effect of the interviewer upon the data collected from individual interviews. This effect will be discussed below with regard to structured and unstructured interviews.

The structured interview is defined by Cohen and Manion (1994) as '...*one in which the content and procedures are organised in advance*' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.273). Questions to be asked and other items to be introduced are decided beforehand. The order of items is fixed and, where deviation from this is allowed, the nature and extent of such deviation is planned in advance and rigidly adhered to. The structured interview serves a positivist approach in which:

> *...interview data give us "facts" about the world; the primary issue is to generate data which are valid and reliable independently of the research setting* (Silverman, 1993, p.90).

If standardisation to this level is to be achieved, even the means by which the interviewer establishes rapport with respondents must be pre-specified and adhered to (Sjoberg and Nett, 1968).

The aim is thus to produce a standardised protocol which enables the researcher to '...*generate data which hold independently of both the research setting and the researcher or interviewer*' (Silverman, 1993, p.92). This approach is particularly important when establishing a reliable interview schedule to be administered by more than one interviewer. On the practical level it allows savings in time, labour and, consequently, money (Sjoberg and Nett, 1968). Analysis can be built into the questionnaire or schedule via a coding scheme and is less difficult and time-consuming than data analysis from less structured interviews (Silverman, 1993).

❑   The interviews in this research were all conducted by the researcher. This allowed for a less rigid, semi-structured approach, with side issues followed

up where necessary and, if productive, brought into the discussion with subsequent respondents.

The structured interview has drawbacks, which may detract from reliability claims made by its advocates. As in postal questionnaires, errors will naturally occur as a result of a respondent giving an inaccurate response. Furthermore, questions or items on the interview schedule may be flawed, as indeed may be the questioning technique of the individual interviewer (Fontana and Frey, 1998).

However hard the researcher tries to eliminate the scope for bias on the part of the interviewer or inaccuracy on the part of the respondent, as Fontana and Frey, 1998) point out:

> ...*structured interviewers are aware that interviews take place in a social interaction context, and they are influenced by that context* (Fontana and Frey, 1998, p.53).

Sjoberg and Nett (1968), quoting the work of Warner and Lunt of some sixty years ago, note that:

> ...*the bias of the researcher is implicit within the framework and the detail of a questionnaire or schedule. The answers to the questionnaire are not answers to the questions asked but to what the subject thinks is being asked, and there is little or no opportunity for the fieldworker using such a technique to discover the difference* (Sjoberg and Nett, 1968, p.194).

This relates to the notion of the double hermeneutic reported by Scott (1996). Both researcher and research subject are '...*engaged in interpretative activity*' (Scott, 1996, p.67):

Researchers interpret through their own conceptual and
perceptual lens the interpretations made by those being studied.
The double hermeneutic involved in this renders problematic the
validity of data collected in this way. (Scott, 1996, p.67).

The researcher employing structured interviewing must, on the one hand, attempt
to minimize bias and, on the other, take account of its inevitability. Proponents of
less structured interview techniques such as those employed by ethnographers
(Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995), while attaching importance to interviewer
effects, make the point that:

...minimizing the influence of the researcher is not the only, or
always even a prime consideration. Assuming we understand how
the presence of the researcher may have shaped the data, we can
interpret the latter accordingly and it can provide important
insights (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.131).

Unstructured interviews raise particular issues, which must be addressed. Fontana
and Frey (1998) state the difference between structured and unstructured
interviewing as follows:

The former aims at capturing precise data of a codable nature in
order to explain behaviour within pre-established categories,
whereas the latter is used in an attempt to understand the complex
behaviour of members of society without imposing any a priori
categorization that may limit the field of enquiry (Fontana and
Frey, 1998, p.56).

This kind of interview can be seen as a route to minimizing interviewer bias. It is,
however, as Sjoberg and Nett (1968) point out:

...by no means lacking in structure. After all, if the researcher is to
sustain his role as a social scientist, he must attempt to structure
every interview. He must as a minimum clarify his goals, if only to
himself (Sjoberg and Nett, 1968, p.211).

Fontana and Frey (1998) list basic elements of unstructured interviewing which must be taken into account prior to the interview itself. These are, of course, shared with structured interviewing, both with individuals and groups.

Firstly, informants must be chosen and the setting must be accessed. There are gatekeepers (Fontana and Frey 1998) to consider. If the interview is to take place during directed time, should the Headteacher be approached?

❑ The major problem encountered in procuring interviewees for this research was excessive workload (Glover and Miller, 1999), an issue which is, after all foregrounded in the study. Gaining permission to speak to heads of department and classroom teachers was not straightforward, even though gatekeepers could be bypassed. The interview sample was largely determined by the level of difficulty in contacting individuals and gaining their agreement (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). This can have effects on the data in so far as the potential data from those unable or unwilling to take part may be substantively different from those obtained from the sample (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

The number and identity of interviewees is also dependent to a large extent on practical issues such as cost and time. This researcher found it necessary to take the advice of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), who reflect on these problems in their discussion of ethnographic interviews:

Often the time is simply not available to interview a large sample.
In such circumstances, the researcher will have to select

interviewees as best he or she can in order to try to achieve

representativeness (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.137).

Secondly, the researcher must take steps to understand the language and culture of respondents (Fontana and Frey, 1998).

❏ In the case of this research, I was working with colleague heads of department. Sharing a culture meant that I knew the language, understood the jargon and could empathize with the respondents' situation. There was, of course, a greater danger of being too involved and allowing my own deeply held feelings to come through both at this and other stages of the research.

The issue of personal involvement will be further discussed in Chapter 6, under the heading of the limitations of the research. A measure of personal involvement does, however, help with the building of rapport with the interviewee. Having had previous contact with some of the interviewees helps to establish rapport. It is important to be aware of the potential effects of familiarity on the data, however. Firstly, am I, the researcher, responding in a significantly different way to interviewees whom I know? Secondly, how is my involvement with them and their situation affecting the data? For example, am I hearing what I expect them to say rather than what is actually being said?

❏ I attempted to counteract the potential problem of familiarity by keeping to my outline interview schedule and resisting temptation to become involved in a dialogue with the interviewee.

A further aspect of the building of rapport concerns self-presentation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995):

As in participant observation, so in interviewing, it may be possible by careful self presentation to avoid the attribution of

damaging identities and to encourage ones that might facilitate
rapport (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.141).

❑ To address this issue, I conducted my interviews wearing normal 'teacher's clothes' rather than appearing either very smart or very casual. I felt that this would help my interviewees to respond naturally in their working environment.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) also note the importance of '*...establishing and maintaining the interview situation itself*' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.141). First impressions are important and the first few minutes of an interview can set the seal on how it will proceed (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). One difficulty when working with acquaintances is the stage of moving from social chat to assuming the researcher role, maintaining as much distance and objectivity as possible.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note the importance of the interviewer's manner at all stages of the process, stressing the importance of the interviewer giving '*...clear indications of acceptance*' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.143):

> *Within the boundaries of the interview context the aim is to*
> *facilitate a conversation, giving the interviewee a good deal more*
> *leeway to talk on their own terms than is the case in standardized*
> *interviews* (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.143).

❏ In this research I planned the opening of the interviews carefully, attempting to use social behaviour to put the interviewee at ease but making the transmission to the formal interview situation in a clear and sharp manner.

This chapter has summarised the major features of the three research instruments used. I have also presented the way in which I carried out the data collection in relation to the methodological issues discussed. The instruments used are viewed as data collection methods, which are relevant to the aims of the research but which have limitations with regard to the validity of claims to knowledge arising from the data generated by them. The following chapter will present an analysis of the themes arising from the data generated by the postal questionnaire and the group interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

<u>ANALYSIS OF THE DATA FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY AND
GROUP INTERVIEW</u>

<u>Introduction</u>

This chapter begins with a short theoretical discussion of data analysis issues affecting this research. The quantitative and qualitative data derived from the postal questionnaire (see Appendix 3) are presented and discussed. This is followed by an analysis of the qualitative data resulting from the group interview with four MFL heads of department. The data are presented in thematic areas, as they emerged from the analysis.

<u>Theory of data analysis</u>

Swift (1996) poses four questions, which must be answered before attempting to deal with a data set:

> *What is the time scale and what resources are available?*
> *What is the nature of the data that have been collected?*
> *What kind of analysis ... is planned?*
> *What are the research objectives?*
> (Swift, 1996, p.155).

Time scale and resources

The time scale of the analysis of this research was linked to the question of resources. Time and money being constrained, the analysis was carried out over six months of spare time working. Although the interviews were all transcribed onto disk, ICT resources were not used in the categorisation or subsequent analysis of the interview data. These choices, made for practical reasons, affect the methods and timescale of data collection. As a result they may have an effect on the data themselves and subsequent claims to knowledge.

The nature of the data

Data collection methods determine the extent to which the data are structured and the amount of structuring necessary prior to analysis (Swift, 1996). These two issues can therefore be taken together. The first stage of this research involved the collection by postal questionnaire of both a quantitative data set derived from 1-5 rating scales and a number of responses to an open-ended question. The first stage of analysis was through the production of bar charts for each item on the questionnaire. These were used to make judgements on the overall and relative importance given by the respondents to each item. The written answers to the open-ended question and subsequent interview transcripts were analysed by a simple form of coding. This was a version of that described by Miles and Huberman (1984). The data were scanned for categories, for example, issues of time, lesson planning and interruptions. Quotations were then selected to illustrate these categories.

The qualitative data drawn from the request in the questionnaire for respondents to write their thoughts on the issues raised, and from the subsequent group and

individual interviews, required further attention in order to produce manageable data (Swift, 1996). This data reduction (Cohen and Manion, 1994) can take the form of categorisation in order to index data prior to analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Mason, 1994, 1996; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Mason (1994) suggests the use of descriptive and conceptual categories (see also Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The former are '...*very straightforward, simply a list of key substantive topics*' (Mason, 1994, p.91). She notes, however, that the choice of these is '...*often a matter of interpretation*' (Mason, 1994, p.91) as a result of the inevitable variation in language and expression of research subjects, who will not always phrase information in the manner expected or hoped for by the researcher (Mason, 1994). This must be taken into account in the analysis and, importantly, in any claims for validity.

Conceptual categorisation is '...*aimed at teasing out, across the board ... aspects ... relevant to ... research questions*' (Mason, 1994, p.92). The formation of these categories relates to the research objectives, allowing the researcher to seek answers to initial research questions (Mason, 1994). They are also, however, '...*grounded in the data, and devised in part through (the researcher's) growing familiarity with the data*' (Mason, 1994, p.92). Silverman (1993) reports Atkinson's (1992) criticism of coding schemes:

> *Because they are based upon a given set of categories, they furnish a "powerful conceptual grid" ... from which it is difficult to escape. While this "grid" is very helpful in organising data analysis, it also deflects attention away from uncharacterised activities* (Silverman, 1993, p.39).

This danger can be alleviated to an extent by the use of categories grounded in the data themselves (Mason, 1994) and also by returning regularly to the data (Silverman, 1993). The former can also be seen in the context of Sanger's (1994) suggestions for bringing greater creativity into data analysis. He

recommends the appropriation of labels and categories used by the research subjects themselves, therefore grounded in the research, rather than categories taken from the rapidly changing '...*hit parade of "in" terms*' (Sanger, 1994, p.180).

As Mason (1996) points out, any kind of data reducing activity must be viewed as more than just a practical task. Any such system is '...*not analytically neutral*' (Mason, 1996, p.108). In choosing any one system of data organisation, the implications, not just of that system, but also of systems not employed, must be taken into account. The choice has a bearing on which items of information '...*count as data and which do not*' (Mason, 1996, p.108).

Research objectives and analysis

The nature of coding of data derived from open-ended questions relates to the objectives of the research (Swift, 1996). Thus a tightly argued quantitative analysis would require, of necessity, a coding frame (Swift 1996), as would a wide ranging survey with the intention of producing generalisable claims to knowledge about a population. This research, as noted above, aimed to shed light on aspects of the experiences of heads of department and, as a small case study, was not aimed at generalisable outcomes based on empirical data. Nevertheless, as Mason (1996) notes, the researcher should '...*make some claims for the wider resonance or generalizability of ... explanations which are based on the rigour of ... analysis*' (Mason, 1996, p.154). The success of any such claims relates to the level of validity that can be claimed for the analysis of the data. The key question to ask in this regard is: how does the analysis affect the validity of statements made as a result of it?

Analysis and validity

The first concern during analysis is for the researcher to remain aware of the constraints imposed by the data collection method itself (Mason, 1996; Sanger, 1994). These issues have been referred to above in relation to the methods used in this research. The strength of claims to knowledge based on the data is positively affected by the awareness of issues affecting analysis at the data collection stage (Mason, 1994):

> *In the early stages of designing the qualitative study, we were*
> *thinking very much in terms of the principles of analysis*
> *(although not the precise practice of it)* (Mason, 1994, p.102,
> bracket in original).

The sources of bias in interview research must be taken into account during analysis. These are, principally, '*...the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondent and the substantive content of the questions*' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, pp.281-2). These issues, however much taken into account at the data collection stage, are unavoidable in the socially constructed setting of the interview (Scott, 1995) and must be balanced by a reflexive approach during analysis. Neither is it certain that a mix of data collection methods and types of analysis will achieve maximum validity (Trend, 1979):

> *(Whereas) different methods of inquiry may be complementary ...*
> *simply using different perspectives, with the expectation that they*
> *will validate each other, does not tell what to do if the pieces*
> *don't fit* (Trend, 1979, p.83).

This lack of fit with views either held prior to the research or gained through earlier stages and/or different data collection methods, leads to a further issue of validity in data analysis. This relates to the need to:

> *...search the data set for comparisons which help not only to flesh out the theory, but also to sharpen and test it* (Mason, 1994, p.103).

Searching for evidence which '*...contradicts the emerging explanation*' (Mason, 1994, p.103) can either strengthen the explanation or make clear the need to modify it (Mason, 1994). Trend (1979), faced with competing explanations from two analyses that were intended to be complementary, describes the trap that can await the researcher:

> *The observer and I did what most researchers would do when faced with mounting evidence that their dearly held interpretations were wrong: we capitulated and tried to salvage whatever scraps of the original explanations we could* (Trend, 1979, p.76).

Mason (1996) considers the question of '*validity of interpretation*' (Mason, 1996, p.149), noting the importance for researchers in convincing themselves of the validity of their interpretations as a route to convincing others. This is based upon the need for reflexivity (Olesen *et al.*, 1994), the need for the researcher to engage with her/his own position (Mason, 1996):

> *The basic principle here is that you are never taking as self-evident that a particular interpretation can be made of your data but instead that you are continually and assiduously charting and justifying steps through which your interpretations were made* (Mason, 1996, p.150).

In the following section I will present the main themes arising from the data, beginning with the results of the postal questionnaire. This was not intended to be the driving force for the research, but was carried out in order to suggest a direction for the later qualitative stages.

As noted already, the data were collected in three stages. The first was a postal questionnaire (see Appendix 3), which elicited responses from 48 heads of department, 25 of whom were heads of MFL. This represented 71% of the core target group of MFL heads of department in the County. The second was a group interview involving four heads of MFL. The third was a series of individual interviews with nine heads of MFL and three headteachers. The semi-structured schedules for the group and individual interviews can be seen in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 respectively. The first stage of the analysis covers the data derived from the postal questionnaire.

Analysis of data from the postal questionnaire

As discussed in Chapter 3, respondents were asked to rate the importance of a range of role behaviours and attributes along a five point Lickert scale. The first scale asked for ratings from the perspective of head of department; the second from that of classroom teacher. The thirty items were arranged in three groups of ten in an attempt to reflect attributes and behaviours most closely connected to teaching (items 1-10), management (items 11-20) and interpersonal behaviour (21-30). This grouping was not made explicit to the respondents (the reasons for this grouping and its implications have been discussed in Chapter 3).

The data from the rating scales are presented in Figures 1 – 30 below, in the form of compound bar charts. Each questionnaire item is shown individually.

The x-axis shows the five points on the Likert scale, the y-axis gives the number of responses at each point, up to a maximum of 48.

It can be seen from the figures that the Likert Scale afforded respondents the opportunity to value some items more or less important than others, across a five point range. Actually, most ratings were in the Likert range 4 – 5. This suggests that the items chosen for the rating scales may have been insufficiently subtle to elucidate the differences between the teacher and manager perspectives, as was suggested by Bell and Morrison in their research into primary school headteachers (Bell and Morrison, 1988). There was some evidence of this from the respondent, who commented that she had answered with a large number of fours and fives because:

...all attributes are undoubtedly what we as teachers and heads of department aspire to and to be able to do.

The results shown in Figures 1-30 are now considered. These will be taken in three groups of ten to reflect the three categories of attributes and behaviours discussed in Chapter 3.

Items 1 – 10: attributes and behaviours relating to teaching

Figures 1-10 show responses to the items categorised by me as attributes and behaviours relating to teaching. These show a heavy bias towards ratings four and five, which suggests that respondents regard their function as classroom teacher as an important aspect of their role. This is to be expected when viewed from the perspective of the classroom teacher. It can be seen, however, from Figures 1-10 that these items were frequently rated highly from the head of department perspective. For example, items one (first class subject knowledge), three (well planned lessons), five (wide range of classroom skills) and six (good discipline) were all rated at the top of the scale of importance by

Figure 1: Responses to Item 1
(first class subject knowledge)

Figure 2: Responses to Item 2 (good
understanding of the National Curriculum)

Figure 3: Responses to Item 3
(well planned lessons)

Figure 4: Responses to Item 4
(knows the pupils)

Figure 5: Responses to Item 5
(wide range of classroom skills)

Figure 6: Responses to Item 6
(good discipline)

Figure 7: Responses to Item 7
(uses pupil data in planning)

Figure 8: Responses to Item 8
(regular formative marking)

Figure 9: Responses to Item 9
(commitment to all pupils)

Figure 10: Responses to Item 10
(able to model effective teaching)

over thirty of the forty-eight respondents, viewing them from the head of department perspective. At the same time, all but two of the forty-eight respondents regarded the ability to model effective teaching (item ten) as of high importance to their head of department role. However, over one quarter of respondents were only able to give this aspect of the role a rating of four, and three respondents chose a rating of three. This suggests that their acceptance of the role may be limited.

Item 2 (good understanding of the National Curriculum) and item 7 (uses pupil data in planning) are unlike the others in this group, however. Although the responses from classroom teacher and head of department perspectives were almost identical, fewer respondents chose point five on the Likert scale. This suggests that the majority of the heads of department in this research regarded their understanding of the National Curriculum as of less importance than aspects such as subject knowledge, classroom

skills and discipline. A similar, but stronger picture emerges from Figure 7 (item 7 – uses pupil data in planning). Here the low rating is more marked, with less than a quarter of responses at point five. Furthermore, over a third of respondents rated this item at point three or below. The results illustrated by these two charts suggest limited commitment to these two issues, both regarded by the TTA (1998) as aspects of good practice and, in the case of item 7, recently restated as such by OFSTED (2002).

A similar suggestion emerges from Figure 8 (item 8 – regular formative marking). This was again judged in a similar manner from head of department and teacher perspectives, but was given lower ratings overall than other aspects of the teacher's craft. To attempt to explain this difference in detail lies outside the scope of this research, which was seeking trends in terms of the role. Furthermore, the term 'formative marking' covers a wide range of activity, including written and oral feedback and target setting. It does, however, suggest limited enthusiasm among a proportion of these heads of department for an aspect of the teacher's role currently held to be important (TTA, 1998).

As already noted, it can also be seen from Figures 1-10 that the ratings of the majority of items, regardless of perceived importance, are similar when seen from the two perspectives of classroom teacher and head of department. Although this could be the result of a possible lack of subtlety in the items chosen, it could also suggest that these heads of departments are operating within similar paradigms of behaviour in each aspect of the dual role.

Items 11 - 20: attributes and behaviours relating to management

Figures 11-20 show, on the whole, greater differences between the two perspectives. Considerably higher ratings were given when viewing these items from the head of department perspective. Two exceptions to this were items eighteen (monitors pupil progress) and nineteen (sets targets). These could both be viewed as behaviours equally relevant to the teacher in the classroom and the head of department. This behaviour may appear in different forms for the two roles. For example, the

Figure 11: Responses to Item 11
(strong but consultative leader))

Figure 12: Responses to Item 12
(good delegator)

Figure 13: Responses to Item 13
(knows the value of effective meetings)

Figure 14: Responses to Item 14
(takes account of whole school priorities)

Figure 15: Responses to Item 15
(produces handbooks, schemes of work)

Figure 16: Responses to Item 16
(monitors teaching quality)

Figure 17: Responses to Item 17
(deploys staff effectively)

Figure 18: Responses to Item 18
(monitors pupil progress)

Figure 19: Responses to Item 19
(sets targets)

Figure 20: Responses to Item 20
(aware of INSET needs of self and others)

monitoring of pupil progress (item 18) by the head of department is likely to be of a strategic nature, whereas for the classroom teacher, it would tend more towards a guide to individual teaching and learning strategies. Similarly, a head of department may set targets (item 19) for teachers and groups of pupils, whereas a classroom teacher is more likely to set targets for individual pupils. This might explain the similarities between the classroom teacher and head of department responses for these items.

It can also be noted from Figures 11-20 that the overall ratings were not as high as those for the teacher-related items (1-10), even when viewed from the head of department perspective. This suggests that these heads of department may not be assigning as much importance to management-related tasks as they are to their classroom teaching. This is especially noticeable in figures fifteen (produces handbooks and schemes of work) and sixteen (monitors teaching quality).

The attribute afforded greatest importance from the head of department perspective in Figures 11-20 was item eleven (strong but consultative leader). This item can be seen as more closely related to aspects of 'consideration' rather than 'decision centralisation' (Nias, 1980). As such it would also belong in the third category, interpersonal aspects of the teacher and head of department roles.

<u>Items 21-30: attributes and behaviours relating to interpersonal aspects of the roles</u>

Figures 21-30 show the results for the ten items labelled as 'interpersonal'. It can be seen from these bar charts that the majority of the responses given were in the higher levels of four and five. This reflects the '...*web of interpersonal relationships*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.78), which is a

Figure 21: Responses to Item 21
(accessible to staff, parents and children)

Figure 22: Responses to Item 22
(flexible and imaginative)

Figure 23: Responses to Item 23
(good communicator)

Figure 24: Responses to Item 24
(able to negotiate and consult)

Figure 25: Responses to Item 25
(good time manager)

Figure 26: Responses to Item 26
(team member as well as leader)

Figure 27: Responses to Item 27
(adaptable to change)

Figure 28: Responses to Item 28
(willing to seek advice and support)

Figure 29: Responses to Item 29
(reliable and shows integrity)

Figure 30: Responses to Item 30
(committed and enthusiastic)

feature of the head of department role. With the exception of items twenty-four (able to negotiate and consult) and twenty-six (team member as well as team leader) they all show a marked similarity in response from the two perspectives. As the interpersonal behaviours and attributes are linked both to classroom teaching and managerial activities, it is perhaps not surprising that the responses from the two perspectives are markedly similar.

As noted in Chapter Three, the questionnaire included, in addition to the rating scales, a blank sheet, on which respondents were asked to note thoughts provoked by the process of completing it. I will now consider these responses.

Data obtained from the written comment

Twenty-five of the forty-eight respondents took the opportunity to comment on their dual role as classroom teacher and head of department. These responses were analysed in order to seek out common threads to follow up in the later stages of the research. It is possibly a result of this method of data collection being highly unstructured, that no single aspect of the dual role was mentioned by all, or the majority of the respondents. Nevertheless, a number of areas for discussion began to emerge at this stage. I will now briefly consider these areas.

Having requested some personal information on the questionnaire (see Appendix 3), I was able to establish that the forty-eight respondents were spending an average of 75% of a full teaching timetable in the classroom. This can be compared with the findings of Brown and Rutherford (1998), whose respondents reported spending an average of 80% of their time in the classroom. The issues raised related mainly to the question of conflict between the management function and classroom teaching. This was expressed within and alongside comments on issues such as time and workload, planning and marking, the perception of performing below potential and the head of department as a role model teacher.

Conflict between the roles of manager and classroom teacher

Comments were made which suggested that, on one level, there is little conflict between the roles of teacher and manager, but only insofar as the same or similar skills are brought by the individual to both roles. For example:

The roles are not in conflict and each informs the other
(Head of English).

Another head of English highlighted the transferable skills between the two roles:

They (the roles) aren't so different. If you function well in the
classroom ... you should also be able to function well as a head of
department.

This could be related to the different personalities and their relative ability to work with both adults and children, but the suggestion remains that the skills of classroom management and team management may be essentially the same (to define the differences between the two roles is outside the scope of this research). A head of humanities alluded to this issue:

It is somewhat difficult to disentangle where one role ends and the
other starts. I think both are organic and evolutionary roles
drawing on skills that are common to both but which will be used in
different ways depending on which role you are undertaking.

Where conflict can be identified between the two roles it is on a more practical level. This was expressed by a head of MFL who was quite new to the post:

The two roles are very often difficult to marry. Very stressful as in
effect you are doing 2/3 different jobs despite obvious overlaps.

And by a more experienced MFL head of department:

You are constantly being pulled in different directions; demands are
regularly made of you as a classroom teacher and you are expected
to put your other identity to one side and vice versa.

So, certain issues appear to suggest the existence of conflict between the roles of head of department and classroom teacher.

Time and workload. The issue of time and workload was summed up by a head of physical education:

> *Time is the main issue. I like my job but find I do not have enough*
> *time to do it as well as I would like.*

The impression that the heads of department in this research are keen to do their jobs well, but are frustrated to an extent by the lack of time is expressed by a head of MFL:

> *A head of department as a middle manager is the 'shaper' of a*
> *school yet, despite all the research findings, time is not given in*
> *sufficient amounts to heads of department to really impact upon the*
> *development of the school.*

Planning and marking. This issue was mentioned in terms of time and effort. The following guarded comment was made by a head of science:

> *I feel that my role as head of department in developing and*
> *supporting staff can sometimes mean that I do not always put the*
> *same amount of effort into lesson preparation that I used to.*

There was evidence of heads of department giving priority to management related tasks over lesson planning when apportioning time:

> *Sadly, planning lessons comes to the bottom of the priority list,*
> *unless you spend hours working in the evenings ... I feel*

*increasingly frustrated that I haven't got more time to be more
creative in lesson planning.*

It may be possible to read an element of frustration into comments such as these.
One MFL head of department wrote:

*I have become the primary resource in the classroom, relying on
experience to see me through rather than searching out new ideas. I
find this frustrating.*

The perception of performing below potential in the classroom. It can be seen from
figure 3 that all respondents rated 'well planned lessons' as four or five on the
Likert scale when viewed from the classroom teacher (CT) perspective. At the
same time, forty-six of forty-eight respondents assigned the same level of
importance to this from the head of department (HoD) perspective. The perception
of performing below potential was stated clearly by a head of MFL:

*I was a better classroom teacher before I became a head of
department, i.e. spent more time planning lessons, thinking up
imaginative delivery of subject content, marking, etc.*

This perception of a fall in quality of teaching when a teacher takes on a
management responsibility may, of course, be most strongly linked to the lack of
time for planning. A head of science mentioned, however, another issue to impact
upon the quality of a head of department's classroom work, when he stated:

Interruptions to my lessons are more frequent than I would like.

This issue will be discussed further below.

The head of department as a role-model teacher. Comments were made which support the responses found in Figure 10. This shows a strong bias towards ratings of four and five from both teacher and head of department perspective for item ten (able to model effective teaching) This may suggest that the heads of department in this research find it important to be able to act as role models for the classroom work of others. One MFL head of department stated:

> *I feel that as a head of department I am required to be a model of good teaching for the department. How can I tell them how to do it if I'm not doing it myself?*

Another wrote:

> *I do feel that a head of department should be an exemplary class teacher, able to demonstrate good lessons.*

A Head of English expressed the need to be effective in the classroom in a more down-to-earth manner:

> *If you cannot maintain your self-respect as a teacher, you won't be much good as a head of department.*

The postal questionnaire was intended as the first of three stages of data. It was carried out in order to set the scene for the study and provide a focus for the subsequent in-depth interviews. The first of these was a semi-structured group interview with four MFL heads of department. I will now turn to analysis of the data collected from this interview.

Analysis of data from the group interview

The group interview was semi-structured. The main questions used can be found in Appendix 4. The group consisted of four female heads of MFL. For the purpose of the research, they were given the names Amanda, Bethan, Harriet and Pippa. The discussion of the interview group was guided by issues emerging from analysis of the quantitative data collected via the postal questionnaire and the written comments made by the respondents. The headings under which the interview data are analysed below relate, therefore, to these issues and others emerging from the group's discussion.

The interview began with a request to the group to answer two questions: what are the qualities of a good teacher and what are the qualities of a good head of department? The aim was to follow-up suggestions from the postal questionnaire that heads of department may perhaps behave in a similar manner in both aspects of their dual role and that emphasis is placed on teaching and interpersonal aspects of the roles rather than managerial functions.

Analysis of the data relating to the characteristics of good teachers and good heads of department

The group agreed that good teachers should be good communicators and able to organise themselves in terms of having the relevant materials to hand when needed. There was also general agreement that sympathy for the learner was an important attribute. When asked to give similar information in terms of the head of department, one group member immediately alluded to those same issues of communication, organisation and sympathy:

> *Thinking about other people ... it depends how you see the role ... if*
> *you look at it, which I do, as the person who is ultimately*
> *responsible for other people's well being ... then it's thinking about*
> *what they want and where things should be for them ... in many*
> *ways it's not that different from the kind of things that would make*
> *an understanding teacher* (Bethan).

The suggestion was of effective interpersonal behaviour on the part of the head of department, which mirrored that of the classroom teacher. This was summed up by Bethan, who stated:

> *If you are a head of department that sees yourself as the*
> *boss and you therefore decide to timetable, for example,*
> *according to what you like, then just dish the rest out. And if*
> *you teach the same way, as an autocrat ... then I think*
> *you're going to fail on both counts ... so there's probably*
> *quite a big link.*

The question of achieving task completion was raised, with Amanda speaking of the need to give '...*directive guidance*'. Both she and the others agreed, however, on the value of communication and mutual respect. Referring back to Bethan's comment, quoted above, Amanda summed up this phase of the discussion:

> *You're just steering as opposed to the kind of autocratic approach*
> *that you were describing earlier.*

Amanda and Bethan agreed on the need for consensus and collaboration, with Bethan summing up as follows:

> *You can't make people go somewhere just because you feel like it,*
> *because you're the head of department.*

The other two participants did not comment directly on this, but nodded agreement.

The next question asked, 'what do you regard as your main professional role?', led the group into a discussion of the role of the head of department as classroom teacher.

Issues relating to the head of department as a teacher

The four MFL heads of department regarded their main professional role as that of teacher. One group member, Pippa, saw her main role as '*lead teacher*', while another regarded '*...leading by example as a teacher*' as an important point. She pointed the way to a later discussion of the head of department as a role model teacher by describing her role as to be '*...open and prepared to allow others to come into (her) classroom so that they can share ideas*'. This aspect of the head of department role will be discussed in more detail below

Analysis of data relating to the perceived conflict between the roles of teacher and head of department

The suggestion from the discussion of the interview group was that the major source of conflict between the two sides of the dual role may be the lack of time. This was expressed in broadly similar terms to comments made on the postal questionnaire and can be summed up under the headings of: time and workload, the individual's control over her/his time, the apportionment of time between teaching and management related tasks and the effects of time constraints on the head of department's own classroom teaching.

Time and workload. The effect of the dual role in relation to time and workload was mentioned in the context of the question as to whether the teacher/manager

roles were, in fact, sustainable alongside each other. One group member contrasted her experience as a head of MFL with her perception of a middle manager's role in commerce:

> *If I was managing at Marks and Spencers, I wouldn't spend*
> *all day sewing the blouses ... I would be managing things,*
> *whatever they do at Marks and Spencers ... they don't make*
> *the things, we make the things in the classroom* (Amanda).

Whereas Amanda's statement brought a large measure of agreement from the other group members, Bethan added:

> *I think we would lose enormous credibility if we didn't*
> *(teach) ... you are able to support them (your colleagues)*
> *much more because you know what they're talking about*
> (Bethan).

This issue will be returned to in more detail below, in the analysis of data from the individual interviews.

The notion of being '...*piggy in the middle*' (Earley, 1992, p.192) was raised:

> *You're the middle in the sandwich, you know, you've got*
> *people, shall we say, below you, wanting things from you,*
> *wanting a part of you, and people from above, so you're*
> *actually being crushed between that all the time. Sometimes*
> *what those from above want from you ... to some extent it*
> *might conflict with what those from below might require*
> (Amanda).

This led to a discussion of how conscientious heads of department were able to cope with time limitations and high workload. Personality was an issue here. The kind of person who can accept imperfections was felt to be more likely to be effective in both roles:

> *Acceptance of limitations has to be part of that deal in order*
> *to feel that you've been effective on both sides of your*
> *playing field* (Amanda).

The problems encountered by conscientious heads of department faced with the difficulty of achieving effectiveness in both aspects of their dual role is perhaps best summed up by the following passage, in which Bethan answered questions from Harriet and Amanda:

Harriet: *So you put pressure upon yourself as an individual teacher to ensure value added.*

Bethan: *Yes, all the time.*

Harriet: *But in addition to that you have the pressure on you as a head of department to ensure value added.*

Bethan: *Across the board, yes.*

Harriet: *And you can't afford to have one lesson off, or one interrupted lesson.*

Bethan: *Hmm hmm.*

Amanda: *But you have them all the time.*

Bethan: *Yes.*

The individual's level of control over her/his time. This was perceived by the group as an area for conflict. The issue took two forms for the respondents in this research. Firstly the overall level of control of the individual over the allocation of time to tasks in the course of the day. Secondly, the loss of control over allocated lesson time through interruptions. The second point will be discussed in detail below with regard to the individual's views on her/his teaching. The first point, a more general one, was brought out by a number of the interviewees as a source of frustration and pressure. One example was the following exchange in the group interview:

Bethan: *... you're not in control. You can't plan. You can't*
      get up in the morning and say, right, today I'm going
      to do x, y, z, p, q.

Harriet: *You don't know what's going to be thrown at you*
      really, do you.

Bethan: *No, you can say, I've got x, y, z, p, q to do .... by Friday*
      you've probably still got p and q left.

Issues relating to the apportionment of time between teaching and management tasks. The suggestion from the interview group was that extra non-contact time may be used for management rather than teaching tasks, although this was far from conclusive as the direction of the discussion changed after the following exchange:

Pippa: *I think (an extra non-contact period) would mean an extra*
      hour you could spend on a managerial task within school,
      which would mean then, especially if it's ... paperwork one
      less hour you'd have to spend at home.

> *Harriet:*   *But it would be a managerial task, rather than ... marking,*
> *planning.*

The suggestion here is that, whereas these heads of department appeared to stress their teaching role, they may prefer to use extra non-contact time for their management tasks, rather than for improving their teaching. This leads to the final major issue to emerge from the group interview, that of the effects of time constraints on the perceived quality of the head of department's own classroom teaching. This will also touch on the question of the head of department as a role model teacher.

Time and the head of department's own classroom teaching. This was discussed within the following themes, all of which emerged to a greater or lesser extent from the postal questionnaire and the group interview: planning and marking, innovation, interruptions to lessons and the ability to act as a role model teacher.

The question of planning arose with the interview group as soon as I asked a question about the proportion of the working week devoted to teaching-related tasks. It is interesting to note that the use of the word 'planning' provoked raised eyebrows and laughter from the group members. It emerged that planning and marking were regarded as tasks to be completed at home:

> *It's always done out of school* (Bethan).

> *Marking's done at home at the weekends and early mornings before*
> *school starts* (Harriet).

The question of a hierarchy of demands leading to frustration began to emerge at this point:

I certainly find more and more that planning is the thing I'd like to
do first but it's becoming more and more the last thing that I do.
I've got a deadline for that and it's paperwork that has to be done
and I don't have any choice (Amanda).

This was echoed by another group member, who alluded to the concept of the role
that team colleagues play in alleviating this problem

You've got younger members of your department, you know,
fresh out of college, or a few years into their teaching and
they're still on main scale. And you see them coming in and
they've got all these OHT's, they've made their flashcards
and things like that and various worksheets and so on and
yes, we do that now and again, but as you say (to another
group member) you fall back on your stock and your file of
materials (Harriet).

Although interviewees spoke with confidence in their ability to cope through
experience, the impression was one of classroom practitioners frustrated by the
necessity of living by their wits:

You have to work out how to do your planning quickly, push it
sometimes to one side in order to fulfil other things that are required
of you ... I do find it frustrating (Pippa).

In terms of innovation, the lack of time to translate innovative ideas into
practical action was mentioned by one group member and agreed by all:

I went to London on an A level course and we came back on
the train and we were saying, what we need to do at this
point is to be off timetable, to have time, let's say tomorrow

morning or even the whole of the day, we could crack this

nut very easily, but as it is ... the pack gets closed, put to

one side, the next day, straight back into the flow again and,

you know, it could be a month before you get back to it all

(Harriet).

One member of the group (Harriet) was optimistic that she could: '...*move things on as regards methodology'*, adding, '...*I feel like I've stood still a little bit'*.

Two others, however, were less sure of their ability to respond to new developments in MFL teaching:

I would love to have the time to be more innovative but quite often I

feel that I'm doing fairly bog standard lessons because I don't have

the time to plan as much as I did (Pippa).

This view was echoed by Amanda:

Experimentation for oneself seems to go a bit by the board for a

variety of reasons ... I certainly feel that that's what I used to do

more of and I don't do that so much anymore (Amanda).

The above statements both contain a suggestion of performing below one's own perceived potential. This was further investigated in the individual interviews and will be re-visited later.

The interviewees were unanimous in citing interruptions to lessons as a particular problem for the head of department. These interruptions arose mainly from colleagues experiencing discipline problems in class, but also from senior managers and pastoral staff completing their own tasks. All of the group members

made reference to interruptions from senior managers. Bethan stated, with an air of annoyance:

> *They'll always presume, especially senior management in*
> *my school, that you've got a class in front of you but they*
> *can come and turn up. They don't make appointments with*
> *you* (Bethan).

She made the important point that the head of department's response to the interruption has a bearing on the outcome:

> *You know, I've even had senior managers come into my lesson with*
> *the latest copy of the timetable and wanting to talk about this*
> *problem and can I solve it then, in the middle of but I think you*
> *have to be quite strong about not letting people disturb your lessons*
> *and say, I'm free next or see you later or something, but you have to*
> *be quite strong to do that* (Bethan).

An issue relating to the recognition by senior managers of the head of department as a classroom teacher was beginning to emerge from this discussion and will be returned to later. The main source of interruption for these heads of department was, however, departmental colleagues dealing with issues relating to classroom management.

> *Bethan:*   *The fact that you may be actually teaching a class and*
> *yet within that time people actually presume that they*
> *can also expect you to be somehow a manager of some*
> *other situation at the same time ... they may send you*
> *a child who can't behave itself in their class, and*
> *you're teaching your own class and yet somehow*
> *you're supposed to absorb this, or worse still they may*

> *even send you a message, please come and help me*
> *deal with so and so ... and that is a real conflict*
> *because ... who actually suffers but the very children*
> *that you are teaching.*

Pippa: *Yes.*

Amanda: *And they can suffer quite considerably if there is an*
> *on-going situation.*

Issues relating to the head of department as a role model teacher

Finally, the theme of the head of department as a role model teacher, leading by example in the classroom was touched on by the group. There was the suggestion that the head of department may not necessarily have to be the best teacher in the subject area, but must maintain high standards:

> *You couldn't get away with being a head of department if*
> *you weren't as good a teacher as anybody else. Not*
> *necessarily the best but as good a teacher as anyone else*
> (Bethan).

> *You wouldn't have the respect of your colleagues as head of*
> *department and I think that's quite a key point, to gain that*
> *respect* (Harriet).

The data collected from the group interview were provisionally analysed prior to the individual interviews, and emerging threads that mirrored or extended those of the postal questionnaire were further investigated. The data from the final stage of the research, the individual interviews, will now be presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA FROM THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Introduction

Semi-structured individual interviews were carried out with nine serving heads of department and three headteachers. The heads of department were given the following names: Andrew, Caroline, Catherine, Louise, Mary, Oliver, Orla, Victor and Yvonne. The headteachers were given the names Bernard, Celia and Sharon. Although the interview schedules were different, I propose to take the analysis of them together, bringing in points made by the headteachers where relevant to complement the data from the heads of department. Copies of the schedules for these two series of interviews can be found in Appendix Five.

Analysis of the data relating to good teachers and good heads of department

As was the case with the group interview, the individual interviews with heads of department began with a request for the respondents to answer the following questions. Firstly, what are the qualities of a good teacher? Secondly, what are the qualities of a good head of department? The aim of these two questions was to follow up suggestions from the postal questionnaire data that heads of department may be relying on similar skills, attributes and role behaviours in the two aspects of their role. I was therefore looking to see whether these individuals mentioned the same or similar attributes in answer to both questions? Furthermore, did they stress interpersonal aspects of the head of department function rather than more 'mechanical' management functions?

Analysis of the response to the question 'what are the qualities of a good teacher?' shows only one attribute mentioned in the majority of cases (five from nine in the individual interviews); the ability to maintain good relationships with the pupils. This is, of course, a very wide area, which could be seen as relating to a number of the attributes and behaviours on the questionnaire rating scales. For example, Figure 4 shows a very high rating from both classroom teacher and head of department perspectives of the item 'knows the pupils'. Similarly, Figures 6 (good discipline) and 23 (good communicator), both of which were highly rated by questionnaire respondents, could be viewed as particularly important to the maintenance of good relationships with both pupils and colleagues. In terms of the perceived similarities between managing departmental teams and the classroom, three of the individual interviewees commented directly, having spoken first of teacher characteristics:

I would say the same characteristics (Yvonne).

(A good head of department is) very similar in lots of ways
(Orla).

A good head of department ... needs to have all those skills
as number one (Victor).

Analysis of the responses of those who did not make such direct comments shows similarities in the attributes and behaviours cited for the two roles. The order in which the questions were asked may, of course, play a role in highlighting the similarities for the interviewee and no data are available for triangulation based upon different forms of questioning.

The interviewees appeared to place less emphasis on directional (Nias, 1980) aspects of the head of department's role. Indeed, in giving mostly short, unprepared replies to the question of what makes a good head of department, all

immediately highlighted 'people skills'. The interviews with the three headteachers shed some light on why this may be particularly so with modern foreign languages (MFL) heads of department. They were asked whether there were particular skills or attributes required of MFL heads of department. All three cited teacher supply difficulties and pupil attitudes in these subjects as a reason why the MFL head of department requires especially well-developed interactive skills. For example, having listed attributes sought when appointing a head of department, one headteacher stated that MFL '...*tends to demand the same but more*'. Another cited '...*the ability to handle complex staffing issues*' as a necessity for heads of department in MFL and the third stated of this group of middle managers that:

> ...*they have to be very strong. In terms of their personal belief, in terms of their effectiveness in their subject as a practitioner. They have also got to be very secure in being able to work with teams and build teams and support teams* (Bernard).

I will now turn to the question of how the heads of department interviewed view themselves as teachers and to what extent, if at all, their teaching role is affected by their management duties. The issues arising can be categorized under the following three broad headings:

❑ the head of department as a teacher
❑ the perceived conflict between the roles of teacher and head of department
❑ the head of department as a role model teacher.

Under these headings I will return to and develop issues raised in the group interview as discussed above.

Issues relating to the head of department as a teacher

As noted above, the heads of department who responded to the survey in the first stage of the research gave information on the ratio of teaching to non-contact periods on their timetable. From these figures it was calculated that they are spending an average of 75% of a full teacher timetable in classrooms. The interviewees spoke in a number of cases of receiving only one extra non-contact period per week in respect of their head of department role. One headteacher described the non-contact time allocated to heads of department as '*notional*', suggesting that individuals are expected to use more of their non-contact time for management duties.

One interviewee spoke at some length about his pivotal role as the leader of the MFL team before coming to his overall role:

> *I have a pretty heavy teaching load, it's about twenty-five*
> *per week, so usually one contact period per day off, so I'm,*
> *yes, as head of department I'm pretty well involved in*
> *teaching, myself, with a bare minimum of non-contact*
> *periods, which are usually taken up with cover, so it's*
> *mainly, yes it is, essentially a teaching role* (Oliver).

Another began to talk about a senior management role that he had alongside his function as head of department before coming back to his classroom teaching role:

> *I mean, clearly, the starting point I think, I've been in this*
> *job long enough to know that I still consider myself a*
> *teacher* (Andrew).

A third interviewee spoke in terms of priorities:

I still have a large teaching commitment and if I prioritise
then my priority is to plan my lessons and deliver lessons to
my students and my next priority is to make sure that other
people are delivering their lessons to students (Orla).

Others, when asked to state their main professional role, were less equivocal:

Teaching, otherwise I wouldn't be here (Victor).

and,

Teaching, teaching, teaching children (Catherine).

This is not to say that the heads of department were in any way denying their management role. They all spoke with enthusiasm and seriousness about their head of department role. Louise summed up the general impression gained:

I'd say it's a dual role. I'd say it's the head of department in
leading my team. I mean I came in here to build up a team
so I've been in no doubt about that aspect of my work and
changing the kind of ethos of my department has been
absolutely fundamental ... but I also take great pride in my
work as a classroom teacher so it's very much a dual role
(Louise).

I now turn to the major themes emerging from the data regarding the measure of conflict between the dual roles of the head of department and the effects of that conflict upon the individual's classroom teaching.

Issues relating to conflict between the roles of teacher and head of department

Middle managers in education and industry

As mentioned above, one member of the group contrasted her experience as a MFL head of department with her perception of a middle manager's role in commerce, saying that a manager working for Marks and Spencers would not be expected to do shop floor work. In the context of a discussion of a service providing industry, her statement could be disputed and perhaps suggests the need for teacher / managers to gain experience outside education (Green, 1992). It does, however, raise issues with regard to taking on a significant managerial role while still working almost full time on the 'shop floor'. Whereas store managers may deal directly with customers, they are unlikely to spend 75% of their time on such activities. In response to Amanda's statement the headteachers spoke of their own knowledge of middle management in industry and commerce. One headteacher, Celia, referred to her experience on an industrial links project where she worked with post office managers:

> *It was very clear that the managers had a tremendous*
> *amount to do in terms of planning, evaluation, monitoring*
> *and working with staff and making sure that staff were*
> *doing it. They didn't stick a lot of envelopes* (Celia).

Another headteacher, Sharon, felt that there would be examples in some areas of industry where managers were also practitioners but did admit to recognising the point being made. The third, Bernard, acknowledged the point, but added that heads of department should perhaps be compared to managers of businesses whose purpose was developing people rather than trading products. He acknowledged a difference between school and industrial managers, which is fundamental to this research:

I suspect that in any of the larger concerns, industrial and
commercial managers are pretty much specialists ... I would
say our managers are different because they of necessity
must be all-rounders. The question remains as to whether a
head of department can be effective in the role of classroom
teacher while carrying out her/his management duties to the
full (Bernard).

The possibility of effectiveness in both roles

I approached this question by asking the interviewees whether they felt it possible to
be effective in both roles, at the same time. All nine of the individual interviewees
gave replies suggesting that effectiveness in both roles depended on the availability
of time. The heads of department felt that they had the ability to combine the two
roles with effectiveness in both, but had doubts as to whether this was possible given
current working practices:

You ask the question, can you be effective, and I would say
yes, if we're utterly brilliant, we can be effective up to a
point but on a scale of one to ten, I might be being utterly
brilliant up to about three, whereas if I had the time, I could
be utterly brilliant up to ten (Oliver).

Within the time available, however, the impression gained was that the only way to
achieve the two roles with a high level of effectiveness in both was to work long
hours, maintain high energy levels and receive support for children with behavioural
difficulties. One interviewee, having considered the issues, summed it up as follows:

I think it's an impossible role if you're going to do
everything the way that you would wish to do it you know,

supportive colleague, admin queen, superb teacher at all
times. I think it's impossible probably yes (Yvonne).

This view was echoed by Oliver:

I think you can paper over the cracks. I think you can get
people that run around and probably do a better job than I
do ... but either they've got no life whatever, or I just don't
think they exist (Oliver).

As mentioned above, conflict between the two roles appears to be on a practical level, in terms of the demands made on the individual. All nine heads of department interviewed gave details on areas of conflict between the teacher and manager roles. Whereas this was in response to a closed question, eight of the nine had no hesitation in expanding immediately on the issue, appearing pleased and, in some cases, relieved to be given the opportunity to talk about it.

One interviewee introduced the term 'tension':

Constant conflict basically. Tension is a word I often
think of in teaching, tensions between the pastoral
side and the departmental side, between SMT I don't
mean negatively, but in the demands (Yvonne).

So what are the sources of this tension insofar as it exists between the head of department and classroom teacher roles? All nine interviewees referred to time as a major source of role strain (Handy, 1993). The data suggest that this issue can be divided into four elements relevant to this study:

❑ time problems relating to workload
❑ individuals' level of control over their time

- ❑ how time is apportioned between management and teaching-related tasks
- ❑ the effects of the time issue on individuals' perception of the quality of their own teaching.

Time and workload

All head of department interviewees gave the impression of being happy in their work but they spoke of feelings of frustration and inadequacy at times owing to the lack of time to fulfil their roles. The workload issue was highlighted by one of the headteachers:

> *The additional workload is probably greater than the*
> *amount of relief from direct classroom teaching, and that*
> *puts people under pressure and there are times when the*
> *pressures make it very difficult for people to achieve both*
> (Bernard).

A number of respondents reflected the workload issue in terms of changes over time in the role of the head of department:

> *I started teaching in 1974 and when I look at middle*
> *managers in 1974 they ordered books and I dare say wrote*
> *an end of year report* (Louise).

The more recent acceleration in growth of the head of department's responsibilities was evident in the comment of a relatively new holder of the role:

> *This year I've felt more and more tasks are allocated to the*
> *head of faculty, I mean the job has changed so enormously*
> *in the last sort of year and a half and I actually feel the time*
> *allocation for the job is inappropriate* (Caroline).

<u>Individuals' control over time</u>

The issue of time emerged in the interviews, not simply in quantitative terms, but also in terms of the measure of control over their time perceived by individuals. In the case of the group interview, as discussed above, this issue took two forms. Firstly the overall level of control of the individual over time given to tasks within the course of the school day. Secondly, the loss of teaching time as a result of interruptions to lessons. Apart from one interviewee, who expressed her feelings on her lack of control over time succinctly:

You're running around like a headless chicken at times (Caroline).

The individual interviewees tended to concentrate on the second point. As this relates clearly to teaching quality, it will be discussed below with regard to individuals' perceptions of their own teaching.

<u>The apportionment of time between management and teaching tasks</u>

In investigating the issue of time in relation to this group of heads of department I was mindful of the 1989 NFER report *The Time to Manage?* (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989), which called for heads of department to be given more time to perform the management aspect of their role. In analysing the data from this group of practising heads of department on time issues, I attempted to gain insight into whether they wanted time in order to carry out management tasks or to spend more time on teaching related activities.

Seven of the nine interviewees made statements which gave the impression that were looking for extra time in order to carry out management tasks effectively. This was a result of the sheer weight of the management role and the desire to meet the challenge of it;

> *I feel that so many tasks are now going towards the head of*
> *faculty that they have to look at the teaching hours if they*
> *want good service ... if they are not going to reduce the*
> *workload then I think they have to allocate more time to it*
> (Caroline).

Louise, an experienced head of department, was more specific about the tasks that she would like the time to carry out. The suggestion is that her management priorities lie in the domain of teaching:

> *I would love to do more coaching, I would love to do more*
> *team teaching. I would love to spend more time in lessons*
> *with people, or people to be with me ... and it appals me*
> *how much time I'm given. I'm basically not given any time,*
> *you know, to do that kind of thing* (Louise).

The time to teach was also called for. For example, Catherine, a less experienced head of department, noted the need to devote time to management tasks if more were allowed but added:

> *I would not like to forget the teaching, I think organising ...*
> *your lessons so that they are fun and they are actually*
> *motivating for children* (Catherine).

After a short pause, she added:

> *first of all, I would say getting my paperwork done would be very*
> *important to me* (Catherine).

I will now turn to the issue of limited time and conflicting demands on that time, in relation to the heads of departments' perceptions of their own classroom teaching. This will lead to a discussion of the data arising from the research with regard to the individuals' classroom teaching in general and their perceived role as modeller of good practice, viewed in relation to their head of department role.

Time and the head of department's own classroom teaching

The data suggest four issues relating to the impact of time upon the head of department's teaching-related tasks outside the classroom. These are planning and preparation, the capacity for innovation, the use of teamwork to offset time-related difficulties and the perception of performing below potential

Planning and preparation. This issue was mentioned by eight of the nine heads of department, all suggesting that they perceived inadequacies in this area.

> *Preparation versus admin time, I'd put on a ratio of one to*
> *nine, which is a frightening admission and I think most*
> *people would say the same* (Andrew).

> *My role as head of department ... invariably takes away a*
> *lot of the sort of time I feel I can spend on planning and*
> *preparing lessons* (Mary).

The major coping strategy employed appeared to be a reliance on experience to compensate for any lack of preparation:

> *We always get times when we don't spend enough time on*
> *our lesson preparation but there are also lessons which can*
> *go quite well whether you are prepared or not. Even if*
> *you've not had time to prepare your lesson fully, if you know*

what you're doing, it's something you've done before and it
goes very well, as long as you've got the energy and
enthusiasm it can still go well (Victor).

When asked about strategies employed when time for planning was short, the same interviewee replied:

I'll just slog on through the evening to get there. There's no short
cut strategy (Victor).

This was an isolated view among a group of individuals prepared to admit that something had to give if the head of department role was to be carried out. The suggestion was that it was generally connected with their own teaching, even if advance planning had taken place:

I come in some days and I always know what I'm going to
do but I haven't always got the overhead transparencies, I
haven't always got my cassette to absolutely the right place.
It's corners like this that I do have to cut because I cannot
do everything (Louise).

One advantage of the experience of the heads of department in the group interview was the possession of a considerable stock of tried and tested materials, which could be relied upon in times of high workload. One individual interviewee pointed out, however, disadvantages to this, especially in times of rapid change:

I just think teaching is one of those things where, if you're
not careful, you can become very stagnant ... there is that in
us when you're under pressure and you fish out something
(Mary).

Innovation. Preparation of lessons is, of course, a vital factor in successful innovation in the classroom. The individual interviewees were asked whether they were able to innovate in their teaching? Eight of the nine heads of department professed themselves able to innovate in their teaching although the majority added that they would wish to be more innovative. The overall impression was that such innovation was generally linked to departmental needs or stemmed from work with colleagues. The perceived need for innovation was apparent in all but one of the interviewees: 'I don't think you could survive if you weren't innovative' (Catherine). One interviewee cited colleague departmental heads as a source of inspiration:

> *As a head of department, you're privileged because you*
> *meet with other heads of department regularly and you can*
> *share ideas* (Orla).

Teamwork. The interviewees found that teamwork involving departmental colleagues, especially younger and/or recently qualified teachers was helpful in innovation. All the heads of department interviewed mentioned the benefits that they could gain from their colleagues to offset their own lack of time and energy for innovative behaviour. This was expressed in a variety of ways. In some cases it could be seen as team members appearing to take pity on heads of department:

> *Fortunately I've got a very good team that will support me.*
> *They'll recognise that I'm under pressure and I can delve*
> *into their lesson plans or whatever for support* (Orla).

Support for the head of department in innovating in the classroom was also mentioned as a pro-active process. The head of department could use the variety of resources available in a departmental team, including student teachers, to her/his advantage:

They are quite inspirational, the good ones. It's wonderful,
it's really nice ... that's why I like dealing with trainees as
well, because you always get a little bit of inspiration
(Yvonne).

I've actually taken ideas from junior members of staff ... I
have fed off other members of staff in the department who
are either part time or ... students or NQT's who are closer
to the real source of action, which is teaching (Oliver).

Another interviewee was more succinct:

You just go elsewhere and nick their ideas (Victor).

The perception of performing below potential. The interviewees gave the impression
of enjoying working as team members and were not being afraid to feed off others.
They also gave the impression, however, of feeling that they were not as good at
their core job as they had once been. Six of the nine interviewees made statements
suggesting feelings of frustration and perceived inadequacy:

I often say, I don't think I'm as good a teacher as I used to be
(Andrew).

In terms of my teaching I think ... it's pretty average, I
wouldn't say it was outstanding, it used to be (Mary).

The body language and tone of voice accompanying these statements suggested
feelings of frustration as a result of this situation.

The manner in which the heads of department viewed their own teaching was further investigated by asking their views on themselves in the role as modeller of good classroom practice.

The head of department as role model teacher

This aspect of the head of department's work emerged under three broad headings:

- ❑ the extent to which the individual accepts this role:
- ❑ the ability of the head of department to maintain high standards of teaching where the management role impinges upon classroom work
- ❑ the recognition by senior managers of the head of department's role as a classroom practitioner

The level of acceptance of the role

The three headteachers were unanimous in their view that the head of department should act as a role model for other teachers in the subject area:

> *The head of department should be the kind of person where OFSTED come in and say, yes, good or better* (Bernard).

> *I think the head of department should be one of the best teachers of the subject in the school* (Celia).

> *It's nice if you can have a head of department who is the best teacher* (Sharon).

All nine of the heads of department interviewed were aware of this aspect of their role and accepted that they had a part to play in the modelling of good practice. In general, however, it was seen as a less explicit role, which could be carried out through a serious and consistent approach to one's own teaching, rather than by setting oneself up as the model teacher:

> *not a model as such. I think that's dangerous. Come and watch me,*
> *this is how it's done* (Andrew).

Some expressed the need to attain a level of excellence in their teaching in order to be a sound role model, whereas others were content with descriptions such as 'good' and 'solid'. This level of performance covered all aspects of the teacher's role and was not seen just in terms of classroom performance:

> *You're the one who gets to lessons on time, you're the one*
> *who has a good turnover of exercise books, you're the one*
> *who has students carrying on with your subjects* (Victor).

One interviewee, however, was more down to earth in his expectations of his own performance:

> *I don't think I have to be the fount of all knowledge and all*
> *wisdom because I think that would be too much for a head*
> *of department. You've got to be a good, solid teacher,*
> *delivering the goods year in year out, respected by the kids,*
> *easy to work with colleagues* (Oliver).

Discussion of this topic again pointed to the situation within the department, mainly in terms of relationships with colleagues, as a determining factor at times when the head of department is unable to deliver excellence in the classroom: '*It's a*

supportive department so I haven't got anyone saying well, she's telling us to do this but she's not doing it herself (Yvonne).

The ability to maintain high standards in the classroom

In spite of the measure of frustration felt, the interviewees were confident in their abilities in the classroom. They all felt that they had the skills to ensure that their own classes were not unduly disadvantaged as a result of being in the head of department's teaching group:

> *I would think they get at least a satisfactory deal but I think if I could spend more time on them they would get a better deal* (Caroline).

> *I think they get a good deal in that when I am there ... I think they have a teacher who knows what he's at* (Andrew).

> *I think they do, yes, because they get somebody who has got this overview and who's who's a sound teacher ... I think on a range of excellent to sound ... most of my lessons would be good. I have some when I am under pressure that are sound but the majority are still good, good enough* (Orla).

Interruptions to lessons

There was, however, a suggestion that effectiveness in the classroom was, in danger of being compromised by interruptions to lessons.

The interviewees were unanimous in citing interruptions to lessons as a particular problem for the head of department. The major source of interruption to lessons was colleagues' difficulties with challenging behaviour in children. This was followed by

members of the senior management team satisfying their own agenda. These represent the head of department's functions as disciplinarian and administrator. Such interruptions represent another example of heads of department losing control over their time

All nine interviewees mentioned discipline problems in colleagues' classes as a source of interruption to their teaching. They all saw it as their role to support colleagues, even if, in two cases, dealing themselves with challenging behaviour. A head of MFL in a large comprehensive expressed it as follows:

> *If somebody's got a disruptive kid in class then they can*
> *send that child to somebody else, well of course invariably*
> *the child gets sent to the head of department and I have*
> *found myself teaching quite a challenging class myself ...*
> *with ... up to about four difficult pupils from other people's*
> *classes, sort of joining me and sitting at the back of my room*
> *and I find that can be intrusive ... if you're teaching a*
> *difficult class, just the act of having someone come through*
> *your door can have a disruptive influence, let alone if that*
> *person ... is, you know, a bit of an "oik" coming in with a*
> *silly smirk on their face* (Louise).

This problem was not confined to schools with a large proportion of challenging children. Nor did any heads of department suggest verbally or otherwise that it resulted from inadequacies on the part of their colleagues, although Orla, the head of MFL of a relatively high performing suburban school, showed a certain frustration:

> *You know, as good as my team are, there will be knocks on*
> *the door with people either sending students to me because*
> *they are misbehaving or wanting to know how many*

textbooks we've got left in a certain set. That sort of thing,

silly things (Orla).

She did, however, quickly restate her support for her team:

Some of them are silly things and some of them are things I

need to deal with and of course I have to make the decision.

Do I leave my class, do I deal with that, or do I carry on

with my teaching. But I am fortunate because the team tend

not to do that unless it's important (Orla).

The impression was gained from all nine interviewees that they felt a sense of responsibility for their team in matters of student discipline. For example Yvonne, having complained of her difficulty of getting to her own lessons on time, stated that she could not simply shut her door, adding:

I don't want to leave somebody stranded in the corridor

with a kid who is being difficult, so I tend to get involved

when they call me (Yvonne).

The language used reinforced perceptions of the weight given to inter-personal aspects of the head of department role by the questionnaire responses. For example, Caroline showed great frustration in having been interrupted six times in a carefully prepared lesson observed by a trainee, but added:

Of course the lesson didn't run at all the way I'd planned it

and I had to explain that, in the context that as a head of

faculty I have to be there for the colleagues ... if a colleague

feels he or she needs me then I want to be there for them

(Caroline).

The general impression was one of a situation, which causes frustration but is taken for granted as part of the job. The only interviewee to report not having to leave classes was Victor:

> *We don't have any major crises* (Victor).

He too had to take recalcitrant children into his classroom on occasions but was adamant that he did not have to leave classes:

> *There is no great bone of contention, no faculty problem that takes*
> *me out of the classroom* (Victor).

Three others, however, were so aware of the need to leave their classes that they had systems, formal and informal, to deal with what they saw as inevitable. These were both implicit and explicit:

> *I've always got in my planning the possibility that I need to*
> *drop it and I've got all these alternative activities at the*
> *back of my head, they're not written into my lesson plans*
> (Orla).

> *Two of my classes in particular ... are actually so used to*
> *me being called out of the lesson that we have a sort of set*
> *task that they get on with when I'm not there* (Caroline).

Seven of nine interviewees made reference to their lessons being interrupted by senior managers. Caroline was slightly indignant:

> *With management, I think that we should not have to point*
> *out that we do not want to be interrupted, unless it is very,*
> *very urgent* (Caroline).

Mary represented the other end of the spectrum, accepting the necessity as she sees it of interruptions:

We might well be in the middle of a lesson but then the
answer is equally as pressing as what I'm doing (Mary).

A further interviewee, Oliver, felt that senior managers were sensitive to his needs as a teacher during lesson time, but the balance was tilted towards the less positive outlook. The conflict of interests for the individual head of department was summed up by Louise. Appearing to enjoy and value both her management and teaching roles, she responded to the question of whether she had ever had to put the interests of her classes aside as follows:

A member of senior management will come in to consult me
about something when I've actually got a class in front of
me and I value the consultation but of course it, when it
happens, when you're trying to teach a class, that is very
intrusive (Louise).

A particular weapon in the MFL head of department's armoury to discourage interruptions was revealed by Orla:

They're always put off because we're always in the target
language and it always throws them anyway so they hesitate
to knock on the door because they know I'm going to ...
drag them in ... so it does cut down on interruptions (Orla).

The issue of interruptions to lessons by senior managers is also linked to the level of recognition by those senior colleagues of the head of department's role as a classroom teacher.

<u>Recognition by senior managers of the head of department's role as a classroom</u>
<u>practitioner</u>

As noted above, the headteachers interviewed stressed the importance of the head of department's classroom skills. Four of the interviewees, however, alluded to a lack of recognition on the part of senior managers of their classroom teaching role

> *I don't think they realise how many hours we're teaching ...*
> *I think they often forget how much teaching we're doing in*
> *comparison to what senior teachers are teaching* (Caroline).

> *They (senior managers) will say "are" you teaching now?'*
> *And you say, "well, yes, I've been teaching last lesson and*
> *I'm about to teach the one after that"* (Oliver)

The suggestion here does not appear, however, to be that the heads of department wanted necessarily to be recognised as excellent classroom practitioners, rather that they wanted recognition of the fact that they spend a considerable amount of time in the classroom and on teaching related tasks.

I have attempted to identify the main themes emerging from the data in relation to the dual role of the head of department, concentrating on aspects relating to the individual's classroom teaching. The final chapter will briefly summarise the implications of the data prior to a discussion of the main themes emerging from them with relation to the research questions stated in Chapter 1. The achievements and limitations of this research will then be discussed. Following this, I will make three suggestions for policy, practice and further research in the light of experience and knowledge gained from the research.

CHAPTER SIX.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN THEMES EMERGING
FROM THE DATA

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary and discussion of the main findings of the
research. The aim of this research, as set out in Chapter 1, was to investigate the
dual role of the secondary school head of department. Within this remit, two
questions were asked:

> What are the behaviour patterns adopted by heads of department within
> the dual role and does the head of department act principally as manager
> or teacher?

> How do heads of department perceive their dual role, in particular their
> ability to operate as effective classroom teachers, while engaging with the
> demands of departmental management?

As the findings are not equally balanced between these two research questions,
they will be discussed under the headings of the main themes to emerge from the
data. Following that I will discuss the contribution to knowledge of the research
and make recommendations for educational practice and policy, and further
research. Finally, I will discuss the aims, achievements and limitations of the
research and the justification for its title – "the Broschek syndrome"

The findings

The main themes emerging from the data are as follows:

The heads of department responding to the postal questionnaire and taking part in the group and individual interviews show evidence that they:

i.   Behave in a similar manner when acting as teacher and manager. This behaviour stresses aspects of the role related to teaching and inter-personal issues. These are aspects of '*consideration*' rather than '*decision centralisation*' (Nias, 1980; Bell and Morrison, 1988).

ii. Have difficulty coping with their workload within the time that they feel able to devote to it. Nevertheless they feel able to meet the demands of the dual role of teacher/manager if given adequate time to do so.

iii. Are frequently frustrated in attempts to plan their working day.

iv. Have to cope with frequent interruptions to their own classroom teaching, both from departmental colleagues and senior managers.

v.   Tend to apportion non-teaching time to management-related tasks rather than their own teaching.

vi. Are sensitive to the need to be, and be seen to be a high quality teacher.

vii. Are obliged to use experience and energy to substitute for planning and preparation.

viii. Are able to compensate to an extent for their own short cuts by effective use of teamwork, notably in co-operation with junior colleagues.

ix. View their role principally as a teacher with management responsibilities.

I will now consider these findings in detail.

i.   Heads of department in this research behave in a similar manner when acting as teacher and manager. This behaviour stresses aspects of the role related to teaching and inter-personal issues. These are aspects of 'consideration' rather than 'decision centralisation' (Nias, 1980; Bell and Morrison, 1988).

It was found that the heads of department in this research appeared to adopt similar behaviour patterns in both aspects of their dual role as teacher and manager. This is suggested by the similarity between the ratings of the role behaviours/attributes when viewed from the separate perspectives of head of department and teacher. Furthermore, the high ratings given to teaching and interpersonal behaviours/attributes relative to those connected with management suggest that these individuals may be driven to a greater extent by the teacher in them than by the manager.

The reliance on interpersonal skills found by Bell and Morrison (1988) and suggested by my research, is echoed by the findings with headteachers reported by Hart and Weindling (1996), quoted by Turner (2000). Here the researchers asked experienced headteachers to offer advice to new heads and found that '...they put emphasis on interpersonal skills and relationships, political power and teamwork, all factors embedded in the school context'. (Hart and Weindling, 1996, quoted in Turner, 2000, p.304). My research showed that this may also be the case with this group of heads of department in secondary schools, who gave high ratings to the interpersonal aspects of their role.

It may be possible to view the interpersonal aspects of the role as the bridge between its two main constituent parts, the teacher and the manager, being skills learnt or attributes honed in the classroom, which are then brought to the role of

leading and managing a team of adult professional colleagues. The high ratings given to teacher behaviour (89% of responses in the Likert range 4-5), viewed from both teacher and head of department perspectives, suggests, however, that this role may still be the stronger of the two. These conclusions drawn from the survey data were strengthened by evidence from the group and individual interviews that all of the nine heads of department in the interview sample regarded teaching as their main professional role. Furthermore, similarities of approach could be seen in the answers given to the question of what makes a good head of department and a good teacher. Here there was strong evidence of heads of department rating highly the same behaviours and attributes in both roles. This suggests that this group of individuals consisted of teachers who were bringing pedagogical and interpersonal skills and attributes from the classroom to their role as head of department

On the other hand, it was found that relatively low priority ratings were accorded to behaviours and attributes able to be described as purely or, at least, predominantly managerial (64% 0f responses in the Likert range 4-5). This may shed light on an important aspect of heads of departments' perceptions of their role. It may suggest a reluctance fully to engage with developments such as target setting, data analysis, monitoring and performance management. For example, one interviewee stated that the need for monitoring showed a '...*lack of professional respect*'. At the same time it may simply be that lack of time has so far precluded real engagement with these issues. This would be in accord with the findings of Brown and Rutherford (1998), whose respondents reported '...*little time ... for initiatives to improve teaching, learning and achievement*' (Brown and Rutherford, 1998, p.83).

At the same time, however, all nine of the individual interviewees demonstrated commitment to carrying out their role as manager and team leader. This accords with the findings of Wise and Bush (1998), who found evidence, ten years on from the NFER research (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989), that heads of

department were engaging with the managerial side of their job. For example, one interviewee remarked: '...*if I'm not a good manager, I've got problems*'. At the same time evidence was found of practitioners who, like those interviewed by Brown *et al.* (2000a), were simply struggling to cope with a multiplicity of tasks and seemingly constant change. In short, they appeared to perceive a measure of strain (Handy, 1993) between the two aspects of the dual teacher/manager role.

The heads of department interviewed appeared to feel able to combine the dual roles of teacher and manager if given the amount of time that they perceived necessary to do so. Where there was a lack of time, long hours were necessary to achieve all the tasks set. This supports the findings of Brown *et al.* (2000a), who noted that tasks such as monitoring and evaluating were often not done because of insufficient time. My research suggests that this inability to complete all tasks extends to the role of teacher. The implication is that the lack of time leads to unfulfilled expectations in both aspects of the dual role.

As previously mentioned, this research, having acknowledged efforts to describe in detail the management side of the head of department's role (e.g. Turner and Bolam, 1998; Brown and Rutherford, 1998) seeks to view that as one complete aspect of a dual role and set it alongside the head of department's duties as a classroom teacher. The remaining themes to emerge from the data thus concern the perceptions of the heads of department of their classroom teaching role and the manner in which it is affected by role strain (Handy, 1993), derived from the doubly-loaded (Dunning, 1993) aspect of the overall role.

ii.	The heads of department in this research have difficulty coping with their workload within the time that they feel able to devote to it. Nevertheless they feel able to meet the demands of the dual role of teacher/manager if given adequate time to do so.

It was found that these heads of department were having difficulty fulfilling their workload within the time available. There were two principal responses to this issue. The two choices facing the head of department were seen as either to work extra hours, usually late into the evening or over the weekend, in order to address the demands of the job, or to cut corners in certain aspects of the role. Where the extra time was put in or corners cut related principally to the head of department's own teaching. This supports findings of Glover *et al.* (1998), that time spent on management tasks was time taken from teaching and learning. There appeared to be a hierarchy of demands within the working lives of these individuals which itself would merit further investigation. However this is structured, the impression was that the needs of the children in the head of department's classes were low on the priority list. This is not to say that the heads of department did not care about their own pupils. The evidence was that they cared deeply. For example, one interviewee, having stated that her classes sometimes suffer as a result of her overall workload, added:

> *I try to make them feel a bit special and put in a little bit of extra*
> *for them when I feel that, you know, certain things have taken my*
> *mind and myself away from the classroom and I've had to focus on*
> *other things. I try to redress the balance* (Mary).

Nevertheless interviewees reported that it was common for tasks relating to the head of department's own teaching, principally planning and marking, to be short cut and/or completed at times when the they were not fresh and rested. This led to frustration on the part of the head of department who, viewing her/himself principally as a teacher, frequently expressed feelings of dissatisfaction:

> *If I didn't have to do all the other jobs and I could just concentrate*
> *on my teaching I think they could get a very, very good deal out of*
> *me* (Mary).

The impression was that these individuals wanted to do the whole job well but were frustrated in their willingness by the time issue.

> *My intense frustration comes from the fact that I know that ... if my*
> *role as head of department could be completely re-written, that I*
> *could be far more effective than I'm currently being* (Louise).

The term 'well' is subjective and, in the restricted scope of this research, impossible fully to explore. Nevertheless, as the study is one of the perceptions of the individuals concerned, the use of the term is relevant to the aims of the research. The feelings of inadequacy brought about by the time demands were further exacerbated by worries over the acceleration in the growth of the head of department role, principally brought about by 'top down' initiatives. This was expressed by one interviewee in terms of the demands made by senior managers on their more junior colleagues:

> *SMT feed all these sort of curriculum changes to us and we do it,*
> *in school projects like literacy school improvement project, all*
> *these things come to us* (Yvonne).

This is further evidenced by the demands encapsulated in the standards documents mentioned in Chapter 1 (DfEE, 1998). The heads of department interviewed could see the demands of the management role multiply. For example, Pippa, speaking in the group interview, stated: '*...I think we've probably thrown up too many balls in the air, which are all falling on our heads*'. This echoed the comment of a respondent to the research of Glover *et al.* (1998):

'*the time we have got is not sufficient ... it is a matter of keeping the balls in the air*' (Glover *et al.*, 1998, p. 288). Along with growing pressure on their time *per se*, individuals appeared to foresee themselves continuing to lose control over the available working time during the school day and beyond.

iii.   The heads of department in this research are frequently frustrated in
         attempts to plan their working day

It was found that this group of heads of department were frequently frustrated in attempts to plan their working day. This inability to plan the day effectively was a major theme running through the data. This is, of course, related to the overall time versus workload issue, given that tasks planned for the day but not completed (often not even started) were held over for evenings and weekends.

> *I used to call it crisis management but in fact it isn't crisis management. It's actually day-to-day management that you cannot plan for* (Mary).

As mentioned above, many management tasks can only be carried out in the day when relevant colleagues and students are available. Tasks which can be completed alone, i.e. planning, marking, clerical and administrative tasks, are earmarked for later:

> *Marking's done at home. Marking's done at the weekends and early mornings before school starts. Very rarely during the day* (Harriet).

Here again the question of the hierarchy of demands arises. The head of department is faced with the choice of completing a task required by a senior colleague or, in the servant leader role (Brown and Rutherford, 1998), to smooth the path of colleagues the following day, and planning lessons. Again the

impression derived from the research was that the former would be the most likely choice, leaving the head of department to plan the lesson while tired or, alternatively, teach it "off the cuff":

> *I certainly find more and more though that planning is the thing*
> *I'd like to do first but it's becoming more and more the last thing*
> *that I do. I've got a deadline for that and it's paperwork that has to*
> *be done and I don't have any choice* (Pippa).

The heads of department in this research were safe in the knowledge that they could cope with this approach to their work but were evidently frustrated at the frequent necessity to do so. This brings us to a major source of frustration, interruptions to lessons.

iv.   The heads of department in this research have to cope with frequent interruptions to their own classroom teaching, both from departmental colleagues and senior managers

It was found that the majority of these heads of department (8 of 9 individual interviewees and all of the interview group) were suffering to a large extent from interruptions to their teaching in class, both from subject colleagues and senior managers. In this research, all but one of the interviewees reported problems of this kind. This supports the conclusions of Glover and Miller (1999), who found interruptions to lessons in nineteen of the twenty schools for which they collected data, up to an average of over 41 minutes for five staff observed in one school. These interruptions relate principally to the head of department's roles as a disciplinarian and administrator (Glover and Miller, 1999). The former usually brings about interruptions from within the subject area, the latter from without.

The role of disciplinarian is a further aspect of the servant leader role (Brown and Rutherford, 1998), which wrests control of time from the head of department.

Heads of department spoke of interruptions to their teaching, which were sometimes so frequent that they had contingency plans drawn up with classes for when they had to deal with other issues. This complements the findings of Glover and Miller (1999), who noted evidence that '...*some subject leaders are more able than others to deflect interruption by prior planning*' (Glover and Miller, 1999, p.60). The heads of department were expected to perform these tasks and were willing to do so. They did not want to stand by while colleagues struggled. However there was evident frustration that this was necessary.

> *You're always going to get that difficult year eleven class with someone else, to the point where your year elevens say: "why are you always looking down the corridor, Miss? Why can't you stay in our room all the lesson? But the expectation, certainly from senior management, is that one should be able to deal with the difficulties that are arising in the department, it's part of your role and so you do have that conflict between fulfilling that expectation and fulfilling the delivery of the best grades for your own classes and I think that that is at the moment irreconcilable (...) and quite frustrating* (Amanda).

There was even greater frustration expressed when the interruption came from senior managers and other colleagues, sometimes in pursuance of mundane and routine administrative matters. This mirrors findings of Glover and Miller (1999):

> *Whilst the need to support staff in disciplinary matters and availability for crisis work with pupils are understandable it is less easy to appreciate the reasons why administration and senior management requests should lead to unplanned loss of teaching* (Glover and Miller, 1999, p. 61)

Here the confidence of the head of department and her/his relationships with those colleagues came to the fore as a determinant of whether or not they allowed themselves to be interrupted in this way. The pressure increases, however, as the drive to 'deliver' examination results gathers momentum. This is brought into even sharper focus by performance management and access to the higher pay scale (DfEE, 2000), which depends on individual success as a teacher in the classroom. Servant leader (Brown and Rutherford, 1998) heads of department are then pulled between personal goals and those of the team. They are further put under pressure by the requirement to assist other individuals in attaining those goals. This leads into the question of how heads of department apportion their time.

v.   The heads of department in this research tend to apportion non-teaching
         time to management –related tasks rather than their own teaching

It was found that there was a tendency among these heads of department to apportion time to management in preference to their own classroom teaching. If extra non-contact time were offered, the majority of heads of department stated that they would use it for management related tasks. One example of the support for this view among the interviewees came from Pippa in the group interview. When asked how she would use extra time, she answered:

> *I think it would mean an hour you could spend on a managerial*
> *task within school, which would mean ... one less hour you'd have*
> *to spend at home.*

This is at odds with the tendency of these individuals to view themselves, first and foremost, as teachers. It is, however, a realistic response, given, as noted above, the immediacy of many of the demands of the management role. For example, monitoring of colleagues' work within the requirements of performance management can only take place during the school day. Similarly administrative

tasks requiring a personal computer may have to be done in the day, especially if they require access to the school's computer network. These realities of the head of department's situation lead yet more to frustration and dissatisfaction within the teacher role. This is evidenced by the obvious delight taken by the majority of the interviewees in their freedom (real or imagined) to give time when fresh and rested to their lesson planning during the final run up to an OFSTED inspection:

> *You've done everything administratively ... and I spent a whole*
> *week thinking about my own teaching, and it was amazing. It was*
> *the only good thing about OFSTED* (Amanda).

In more normal times, however, feelings were expressed which echoed those of the head of department in the NFER research (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989), who expressed the worry that, if a head of department gave too much time to being a teacher at the expense of being a head of department, s/he would be regarded as a less than effective departmental manager. As previously noted, the heads of department in this research appeared to want to be effective in their management role, showing a measure of agreement with the respondents in the research of Wise and Bush (1999) and therefore would apportion extra time to it during the school day if that were accorded to them. Again, however, I perceived an element of frustration and annoyance from individuals who felt that their own teaching, while satisfactory or better in OFSTED terms, was not as good as it had been.

vi.   The heads of department in this research are sensitive to the need to be, and to be seen to be a high quality teacher

It was found that these heads of department felt that they had to be, and be seen to be, highly effective classroom teachers. For example, this was clearly stated by eight of the nine individual interviewees. It was also mentioned by all three headteachers interviewed. This supports the view of Harris (1995:1998) and

Turner (2000), who stress the importance of the head of department's teaching to effective leadership and management. Comments on the quality of heads of department's classroom teaching and their role as leading professional and role model teacher are made in the knowledge that, as heads of department, they can and must have an impact on the teaching quality within the department as a whole. This was apparent in the NFER research (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989) which, in its call for 'the time to manage' foregrounded the potential of the head of department as experienced leading professional to influence teaching and learning within her/his subject area. Deficiencies in subject leaders' practice, however, cannot be offset by their potential to exercise a positive influence on teaching and learning in colleagues' classrooms. This was the general opinion of the interviewees in this research and accords with views expressed by heads of department in other studies (e.g. Brown *et al.*, 2000a). The suggestion is that heads of department must be seen to be consummate professionals if they are to have the necessary influence over others (cf. Wise, 2000). Although the view was generally expressed (eight of nine individual interviewees) that classes were not getting a raw deal in being taught by the head of department, the majority of the heads of department involved in this research felt that their planning was inadequate in terms of the goals that they set for themselves.

vii.   <u>The heads of department in this research are obliged to use experience and energy to substitute for planning and preparation</u>

It was found that these heads of department were obliged to use experience and energy to compensate for this lack of planning, essentially living on their wits. Whereas the experience cannot be denied (Turner, 2000), the continued energy, given the increases in the demands of the role, cannot be taken for granted. The suggestion is that, within the system as it currently stands, heads of department are expected to teach with less preparation and follow-up time than their colleagues. This may indeed be viable up to a point but is at odds with the leading professional expectations of the role as identified by Brown and Rutherford

(1998). Another issue to take into account here is the potential for lack of innovation in teaching approaches. One head of department expressed this in terms of short-cutting lesson planning:

> *You can become very stagnant ... very set in your ways ... there is*
> *that in us, this worksheet, when you're under pressure and you fish*
> *out something* (Mary).

The saving grace for the heads of department in this research was the scope for teamwork in which ideas and innovation were available from all parts of the team rather than always having to come from the top.

viii.   The heads of department in this research are able to compensate to an extent for their own short cuts by effective use of teamwork, notably in co-operation with junior colleagues

The heads of department taking part in this research showed evidence of being able to benefit from teamwork to offset deficiencies in their own planning. Junior colleagues, including student teachers, are willing and able to pass ideas and materials along the line. This can be seen as a benefit of the head of department building a team in which the overriding atmosphere is one of collegiality. Harris *et al.* (1995) see this as a feature of an effective department although Brown *et al.* (2000a) feel that more research is necessary in this field. The temptation is to refer to the head of department as following professional as well as leading professional, perhaps opening the way for a more circular model of the role than that suggested above by Turner and Bolam (1998). The head of department can counterbalance her/his own lack of preparation time by encouraging the kind of working practices which allow collegiality and the willingness of individuals to feed off each other, whatever their position in the hierarchy of a departmental team.

ix.   The heads of department in this research view their role principally as a teacher with management responsibilities

It was found that the interviewees in this research viewed the head of department's role as that of a teacher who has an important management responsibility. Brown *et al.* (2000a) note the ambiguous nature of the head of department's role. They quote Siskin's (1993) definition of such a role as '*hermaphroditic*' (Brown *et al.*, 2000a, p.240). This research does not support the statement that the head of department is '...*neither fully teacher nor fully administrator*' (Brown *et al.*, 2000a, p.240). My research supports the view that the head of department is 'fully teacher', however much the management function may take time and energy from the pedagogical role. Furthermore, any attempt to describe the head of department's activities without clear reference to the teaching function may be destined to remain in the realms of theory, however clearly it may reflect the management side of the dual role. Bell and Morrison (1988) conclude from their study of primary school headteachers as follows:

> *Whilst there are clear conflicts and tensions in the role of the teaching head it is inappropriate to regard their situation from the perspective of the non-teaching head.* (Bell and Morrison, 1988, p.208)

Having produced data similar to those reported by these researchers I would suggest that a similar conclusion is appropriate. That is, that secondary school heads of department cannot realistically be viewed in isolation from their teaching role. Therefore research into the daily experiences of this group of practitioners must include an acceptance of, and a clear reference to, their main professional role (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989) as teachers of their subject. With this in mind, I will now consider the research as a basis for recommendations for policy and practice and make suggestions for further research related to the findings listed above.

Summary of the research and recommendations for policy and practice in education and for future research

This research has elicited the views of a number of educational practitioners in one English county. These included a large proportion of the MFL heads of department in the county, a number of subject leaders in other curriculum areas and three headteachers.

It has revealed the suggestion that the heads of department view their role principally from the point of view of teachers and interpersonal actors. It also showed a strong desire to succeed as teachers and to be effective in their departmental management role. This research differs from recent work on the subject (e.g. Turner, 1996; Brown and Rutherford, 1998; Turner 2000; Brown *et al.*, 2000a / 2000b), which has concentrated on the management side of the role. It has emphasised the dual role of the teacher / manager, rather than concentrating on the management function. It has added further evidence that, twelve years on from the major NFER study (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989), these heads of department, in common with those taking part in the research reported by Wise and Bush (1999) are embracing their role as managers and are keen to succeed in running their departments and leading their teams of colleagues. It suggests, however, a predominance of interpersonal skills in this role, with a lesser enthusiasm for the type of managerial behaviour necessary for initiatives such as monitoring, target setting and the use of pupil data.

The research suggests that the time required by heads of department to perform their management function and simultaneously remain highly effective in the classroom has still not been found. It has shown that this group of heads of department is most likely to use extra non-contact time for management-related tasks. The suggestion is that teaching-related tasks are being performed late in the

day and/or at the weekend. The research does not deny the importance of the head of department role in influencing others. It does, however, foreground the need for the head of department to be, and to be seen to be, a highly effective classroom practitioner (Wise, 2000). It therefore supports the NFER research (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989) in calling for more non-contact time for heads of department. Whereas Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) made only passing reference to the importance of classroom teaching, however, this research foregrounds this aspect of the head of department's overall role.

Suggestions for further research

The findings of this research open the way for further research into the leading professional role of the head of department. This could concentrate on the individual as a teacher with a management role, rather than a manager who also happens to teach. It also prompts discussion of the head of department's predicament as a teacher in a system which, rightly in the writer's opinion, places major emphasis on teaching and learning to the point of offering higher financial rewards to those able to demonstrate effectiveness in the classroom (DfEE, 2000).

There has been an increase in research interest in the role of head of department in the time since this study was begun, in 1998. This recent work, which is reviewed in Chapter 2, continues to emphasise the role of middle manager, with little or no reference to the teaching commitment. It is to be hoped that my research may encourage academics in the field to take more notice of the doubly-loaded (Dunning, 1993) element of the head of department role and consider issues such as the sustainability of the role, the hierarchy of demands and the awareness of senior management of the day-to-day experience of their middle-management colleagues. In particular I would suggest research into the viability of a division of the academic and managerial aspects of the role, within the policy of developing advanced skills teachers (DfEE, 2000). If the head of department role is to remain in its current form, then research into the training needs of individuals in terms of

coping with the job and maximising effectiveness in both aspects could have worthwhile practical application.

The themes arising from this research prompt three recommendations for policy and practice, all of which relate to the definition and balance of expectations of the role of the secondary school head of department.

<u>The head of department's teaching commitment</u>

The first recommendation is that the call for more non-teaching time for heads of department (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989) be heeded. This research supports the views of writers such as Turner (1996) and Brown *et al.* (2000a) that the head of department role has grown dramatically over the last 15 – 20 years. It is also in accord with the conclusions of Wise and Bush (1999) in noting that there has been little or no progress in terms of giving heads of department adequate time to perform their role since the call was first made some twelve years ago (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989). The head of department finds her/himself with a considerable burden of classroom teaching with only a small amount of non-contact time above that allocated to classroom teachers. This research found heads of department, some responsible for teams of ten or more teachers, to be averaging 75% of contact time during the school week. In addition to this, many heads of department also have the role of group tutor and some have additional whole-school responsibilities. If the tasks and responsibilities of the head of department role are to be carried out successfully and efficiently, those charged with the role must now be given adequate time within the school working day. This is even more important now that the monitoring required for effective performance management is linked to teachers' pay and career prospects.

The issue of more non-contact time is not only related, however, to the head of department's managerial role. As classroom teachers, heads of department have direct responsibility for the education in their subject of a large number of young

people. Furthermore, progress along the higher pay spine (DfEE, 2000) is directly linked to that classroom teaching. The removal of just one teaching group from the head of department's timetable frees not only the teaching time of that group but also the time and energy required for preparation, marking, attending parents' evenings and more besides. Therefore heads of department not only have increased time during the school day to carry out those duties which require the presence of colleagues and/or pupils, they also have more time outside of this to plan more effectively for the classes that they do teach.

The lack of time was cited by respondents to this research as a barrier to the effective carrying out of both teaching and management duties. At the same time, the individuals were unanimous in their desire to achieve on both counts. Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) called for the time to carry out management duties. They also speculated that less contact time would allow the head of department her/himself to be a better classroom teacher. The need for the head of department to be not only a sound classroom practitioner but a highly effective one – and to be seen by colleagues to be so – has been noted above. I would therefore call for the time to carry out both aspects of the doubly-loaded (Dunning, 1993) role effectively. A reduction in contact time would reduce role strain and give heads of department a better chance of being effective leading professionals both as role-model teacher and through monitoring and coaching. Furthermore, they would be more capable of carrying out the servant leader role (Brown and Rutherford, 1998) for the team while being able to teach in a manner which gives best value to their own pupils and engenders maximum job satisfaction.

Training needs

The second recommendation concerns the training needs of the head of department. Turner (2000) expresses surprise at the lack of formalized management training received by many heads of department and goes on to state that ' ...traditionally, HoDs are appointed on the basis of proven classroom

competence and the acquisition of sufficient experience of teaching' (Turner, 2000, p.301).

Combining this with evidence of the centrality of the head of department's own classroom teaching to her/his effectiveness as a subject leader (Harris *et al.,* 1995, Harris, 1998), I would suggest that attention be paid to training, not only in management and leadership issues (Brown and Rutherford, 1998; Glover *et al.,* 1998), but also in subject-specific pedagogy. Turner (2000), found an average length of teaching experience of twenty-one years among his large sample of heads of department. This underlines the need for systematic up-dating in subject related pedagogical matters if heads of department are to carry out their role as leading professional effectively. Whereas this research does not provide concrete evidence of a lack of such training for heads of department, it is reasonable to suggest that this lack exists given the tone of the interviews. In view of the finding that heads of department lack time during the school day to plan and prepare lessons, training should perhaps be given in achieving maximum effect from minimum time. Viewing the head of department's training needs from both sides of the dual role leads to my final recommendation, the division of the management role.

The division of the 'business' and academic management roles

The final recommendation is that research should be carried out into the viability of a division of the head of department role into two strands – academic and 'business' management. There was support among the majority of interviewees for a change to the established system, particularly with respect to the question of whether the individual should be regarded as principally a teacher or a manager (Schmidt, 2000):

> *Somebody has got to decide ... are they going to just be teachers*
> *... or are they actually going to manage?* (Louise).

The heads of department questioned in the research all reported evidence of role strain (Handy, 1993) The difficulty of carrying out the function of classroom teacher to a high standard while at the same time providing moral and administrative support to a team of colleagues, managing and monitoring human resources and performing the complex role of leading a team of professional colleagues is evident. The result of trying to keep so many plates spinning at once is, inevitably, that some will fall to the ground and break. These breakages are reflected in the words of a number of interviewees, whose responses betray a large measure of frustration.

The experience of listening to a group of motivated, caring but ultimately over-worked and frustrated professionals leads me to suggest the division of the roles as a way of reducing their overload. With particular relevance to this research it would also alleviate some of the strain between their role as classroom teacher, vital to their pupils' progress and their own self-esteem and credibility as teachers, and their management function, vital to school improvement and effectiveness.

The division of roles would involve a 'flatter' form of management. Instead of a head and deputy head of department, there would be two colleagues of equal status within the organisation. One would have responsibility for task completion, the other for teaching standards and quality. This latter role could dovetail with the Advanced Skills Teacher initiative (DfEE, 2000). The details of the two roles would be negotiated by the incumbents and the school's senior managers. The reduced management load brought about by the division of the roles would allow both individuals to perform more effectively in their departmental role while, given a reasonable time allocation, continuing to be highly effective in their own classroom. It would also simplify training needs, the fulfilment of which has been found to be inadequate (Turner, 2000).

There are, of course, funding implications in all three recommendations. With regard to the division of roles, these need not necessarily be prohibitive, however, as salary scales can also be flattened. So, for example a head of department on five management points and deputy on three (a pattern emerging in large 'shortage-subject' departments) could be changed to two colleagues earning four extra salary points. This may be a naïve expectation, in view of the findings of Hannay and Ross (1999), who report on major changes made to the departmental system in a Canadian school district. Where extra money was not made available, existing heads of department had their salaries reduced, leading to a measure of dissatisfaction. Whether or not this would happen in any given department may depend on the culture in terms of power relationships and individual outlooks. Hannay and Ross refer to the radical changes on which they report as '*questioning the black box*' (Hannay and Ross, 1999, p.345). My recommendation would involve a similar questioning of the *status quo*, although It would not amount to questioning the entire subject-leader based departmental system (Hannay and Ross, 1999, Witziers *et al.*, 1999). There would be costs involved, but these could be offset by possible savings in the private and social costs of teacher burnout (Huberman, 1993), low quality teaching and ineffective management.

The achievements and limitations of the research

The principal aim of this research, as set out in Chapter 1 above, was to open up the issue of the dual role of the secondary school head of department as manager and teacher. The term 'manager' has been used for simplicity to cover the three aspects of the head of department's non-teaching duties, those of administrator, manager and leader. These were described through the theoretical writings of researchers in the field in order to illustrate their range and complexity but were not explored in detail as they were not central to the main aims of the study. This

section presents an overview of the achievements of the research methods employed and aspects of them, which limit claims to validity.

The sample

The sample was chosen on pragmatic grounds. This was because of the need to rely on volunteers among colleague MFL heads of department both in terms of responding to the questionnaire survey and, to a greater extent, agreeing to participate in the group and individual interview. Having said that, it did prove possible to obtain a spread of ages, and years of experience and types of school. The status of all interviewees as MFL heads of department was an issue of convenience as these are the colleagues to whom I have access. An element of breadth across the curriculum was achieved by the response of non-MFL heads of department to the initial questionnaire survey.

The predominance of females over males in the research sample was a function of the sample itself, as the majority of MFL heads of department in the county are women. The decision not to differentiate on grounds of gender was taken at the outset, although it is necessary to bear in mind, when discussing issues of time and workload, the effects of family responsibilities on many women teachers (Cunnison, 1994). The female bias was, however, offset to an extent by the presence of a range of backgrounds, i.e. single and married, with and without school-age children. It is acknowledged, however, that the female bias may have implications for the findings as female managers might, for example, emphasise 'people' skills (Gray, 1987). This issue cannot be dealt with within the restricted scope of this research.

The postal questionnaire

The aim of this was to gain an insight into how the heads of department themselves viewed their role. Having established a reasonable basis for

suggesting that they rated the skills and attributes of teaching and inter-personal behaviour more highly that those of management activity the question was asked as to how well they cope with the role of teacher alongside that of manager.

The questionnaire survey was able to give a guide to the approach of this group of heads of department to their job. The results suggested, as mentioned above, similarities between the approach taken to both aspects of the role with a marked tendency towards teacher and interpersonal behaviour. These findings were strengthened by those of the individual and group interviews, along with the comments added by respondents to the survey questionnaire. There are, however, limitations to the strength of the postal questionnaire findings as a result of the manner in which this data collection instrument was employed.

The behaviours and attributes were chosen by the researcher from the DfEE (1998) and OFSTED (1997) documents. Different results may have been obtained using other variables. As mentioned above, there is also the possibility that the categories chosen lack subtlety in terms of their suitability for a rating scale. A diligent teacher / head of department might be tempted to rate all of them highly, giving a utopian view of the situation. The results, however, were subject to a measure of triangulation from the interviews, which were of a semi-structured nature and which yielded comparable results from open questions. A measure of triangulation was also achieved with reference to the Bell and Morrison (1988) study, on which the questionnaire survey stage of the research was based. The results obtained were comparable to those reported by Bell and Morrison (1988) from their sample of teaching primary heads.

The interviews

The group and individual interviews, which produced the bulk of the data for this research, added weight to the questionnaire findings. These data give a snapshot of how these heads of department view their role and, in particular, their role as a

classroom teacher. The validity of the data collected from the individual interviews was enhanced, for example, by the similar situation in which all but one of the research subjects were interviewed and the range of school types and sizes covered. These aspects of the interviews were designed to promote their reliability as a data collection instrument.

As previously mentioned, however, there was a certain imbalance in the sample. A limited attempt was made to elicit the views of significant others (Turner, 2000) in the form of the three headteachers. The scope of the research could, however, have been usefully widened by the collection of data from, in particular, departmental colleagues and pastoral heads. The research is not able to show whether the concerns expressed by heads of department in relation to their classroom teaching are found in teachers with differing levels of non-teaching responsibility. This is related to a further limiting factor. This is that the data were based entirely on the perceptions of the respondents, leading to an element of subjectivity. It was not possible to re-check these perceptions at a different time in order to increase their validity. This also calls to mind Wise's (2000) comment that, whereas the heads of department in her research claim to be embracing management issues, they may not be doing so in practice. Similar unanswered questions may arise from my research.

A further limitation relating to the use of the interview method in this research concerns the use of both individual and group interviews in the data collection. Whereas this can be viewed as a possible aid to validity within a triangulated approach (Denzin, 1978), the reliability of the two instruments when used together cannot be taken for granted. For example, both the group and individual interviewees were evidently inconvenienced by interruptions to their lessons. The individual interviewees, sitting calmly in their own territory, speaking without interruption, were far more sanguine about such interruptions than were the members of the group interview. The latter, it might be said, 'egged each other on' about this and some other aspects of the data. It must be noted that these

heads of department may have responded differently if they too had been interviewed individually (Lewis, 1992). Furthermore, it may have been more effective to use a focus group (Wilson, 1997), in which the researcher has less control over the agenda of the group members.

Generic limitations inherent in both group and individual interviews used for data collection are also discussed in Chapter 3 above.

Effects of the researcher and the respondent on the data

A further limitation to the validity of the analysis of the data is the fact that the data were collected and analysed by an insider (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The researcher is a head of MFL of some fifteen years experience and, as such, shares a culture with the interviewees. This can lead to meanings being taken for granted (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) reflect on the other side of this coin: *'The danger that attends the role of complete observer is that of failing to understand the perspectives of participants'* (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.110).

A further source of bias (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) is the identity of the respondent. Most of the heads of department interviewed in this research have been in post for a number of years and have grown into and with the role. In this case it is not possible to be sure of the separation of the individuals' personal characteristics from their role.

In both of the above instances, the key point is that bias of some kind is unavoidable is research of this nature (Straus and Corbin, 1998; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Denzin, 1998) and must be taken into account when claims to knowledge are made.

Validity

As a result of limitations such as the size of the sample and the way in which it was constructed, claims to external validity (Cohen and Manion, 1994) are not made by the researcher. A claim to external validity implies a generalisation of the findings of the research in this setting to other situations. To be able to extend the findings to general statements about secondary school heads of department across the country would require a more broadly based study. Nevertheless, the research yields a useful snapshot of how this particular group of mainly MFL heads of department view their role, its dual nature and their own classroom teaching. It raises issues relating to the head of department as a classroom teacher and manager, highlighting perceived conflicts between the roles and the effects of the teacher's job satisfaction and the pupils' education. As such it opens the way for further research in a field which has been somewhat neglected by educational researchers until recent years (Turner, 1996). Furthermore, it covers a sample of practising heads of department with considerable combined experience in a variety of different schools.

Concluding statement

This thesis began with a quotation from the 20th Century German author, Heinrich Böll, taken from his short story *'Es wird etwas geschehen'* (Something will happen) (Böll, 1963, my translation). The character Broschek works as deputy to Alfred Wunsiedel, a hyper-active factory owner, whose motto is 'something will happen'. Like his boss and role model, Broschek can apparently cope with the multiple demands of his roles both in his professional and private lives, and appears to do so with aplomb. As I sat and listened to the interviewees and read the survey responses that form part of this research, the image of Broschek became ever stronger in my mind. I could no longer ignore it when one

experienced MFL head of department and member of the group interview, talking about her daily reality and the importance of her role to school improvement, said:

> *That's what they say in London, that middle managers are*
> *absolutely focal in school improvement and this, that and the*
> *other. But would you just do that with your little toe while you do*
> *everything else as well. What you don't get, as the job has*
> *expanded … your non-contact time has not expanded in order to*
> *allow you to do that* (Amanda).

It occurred to me that I was in the presence of latter day Broscheks, who were themselves juggling not just with the duality of the role, but with the multiplicity of demands within both aspects of their job, not to mention their family lives.

Broschek's situation appears to be sustainable, until the following happens to his boss and mentor, Wunsiedel. The narrator describes the scene:

'Something has happened', I said quietly.

Broschek spat out the biro, put down both telephone receivers and hesitatingly removed his toes from the knitting machine.

'What has happened?' he asked.

'Mr. Wunsiedel is dead', I said.

'He isn't', said Broschek.

'He is', I said.

(Böll, 1963, p.57, my translation from the original German).

This story has resonance for me as it evokes the ultimately unsustainable nature of the dual role that the respondents to this research, and I too, must attempt to carry out on a daily basis. I noted in Chapter 1 that the research constituted an attempt to understand the nature of the role. Having carried out the research and reported on it in this thesis, I find that, whereas I act no less like Broschek than was the case at the beginning, I have a deeper understanding of the dual role and of the key issues, which must be addressed in any attempts to improve it.

A provisional model for the part played by subject heads of department in leading and managing their departments (Turner and Bolam 1998, p378)

(i)
National and Local Factors
Examples:
- National Targets
- LEA Subject Advisor
- National Curriculum
- League Tables
- Teacher Training Agency National Standards for Subject Leaders

(ii)
School Factors
Examples:
- Whole School Policies on discipline, assessment and equal opportunities
- Human and material resource allocation

(iii)
Knowledge, Skills and Personal Characteristics of the Individual Head of Department
Examples:
- Age
- Qualifications
- Current teaching load
- Know-how to use value-added data to set targets for improvement
- Knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of departmental staff
- Knowledge of the whole school context in which the school operates

(iv)
Subject-related Factors
Examples:
- Distinctive features of the subject
- Nature of the learning process
- Need for special facilities

(v)
Tasks
Examples
- Leading a team of staff
- Secure and maintain effective teaching
- Provide strategic direction and development of the subject

(vi)
Departmental Factors
Examples:
Size
Environmental Location
Involvement with Initial Teacher Education
Staff Characteristics

(vii)
Methods used by the Head of Department
Examples
- Working with departmental team in formal and informal meetings
- Working with individual staff via classroom observation

(viii)
Educational Outcomes
Examples:
GCSE and A Level Examination Results
Key Stage 3 Assessment
Inspection Reports

APPENDIX 2   Results of Bell and Morrison (1998) Research

Aggregated scores of headteachers' ratings of importance of role behaviours

Role Behaviour	Headteacher Perspective	Class Teacher Perspective
Authoritarian, the ultimate authority	47	84
Concerned with discipline, makes and enforces rules	51	88
Autocratic, remote from staff, children, parents	25	42
Democratic, involves staff in decision making	118	101
Prepared to delegate authority	114	108
Accessible to staff, children, parents	125	118
Knowledgeable, up to date with educational ideas	109	113
Experienced classroom teacher	118	119
Innovator, initiator of new methods	108	99
Open to new ideas	120	110
Flexible, imaginative	121	115
Supportive of staff, conciliator	120	121
Closely identifies with teachers' interests	110	122
Efficient and reliable administrator	93	110
Effective manager, organizational ability	102	112
Moral leader, exemplar, embodiment of values	95	102
Public figure, charismatic, inspirational, motivator	74	91
Willingness to teach	116	120
Controls resources, curriculum, timetabing, funds	79	88
Policy maker, sets priorities and deadlines	78	83
Evaluator, concern with standards	103	92
Assessor, keeper of records, reports, schemes of work	80	84
Mediator, liaison between school and community	108	103
Spokesperson, public relations figure, negotiator	92	104
Communicator	103	108
Independent, strong willed, assertive	64	75
Focus of loyalty and commitment	95	101
Team member	118	113
Closely involved in classrooms and school activities	124	121

Source: Bell and Morrison 1988, p.205

Aggregated scores of headteachers' ratings of importance of role behaviours

Role Behaviour	Rank order	Frequency
Closely involved in classrooms and school activities	1	245
Accessible to staff, children, parents	2	243
Supportive of staff, conciliator	3	241
Experienced classroom teacher	4	237
Willingness to teach	5.5	236
Flexible, imaginative	5.5	236
Closely identifies with teachers' interests	7	232
Team member	8	231
Open to new ideas	9	230
Prepared to delegate authority	10.5	222
Knowledgeable, up to date with educational ideas	10.5	222
Democratic, involves staff in decision making	12	219
Effective manager, organizational ability	13	214
Communicator	14.5	211
Mediator, liaison between school and community	14.5	211
Innovator, initiator of new methods	16	207
Efficient and reliable administrator	17	203
Moral leader, exemplar, embodiment of values	18	197
Focus of loyalty and commitment	19.5	196
Spokesperson, public relations figure, negotiator	19.5	196
Evaluator, concern with standards	21	195
Controls resources, curriculum, timetabling, funds	22	167
Public figure, charismatic, inspirational, motivator	23	165
Assessor, keeper of records, reports, schemes of work	34	164
Policy maker, sets priorities and deadlines	25	158
Concerned with discipline, makes and enforces rules	26.5	139
Independent, strong willed, assertive	26.5	139
Authoritarian, the ultimate authority	28	129
Autocratic, remote from staff, children, parents	29	67

Source: Bell and Morrison 1988, p.206

APPENDIX 3 – THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please begin by answering these questions:

What is your age? (circle as appropriate)   25 – 30   31 - 40

41 – 50   51 - 60

How many years (including the current academic year)
have you been in teaching?   ....

How many years have you been a head of department?   ....

How many teachers do you lead?   Full time   ....

Part time   ....

What proportion of the teaching week do you spend in the
classroom?   E.g. if you teach 20 lessons from a possible 30,
please write 20 / 30   ....

What is your subject area?   (circle as appropriate)   Foreign languages

Other (please specify)

....

On the next page is a list of role behaviours and attributes based on recent
TTA and OFSTED standards documents.
From your perspective as a head of department, please circle one number to rate the
importance of each item, in terms of the time and energy that you feel you should
devote to it as a HoD.

1 = **un**important

5 = very important

	unimportant >>>> important				
1) First class subject knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
2) Good understanding of the National Curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
3) Well planned lessons	1	2	3	4	5
4) Knows the pupils	1	2	3	4	5
5) Wide range of classroom skills	1	2	3	4	5
6) Good discipline	1	2	3	4	5
7) Uses pupil data in planning	1	2	3	4	5
8) Regular formative marking	1	2	3	4	5
9) Commitment to all pupils	1	2	3	4	5
10) Able to model effective teaching	1	2	3	4	5
11) Strong but consultative leader	1	2	3	4	5
12) Good delegator	1	2	3	4	5
13) Knows the value of effective meetings	1	2	3	4	5
14) Takes account of whole school priorities	1	2	3	4	5
15) Produces handbooks, schemes of work	1	2	3	4	5
16) Monitors teaching quality	1	2	3	4	5
17) Deploys staff effectively	1	2	3	4	5
18) Monitors pupil progress	1	2	3	4	5
19) Sets targets	1	2	3	4	5
20) Aware of INSET needs of self and others	1	2	3	4	5
21) Accessible to staff, children, parents	1	2	3	4	5
22) Flexible and imaginative	1	2	3	4	5
23) Good communicator	1	2	3	4	5
24) Able to negotiate and consult	1	2	3	4	5
25) Good time manager	1	2	3	4	5
26) Team member as well as leader	1	2	3	4	5
27) Adaptable to change	1	2	3	4	5
28) Willing to seek advice and support	1	2	3	4	5
29) Reliable and shows integrity	1	2	3	4	5
30) Committed and enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5

Please write below the numbers of the three which you think are the MOST important:

number ....number...............and number ....

As well as being a head of department, you are also a classroom teacher.
On the next page is the same list of role behaviours and attributes.
Without referring back to your previous answers, please now rate their
importance in terms of the time and energy that you feel you should devote
to them as a classroom teacher.

Again,   1 = **un**important
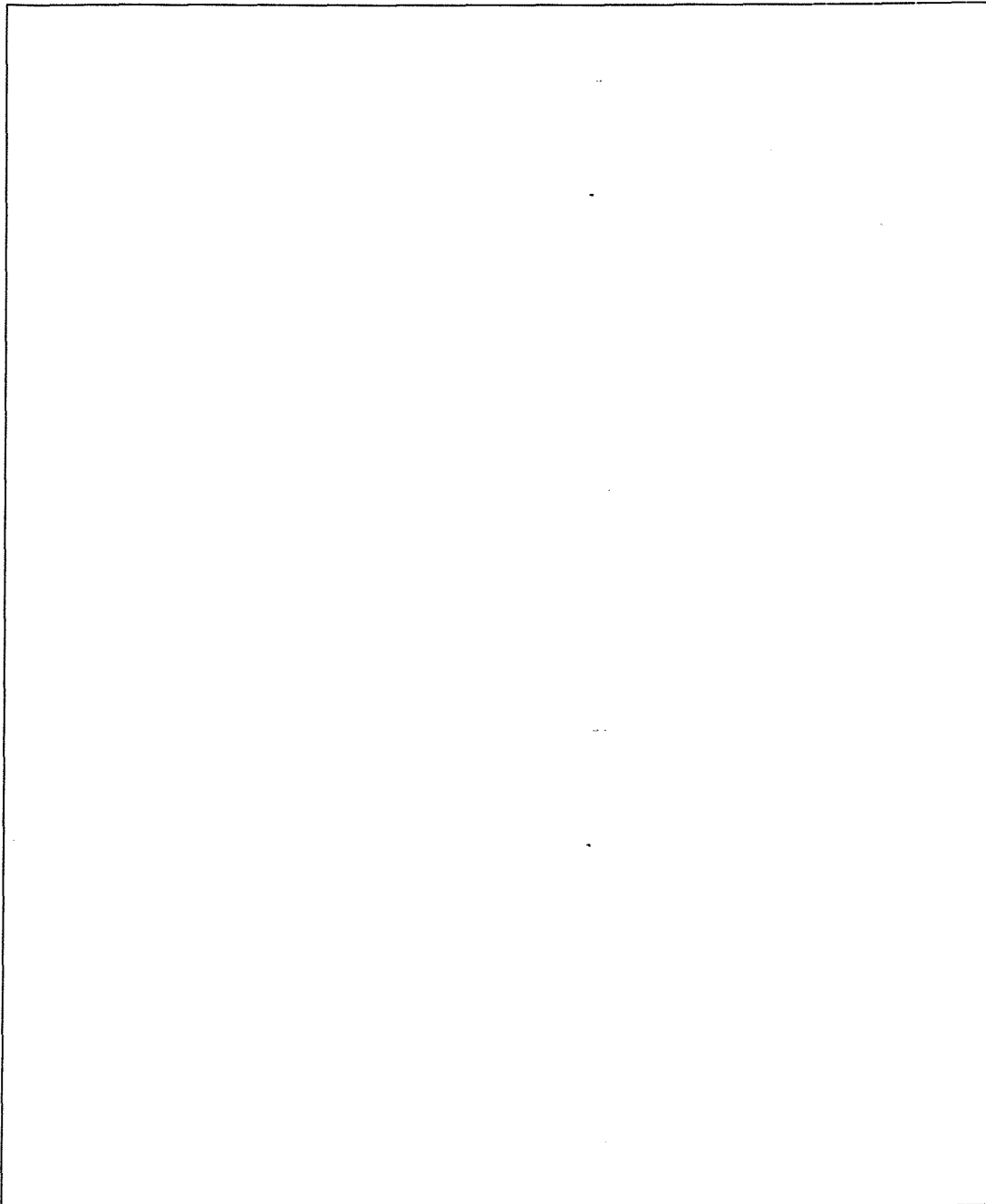
               5 = very important

	unimportant >>>> important				
1) First class subject knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
2) Good understanding of the National Curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
3) Well planned lessons	1	2	3	4	5
4) Knows the pupils	1	2	3	4	5
5) Wide range of classroom skills	1	2	3	4	5
6) Good discipline	1	2	3	4	5
7) Uses pupil data in planning	1	2	3	4	5
8) Regular formative marking	1	2	3	4	5
9) Commitment to all pupils	1	2	3	4	5
10) Able to model effective teaching	1	2	3	4	5
11) Strong but consultative leader	1	2	3	4	5
12) Good delegator	1	2	3	4	5
13) Knows the value of effective meetings	1	2	3	4	5
14) Takes account of whole school priorities	1	2	3	4	5
15) Produces handbooks, schemes of work	1	2	3	4	5
16) Monitors teaching quality	1	2	3	4	5
17) Deploys staff effectively	1	2	3	4	5
18) Monitors pupil progress	1	2	3	4	5
19) Sets targets	1	2	3	4	5
20) Aware of INSET needs of self and others	1	2	3	4	5
21) Accessible to staff, children, parents	1	2	3	4	5
22) Flexible and imaginative	1	2	3	4	5
23) Good communicator	1	2	3	4	5
24) Able to negotiate and consult	1	2	3	4	5
25) Good time manager	1	2	3	4	5
26) Team member as well as leader	1	2	3	4	5
27) Adaptable to change	1	2	3	4	5
28) Willing to seek advice and support	1	2	3	4	5
29) Reliable and shows integrity	1	2	3	4	5
30) Committed and enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5

Please write below the numbers of the three which you think are the MOST important:

number .... number .... and number ....

PTO

Has this questionnaire awoken any particular thoughts on your dual ro'e as a teacher and HoD? If so I would be grateful if you would note them below. Please feel free to write as little or as much as you wish. Finally, many thanks again for your help.

APPENDIX 4

Basic Schedule for Group Interview

What are the characteristics of a good teacher?

What are the characteristics of a good head of department?

What do you regard as your main professional role?

How do you feel about your teaching?

Do you have strategies to help your own teaching?

Are there areas of conflict in your role?

Is it possible to be effective in both aspects of the role?

How would you use extra time?

APPENDIX 5

Basic Schedules for Individual Interviews

<u>1. Interviews with Heads of Department</u>

What are the characteristics of a good teacher?

What are the characteristics of a good head of department?

Heads of department have been referred to as 'leading professionals'. How do you understand that term?

Do you regard it as part of your role to model good practice?

How do you feel about your teaching?

Do you have strategies to help your own teaching?

Are there areas of conflict in your role?

How far is it possible to be effective in both aspects of your role?

What would you say is your main professional role?

How would you use extra time?

Are there issues specific to MFL?

<u>2. Interviews with Headteachers</u>

What do you see as the role of the head of department in your school?

What are the qualities you look for when appointing a head of department?

Are their specific qualities required for MFL?

What is your understanding of the term 'leading professional' when applied to heads of department?

How would you relate the role of middle manager in schools to the role of middle manager in industry?

Do you foresee changes in the roles and practices of heads of department in the future?

REFERENCES

Atkinson, D. (1993) 'Relating' In Shakespeare, P., Atkinson, D. and French, S. *Reflecting on Research Practice*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Ball, S. and Bowe, R. (1992) 'Subject departments and the "implementation" of National Curriculum policy: an overview of the issues', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 24 (2), 97-115.

Bell, J. (1993) *Doing Your Research Project. A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science*, 2ⁿᵈ Edition, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Bell, L., (1992) *Managing Teams in Secondary Schools*, London, Routledge.

Bell, H. and Morrison, M. (1988) 'The teaching head in primary schools: tensions, paradigms and coping strategies', *School Organization*, 8 (2), 203-9.

Benn, C. and Chitty, C., (1996) *Thirty Years On: Is Comprehensive Education Alive and Well or Struggling to Survive?* London, David Fulton.

Bennett, N. (1995) *Managing Professional Teachers: Middle Management in Primary and secondary schools*, London, Paul Chapman.

Böll, H., (1963) 'Es wird etwas geschehen' In *Doktor Murkes gesammeltes Schweigen*, London, Harrap.

Booth-Kewley, S., Edwards, J.E. and Rosenfeld, P., (1992) 'Impression Management, Social Desirability and Computer Administration of Attitude Questionnaires: Does the Computer make a Difference?' In *Journal of Applied Psychology* 77(4), 562-6.

Borg, W.R. and Gall, M.D. (1983) *Educational Research An Introduction* (4th Ed) New York,Longman.

Brown, M., Boyle, B. and Boyle, T. (1999) 'Commonalities Between Perception and Practice in Models of School Decision-making in Secondary Schools', *School Leadership and Management*, 19 (3), 319-29.

Brown, M. and Rutherford, D. (1998) 'Changing Roles and Raising Standards : new challenges for heads of department', *School Leadership and Management*, 18 (1), 75-88.

Brown, M., Rutherford, D. and Boyle, B. (2000a) 'Leadership for School Improvement: The Role of the Head of Department in UK Secondary Schools', *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 2000, (11) 2, 237-58.

Brown, M., Boyle, B and Boyle T. (2000b) 'The shared management role of the head of department in English secondary schools', *Research in Education*, 63, 33-47.

Busher, H. (1988) 'Reducing role overload for a head of department: a rationale for fostering staff development', *School Organisation*, 8 (1), 99-104.

Busher, H. and Blease, D. (2000) 'Growing Collegial Cultures in Subject Departments in Secondary Schools: working with science staff', *School Leadership and Management*, 20 (1), 99-112.

Busher, H. and Harris, A. (1999) 'Leadership of School Subject Areas: tensions and dimensions of managing from the middle', *School Leadership and Management,* 19 (3), 305-17.

Busher, H. and Harris, A. with Wise, C. (2000) *Subject Leadership and School Improvement,* London, Paul Chapman Publishing.

Bryman, A. and Burgess, R.G. (1994) 'Developments in qualitative data analysis: an Introduction' In Bryman, A and Burgess, R.G (eds) *Analyzing Qualitative Data,* London, Routledge.

Buchanan, D and Huxzynski, A. (1985) *Organizational Behaviour: An Introductory Text.* Hemel Hempstead, Prentice Hall International (UK).

Burchell, B. and Marsh, C. (1992) 'The effect of questionnaire length on survey response', *Quality and Quantity* 26, 233-44.

Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1994) *Research Methods in Education* (4th Ed.), London, Routledge.

Czaja, R. and Blair, J. (1996) *Designing Surveys – A Guide to Decisions and Procedures,* Thousand Oaks, Pine Forge Press.

Cunnison, S. (1994) 'Women teachers: career identity and perceptions of family constraints – changes over a recent decade', *Research Papers in Education,* 9 (1), 81-105.

DfEE (Department for Education and Employment) (1998) *Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status,* HMSO, London.

DfEE (1998) *National Standards for Subject Leaders*, HMSO, London.

DfEE (2000) *Performance Threshold – Threshold Assessment 2000 (round 1)*
www.dfee.gov.uk/teachingreforms/rewards/perfthresh/index.shtml

DfEE (2001) *Advanced Skills Teachers*
/a-z/ADVANCED%5FSKILLS%5FTEACHERS.html

Dean, C., Mansell, W. and Thornton, K. (2001) 'Desperately seeking 10,000
teachers', The Times Educational Supplement, March 2, p.3.

Denscombe, M. (1995) 'Explorations in Group Interviews: an evaluation of a
reflexive and partisan approach', *British Educational Research Journal* 21
(2) 131-48.

Denzin, N.K. (1978) *The Research Act* (2nd Ed.) New York, McGraw Hill.

Denzin, N.K. (1998) 'The Art and Politics of Interpretation' In Denzin, N.K. and
Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*,
Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S.(1998) 'Entering the Field of Qualitative
Research' In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) *Collecting and
Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Dunham, J. (1984) *Stress in Teaching*, Beckenham, Croom Helm.

Dunning, G. (1993) 'Managing the Small Primary School: The Problem Role of
the Teaching Head', *Educational Management and Administration*, 21,
(2), 79-89.

Earley, P. (1998) 'Middle Management – the key to organisational success?' In Middlewood, D. and Lumby, J (eds.) *Strategic Management in Schools and Colleges*, London, Paul Chapman.

Earley, P. and Fletcher-Campbell, F. (1989) *The Time to Manage?* London, NFER.

Earley, P. and Fletcher-Campbell, F. (1990) 'Piggy in the Middle', *Education*, 176 (10), 192-3.

Elliott, J. (1991) *Action Research for Educational Change*, Buckingham Open University Press.

Flecknoe, M and Sutcliffe, N. (1997) 'Being a subject leader: what does it take?' *Managing Schools Today*, 7, (1), 30-2.

Fontana, A. and Frey, J.H. (1998) 'Interviewing: The Art of Science' In Denzin, N.K and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Fullan, M. (1991) *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, London, Cassell.

Glover, D., Gleeson, D., Gough, G. and Johnson, M. (1998) 'The meaning of management: the development needs of middle managers in secondary schools', *Educational Management and Administration*, 26 (3), 279-92.

Glover, D. and Miller, D. with Gambling, M., Gough, G. and Johnson, M. (1999) 'As Others See Us: senior management perceptions of the work effectiveness of subject leaders in secondary schools', *School Leadership and Management*, 19 (3), 331-44.

Glover, D. and Miller, D. (1999) 'The working day of the subject leader and the impact of interruptions on teaching and learning in secondary schools', *Research in Education* 62, 55-65.

Gold, A. (1998) *Head of Department: Principles in Practice*, London, Cassell.

Grace, G. (1972) *Role Conflict and the Teacher*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Gray, H. (1987) 'Gender considerations in school management: masculine and feminine leadership styles'. In Westoby, A. (ed) *Culture and Power in Educational Organisations.* Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

Green, H. (1992) 'Strategies for Management Development' In Bennett, N., Crawford, M and Riches, C. (eds) *Managing Change in Education: Individual and Organizational Perspectives.* London, Paul Chapman.

Hamlin, R. (1990) 'The Competent Manager in Secondary Schools', *Educational Management and Administration*, 18 (3), 3-10.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P (1995) *Ethnography Principles in Practice* (2nd Ed.) London, Routledge.

Handy, C. (1993) *Understanding Organizations* (4th Ed.), London, Penguin.

Hannay, L. and Ross, J. (1999) 'Department Heads as Middle Managers? Questioning the Black Box', *School Leadership and Management*, 19 (3), 345-58.

Harding, C. (1990) 'Training for Middle Management in Education', *School Organisation*, 10 (1), 27-37.

Harris, A. (1998) 'Improving Ineffective Departments in Secondary Schools: Strategies for Change and Development', *Educational Management and Administration*, 26 (3), 269-78.

Harris, A. (2000) 'Effective Leadership and Departmental Improvement', *Westminster Studies in Education*, 23, 81-90.

Harris, A. (2001) 'Department Improvement and School Improvement: a missing link?', *British Educational Research Journal*, 27 (4), 477-86.

Harris, A., Jamieson, I. and Russ, J. (1995) 'A study of effective departments in secondary schools', *School Organisation* 15 (3), 283-99.

Huberman, M. (1993) 'Burnout in Teaching Careers', *European Education*, Fall, 47-69.

HMI Wales (1984) *Departmental Organisation in Secondary Schools*, London HMSO.

Katz, D. and Kahn, R. (1978) *The Social Psychology of Organisations* (2nd Ed.) New York John Wiley.

Kemp, R. and Nathan, M. (1992) *Middle Management in Schools – a survival guide*, Hemel Hempstead, Simon and Schuster.

Lewis, A. (1992) 'Group Child interviews as a research tool' In *British Educational Research Journal,* 18, 413-21.

McGarvey, B., Marriott, S., Morgan, V. and Abbott, L. (1997) 'The Role of the Core Subject Coordinator in supporting Differentiation in Northern Ireland Primary Schools', *School Leadership and Management*, 17 (3), 375-86.

Mason, J. (1994) 'Linking qualitative and quantitative data analysis' In Bryman, A. and Burgess, R.G. (eds) *Analyzing Qualitative Data,* London, Routledge.

Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching,* London, Sage Publications.

Maclure, S. (1989) *Education Re-formed – A Guide to the Education Reform Act,* 2nd edn., Sevenoaks, Hodder and Stoughton.

Marland, M. (1981a) *Head of Department,* London, Heinemann.

Marland, M. (1981b) 'Introduction, the tasks of a head of department' In Marland, M. and Hill, S. (eds.), *Departmental Management,* London, Heinemann.

Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: an expanded sourcebook,* Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Molenaar, N.J. (1991) 'Recent methodological studies on survey questioning' In *Quality and Quantity,* 25 167-87.

Moore, J. (1992) 'The Role of the Science Co-ordinator in Primary School. A Survey of Headteachers' Views', *School Organisation*, 12 (1), 7-15.

Morris, D. (1984) *The Head of Department: A Guide to Good Practice*, London, The Modern Language Association.

Nias, J. (1980) 'Leadership styles and job satisfaction in primary schools' In Bush, T., Glatter, R., Goodey, J. and Riches, C. (eds) *Approaches to School Management*, London, Harper Row.

Office for Standards in Education (1997) *Subject Management in Secondary Schools* Aspects of Good Practice, Ref 93/97/NS, London, OFSTED.

Office for Standards in Education (2002) *Good Teaching, effective departments*, London, OFSTED.

Olesen, V., Droes, N., Hatton, D., Chico, N. and Schatzman, L. (1994) 'Analyzing together: recollections of a team approach' In Bryman, A. and Burgess, R.G. (eds) *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, London Routledge.

Peshkin, A. (1988) 'In Search of Subjectivity – One's Own', *Educational Research,* 17 (7) 17-22.

Powney, J. (1991) 'The appraisal of teachers in middle management roles', *Research Papers in Education,* 6 (3), 171-95.

Russell, S. and Metcalf, C. (1997) 'Middle Management, Feeling the Pressure', *Managing Schools Today,* 6 (5), 16-18.

Sammons, P., Thomas, S. and Mortimore, P. (1997) *Forging Links: Effective Schools and Effective Departments*, London, Paul Chapman.

Sanger, J. (1994) 'Seven Types of Creativity: looking for insights in data analysis', *British Educational Research Journal,* 20 (2) 175-85.

Scheaffer, R.L., Mendenhall, W. and Ott, L. (1996) *Elementary Survey Sampling* (5th Ed.) Belmont, Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Schmidt, M. (2000) 'Role Theory, emotions, and identity in the department headship of secondary schooling', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16 (8), 827-42.

Schofield, W. (1996) 'Survey Sampling' In Sapsford, R. and Jupp, V. (eds), *Data Collection and Analysis*, London, Sage Publications.

Scott, D. (1996) 'Methods and data in educational research' In Scott, D. and Usher, R. (eds), *Understanding Educational Research*, London, Routledge.

Silverman, D. (1993) *Interpreting Qualitative Data – Methods for Analyzing Talk, Text and Interaction,* London, Sage Publications.

Siskin, L. (1994) *Realms of Knowledge: Academic Departments in Secondary Schools*, Washington D.C., Falmer.

Sjoberg, G. and Nett, R. (1968) *A Methodology for Social Research*, New York, Harper Row.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research* (2nd Ed.), Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Swanborn, P. (1996) 'A common base for quality control criteria in quantitative and qualitative research', *Quality and Quantity*, 30, 19-35.

Sweetman, J. (1994) 'Review gets the green light from Shephard', *Guardian Education*, 25/10/94, p.9.

Swift, B. (1996) 'Preparing Numerical Data' In Sapsford, R. and Jupp, V (eds) *Data Collection and Analysis*, London, Sage.

Taris, T. (1996) 'Modelling nonresponse in multiwave panel studies using discrete time Markov models', *Quality and Quantity*, 30, 189-203.

Taylor, N. (1993) 'Ability Grouping and its Effect on Pupil Behaviour: A Case Study of a Midlands Comprehensive School', *Education Today*, 43 (2), 14-17.

Thompson, M. (1992) 'Do 27 Competences Make a Teacher?' *Education Review*, 6 (2), 4-7.

Trend, M.G. (1979) 'On the Reconciliation of Qualitative and Quantitative analyses, A Case Study' In Cook, T.D. and Reichert, C.S. (eds) *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Evaluation Research*, Beverley Hills, Sage Publications.

Turner, C. (1996) 'The Roles and Tasks of a Subject Head of Department in Secondary Schools in England and Wales: a neglected area of research?' *School Organization*, 16 (2), 203-17.

Turner, C. (2000) 'Learning about Leading a Subject Department in Secondary Schools: some empirical evidence', *School Leadership and Management*, 20 (3) 299-313.

Turner, C. and Bolam, R. (1998) 'Analysing the Role of the Subject Head of Department in Secondary Schools in England and Wales: towards a theoretical Framework', *School Leadership and Management*, 18 (3), 373-88.

Usher, R. (1996) 'Textuality and reflexivity in educational research' In Scott, D and Usher, R (eds) *Understanding Educational Research*, London, Routledge.

Walmsley, J. (1993) 'Explaining' In Shakespeare, P., Atkinson, D. and French, S. (eds) *Reflecting on Research Practice Issues in Health and Social Welfare*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Watts, M. and Ebbutt, D. (1987) 'More than the Sum of the Parts: research methods in group interviewing', *British Educational Research Journal*, 13 (1) 25-34.

Weindling, D. and Earley, P. (1987) *Secondary Headship: The First Years*, Windsor, NFER-Nelson.

West, N. (1996) 'Subject Coordinators: They can't make it alone', *Managing Schools Today*, 5 (6), 18-20.

Whitaker, P. (1992) *Managing Change in Schools*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Wilkinson, C. (1988) 'The Management of Time' In Bennett, N., Crawford, M. and Riches, C (eds), *Managing Change in Education*, London, Paul Chapman.

Wilson, V. (1997) 'Focus Groups: a useful qualitative method for educational research?' *British Educational Research Journal*, 23 (2) 209-24.

Wise, C. (2000) 'Being a Curriculum Leader: Helping Colleagues to Improve Learning' In Busher, H. and Harris, A. with Christine Wise, *Subject Leadership and School Improvement*, London, Paul Chapman.

Wise, C. (2001) 'The Monitoring Role of the Academic Middle Manager in Secondary Schools', *Educational Management and Administration*, 29 (3), 333-41.

Wise, C. and Bush, T. (1999) 'From Teacher to Manager: the role of the academic middle manager in secondary schools', *Educational Research*, 41 (2), 183-95.

Witziers, B., Sleegers, P. and Imants, J. (1999) 'Departments as Teams: functioning, variations and alternatives', *School Leadership and Management*, 19 (3), 293-304.

Wolf, R.M. (1988) 'Questionnaires' In Keeves J.P. (ed), *Educational Research, Methodology, and Measurement: An International Handbook*, Oxford, Pergamon Press.

Wortley, B. (1993) 'The Role of Subject Coordinators in Primary Schools: The State of the Art', *Education Today*, 43 (1), 43-48.

Wright, D.B., Gaskell, G.D and O'Muircheartaigh, C.A. (1995) 'Testing the Multiplicative Hypothesis of Intensifiers'; *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 9 (2) 167-77.

Yin, R. (1984) *Case Study Research Design and Methods*, London, Sage.