

***Creative Practitioners in
schools and classrooms***

**Final report of the project: The
Pedagogy of Creative Practitioners
in Schools**

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Year 1 teacher at the end of a dance session in the hall, “*Right Class! Back to normal!*”

There has probably always been a tradition of having artists come into schools to work with children, although at the beginning these individuals would have been regarded as crafts’ people who helped with woodwork, needle work and the like. In the period following the ending of the 11+ examination and the publication of the Plowden Report the involvement of writers, poets, visual artists and musicians increased as primary schools, in particular, attempted to broaden the curriculum experiences of children beyond the 3Rs. Local Education Authorities, such as Leicestershire and Oxfordshire, under the guidance of enlightened Chief Education Officers such as Stuart Mason and his deputy, and his subsequent successor, Andrew Fairburnⁱ, actively promoted arts educationⁱⁱ and encouraged the involvement of artists in schools (Jones 1988). Similar developments took place elsewhere, supported by committed advisors such as Len Cowieⁱⁱⁱ in Surrey.

There is little available evaluative evidence of the effect that such interventions had on schools. There are early examples of success, such as Brixworth Primary School in Northamptonshire where under the guidance of a writer in residence the children produced work that was published commercially. In the nineteen nineties, the help of two video artists enabled Rosendale Infant School in South London to mount an exhibition at the Photographers’ Gallery in Leicester Square^{iv} (Sinker 1999). In this multi-ethnic infant school the children investigated their family backgrounds through multimedia story telling, using a collection of photographs, video extracts and

ⁱ Both Mason and Fairburn brought original works of art and placed them in schools. Decades later, when the LEA was required to make large savings, it was decided to sell some of these pictures. It was rumoured that, after a frantic search, a missing Picasso drawing was eventually found in a collection of pupils’ work at the back of a store cupboard.

ⁱⁱ Leicestershire had its own teacher training college at Scraftoft Hall, devoted specifically to arts education.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cowie was in the tradition of famous inspectors such as Robin Tanner and Christine Schiller and championed a progressive integrated approach in primary schools, built around the arts. I once saw him reduce an audience of teachers to tears with his eloquence on this topic.

^{iv} *The Amazing M and Other Stories*, Primary Photography Exhibition held at the Photographers’ Gallery, Leicester Square, 17 March – 6 May, 1995.

drawings accompanied by sound and text. No doubt experiences of this kind had a dramatic impact on the schools concerned. Almost certainly, all forms of creative writing would have flourished and attempts would have been made to extend the initiative into other parts of the curriculum. Teachers would have absorbed into their own teaching repertoire the various approaches used by these artists to stimulate the children's imagination. However, one might surmise that beyond adopting these *tricks of the trade* teachers would not have reflected deeply on other aspects of the writer's relationship with the pupils because these would have been regarded as matters pertaining to the profession rather than to an outsider. A further factor inhibiting such reflection would have been the widespread belief among practitioners that, in the final analysis, the ability to develop a warm, cooperative, mutually productive and trusting relationship with a class owes much to a teacher's personality rather than to the particular teacher's pedagogic skills.^v

While much of the above analysis is speculative, although some accounts of teacher-artist collaborations point to certain tensions around aspects of the implementation of these creative activities (Dahl 1990; Sharp & Dust 1997) there is abundant evidence of the changes that took place following the return of a Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher and the introduction of a National Curriculum. A survey by Galton and Fogelman (1998) showed clearly the arts were being squeezed as a result of the emphasis given in the statutory orders to single subject teaching.^{vi} The situation appeared to have worsened since similar findings were obtained in an earlier

^v In my own earlier work (Galton 1989) I described two teachers under pseudonyms, Norma and Jean. Jean was looked up to by colleagues as a gifted practitioner who could 'get the most difficult pupils to cooperate.' In my conversations with Norma, who shared the same team base, Jean's success was always attributed to personal factors, not aspects of her teaching approach. Norma's viewpoint is reinforced by the common view of many educational writers, who while discounting personality factors, hold that an uncooperative class may be largely due to poor organisation (too much time when pupils are not occupied) or an insufficiently challenging curriculum. Interestingly, Norma's class was a model of efficiency while Jean's often appeared chaotic.

^{vi} See Galton (1995) for an insider's account of early meetings of the NCC on the primary curriculum. Even more interesting is the story told by one government adviser who was present at a meeting to discuss with the Education Secretary, then Kenneth Baker, what should be done about art and music. The meeting broke up without any firm decisions being taken because the minister had to attend the London Schools' Festival of Music. At the end of the concert, and mindful of the tumultuous reception which the audience of parents had given the performers at the final curtain, the minister in his speech stressed the value he placed on arts' education and ended with the words, "And that's why this very day I have decided to make music a compulsory part of *my* National Curriculum." On such moments can policy depend.

survey by Webb (1993). The introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies by New Labour would appear to have exacerbated this situation (Galton and MacBeath 2002). Not only were arts subjects being squeezed further, some children whose performance in English and mathematics needed boosting were now missing out altogether. Associated with this restricted curriculum diet was evidence that pupils' attitudes towards core subjects and towards school generally was in decline (Pell *et al.* 2007). Furthermore, a study of 1,000 primary and secondary pupils in one LEA by the New Economics Foundation, reported in The Guardian newspaper (Berliner 2004), offered supporting evidence that the main reason for the dips was the pressure placed on pupils by the demands of the testing regime. In the survey 65% of primary pupils said they enjoyed school (the figure for secondary schools was only 27%). But when the primary school sample was split in to those doing well on the statutory Year 6 tests and those doing relatively poorly, the attitudes of pupils in the former schools dropped significantly below the average. Transfer studies (Galton *et al.* 2003) also obtained a negative correlation between a pupil's attainment and their enjoyment of school.

Changes in pupils' motivation are perhaps more significant. Early studies of motivation, largely based on behaviouristic theories of learning, considered that a pupil's response to a given classroom task was a function of certain drives. Some drives were intrinsic resulting from the satisfaction and pleasure experienced from the process of learning itself, while others were extrinsic and depended on the existence of clear outward signs of approval (or in some cases disapproval) depending on successful or unsuccessful completion of the learning task. A refinement of this approach was the concept of achievement motivation introduced by Akinson (1964). He argued that the degree of intrinsic motivation was determined by the probability of successfully completing the learning task. The learner might see little merit in satisfactorily completing a relatively easy task but while placing greater value on a more difficult assignment might be reluctant to engage in it if not certain of success. This leads to the proposition (Galloway *et al* 2004) that motivation in achievement related settings is mainly governed not by the prospect of gaining success but of avoiding failure.

This in turn offers a different perspective on motivation. The pupil's behaviour when faced with a challenging task is not only a function of the personality, expressed in terms of basic drives, but is also influenced by the manner in which pupils cope with failure. If a pupil attributes failure to a lack of ability he or she may react entirely differently from a peer who believes the result will be largely determined by the amount of effort required (Weiner 1992). Dweck (1986) who argues that the view the child takes about ability is crucial to motivation, has taken these ideas a step further. If ability is thought of as something fixed then the likelihood is that pupils holding this view will feel that they can do little to alter the course of events when faced with a task that they believe is too difficult for them. Only pupils with a strong belief in their own competence will be highly motivated. Others with little confidence in their innate ability are likely to display a response known as '*learned helplessness*'. In contrast pupils who accept that through increased effort previous failures can be overcome will concentrate on mastery of the task rather than concern for where they stand in relation to their peers (Dweck and Leggett 1998). Clearly one of the factors which influence these decisions is the culture in which the learning is situated. As Watkins (2003) argues the current strong emphasis on performance in schools with their standard assessment tasks, league tables, target setting etc. all militate against a mastery orientation and reinforce those factors which give rise to strategies of task avoidance and teacher dependence resulting from fear of failure. Such behaviour may be further reinforced in anxious pupils (Covington 1992). There are also those who worry that demonstrating cleverness in class may have negative consequences for their standing within their peer group (Marsh 1989).

In the analysis of the results from the transfer studies (Galton *et al.* 2003) and contrary to the theory proposed by Dweck there was little distinction between those pupils scoring high on achievement and performance and those on achievement mastery. The tests were also given to the same pupils after their transfer to Year 7 with similar results but on this occasion the opportunity to interview them about their questionnaire responses was taken up. It appeared that the pupils were no longer interpreting items relating to academic satisfaction or achievement performance in the competitive sense that they could out-perform their peers. Instead their main concern was to attain the required *level* of performance.

“I need to get Level 5 if I am to get into the top set.”

Other pupils were very clear as to the reasons for their motivation. Having said that much of the work they did in Year 7 was very like that carried out in Year 6, they responded to the interviewer’s query of why they continued working so hard by replying

“Because we need our education. We need to get good grades to get a good job and to get GCSEs.”

In a similar manner achievement mastery was not so much about working hard in order to understand something intrinsically interesting, but stemmed from the satisfaction that came when meeting the criteria and fitting it in to the work in ways which gained the required level. Consequently, pupils who score highly on the ‘*academic performance*’ scale also tend to do as well on the ‘*achievement mastery*’ scale.

However, although motivation, defined in this way, remained strong, there were negative consequences. By focusing on the required level and the techniques needed to achieve success pupils tended to view any other demands which were superfluous to this goal as irrelevant to their needs. In particular, teachers commented on the reluctance of more able pupils to do additional work on a topic once the required level was achieved, even when the work was designed to stimulate the imagination. In support of this view pupils responded very poorly to an item on the motivation questionnaire such as:

“I try to learn as much as I can.”

However, they strongly agreed with items of the type:

“I learn just what I have to know to pass.”

“Outside school I am not interested in any of the subjects.”

The above analysis explains why reports by Ofsted (2002a; 2002b) concluded that pupils are highly motivated. Ofsted inspectors are trained to report what they observe.

They see pupils working hard but do not probe the reasons for these high levels of activity. The artists taking part in the Creative Partnership programme also work exceedingly hard at their respective disciplines but their motivation must be mainly intrinsic, since their efforts do not always bring commensurate financial rewards. Thus one of the key factors in the decision to undertake this project was this issue of motivation. In research terms, are creative practitioners^{vii} able to enthuse pupils so that they become interested in the activity for its own sake rather than for some instrumental reason? Further, if they do succeed, then what is it creative practitioners do to bring about this change and in what ways do they differ from teachers in this respect? And finally, if there are common elements among the approaches that creative practitioners adopt, can these be passed on to teachers?

Pedagogy: its several meanings

The recent years have seen a growth in the use of the term, pedagogy, but a great deal of disagreement about what the word, itself, means. For example, Anthea Millet (1999) when Head of the Teacher Training Agency urged schools to ‘talk about the issues of pedagogy’ in terms of their competence, excellence and failures in teaching methods and further observed that,

“I am always struck by how difficult teachers find it to talk about teaching...They prefer to talk about learning.”

Few other commentators, however, would wish to separate learning and the act of teaching in this way. Indeed, Alexander (2004) commenting directly on the above quotation, argues that to reduce pedagogical considerations to a discussion of teaching methods alone is to deal solely with judgements, as with Ofsted’s manner of reporting, rather than substance and justification because pedagogy is a

^{vii} From here on artists will be referred to as creative practitioners in common with the various documents produced by the Creative Partnerships initiative. The latter term recognises that the word artist is often associated with a narrow range of creative activities, whereas in the various CP projects there are environmentalist, horticulturalists, media specialists and other partners who are not usually regarded as ‘artistic’ among the population at large.

“morally purposeful activity, of which teaching is a part, which we call education”
(Alexander 2004, p 11)

Alexander, further notes that in continental Europe this ‘morally purposeful activity’ requires intending teachers to study the wider culture (the philosophy, history, literature and art of the country) to master elements relating to child development and children’s learning (psychology, physiology etc.) and to deepen their understanding of the subjects to be taught and the ways of teaching them effectively. Consideration of the latter (the subject disciplines) is often referred to as didactics.

This leads Alexander to define pedagogy as ‘the act of teaching and its attendant discourse’ (Alexander 2004, p7) which encompasses other views such as that of Watkins and Mortimore’s (1999, p3) who judge the term to mean, ‘any conscious activity of one person designed to enhance learning in another.’ This latter definition is very wide ranging but fortunately most researchers, including Alexander, restrict their deliberations mainly to the transactions taking place between teachers and their pupils within the classroom and school.

In recent years, since the coming of New Labour, greater emphasis has been placed on teaching discourse as ‘*evidence based practice*’. Michael Barber (2002) for example, the former head of the Standards Agency, has argued that teaching moved through four main cycles during the second half of the 20th Century. The first of these cycles, covering the period up to Mrs Thatcher’s election as Prime Minister in 1979, was largely based on teachers’ personal intuitions and was one of ‘*uninformed professionalism*’. This was replaced during the 18 years of Conservative rule by ‘*uninformed prescription*,’ where, for example, the *so-called* integrated day was always bad and organising teaching by subjects automatically good. When New Labour came to power in 1997 it was therefore necessary, according to Barber, to correct the errors of the previous government so that a period of ‘*informed prescription*’ was necessary. In the main this involved a somewhat rigid imposition of Literacy and Numeracy strategies coupled with the use of ‘*interactive whol- class*’ teaching. Now, according to Barber, with the decline in standards halted, it has been possible at the start of the new millennium to enter a period of ‘*informed*

professionalism’ where teachers can access, through the internet, relevant Ofsted reviews and the latest EPPI (Evidence for Policy and Practice Information) surveys in order to inform their classroom decision-making.

This is a reassuring view of the present situation but, unfortunately, one without much foundation. It does not explain why research which is methodologically strong, and which is consistent in its results, the kind which is rated highly in EPPI reviews, appears to hold less attraction for teachers than other offerings, such as ‘*learning styles*’, or ‘*left brain-right brain*’ training procedures such as ‘Brain Gym’ for which the research evidence is far less strong or negligible. Furthermore, those like Barber and David Reynolds (2000) who call for a scientific approach to pedagogy, to be mainly determined from evidence-based practice, often fail to recognise that, as Anderson and Burns (1989) argue,

“Contrary to some people’s opinions, evidence does not speak for itself. The translation of evidence into thought and action requires people who understand both the research and the classroom.” (preface: x)

This viewpoint reflects the distinction formulated by the psychologist, Nate Gage, some 30 years ago when he argued that pedagogy was the ‘science of the art of teaching’ (Gage 1978). In most disciplines, particularly in applied disciplines such as education and medicine, there will be sets of principles based on theoretical perspectives coupled with supporting empirical evidence. But such principles need to be adjusted to meet the particular conditions in which teachers and doctors find themselves. For example, a principle, such as cooperative learning, must encompass the kind of knowing and understandings about matters such as the balance between group work and whole class teaching in the course of a lesson, knowledge of which pupils work well together and so forth. These latter decisions are much more to do with the accumulated wisdom which teachers acquire as they gain experience that allows them to make judgements about the *fitness for purpose* of particular actions within a particular context. This kind of knowledge we usually refer to as ‘*craft knowledge*’.

Teachers' decision making is not, however, solely based on principled judgements allied to experience. This is because teaching is both an intentional and unintentional activity. As the distinguished psychologist, Gordon Allport (1966) has argued, a person's actions consist not only of a coping or rational response to external events but also of an expressive response based on our emotions. Because teaching is also an emotional as well as a cerebral activity (Hargreaves, 2001) the approaches that we *intentionally* choose often become modified during lessons so that what teachers think they are doing frequently conflicts with the impressions of an impartial observer. Thus, as teachers, we may unintentionally close down the range of questions we had intended to put to children because we wish to pursue a particular line of enquiry although subsequently we may maintain, as for example in the Ford Teaching Project (Elliott 1976) that children were given the opportunity to consider a range of possible alternatives. This '*perception gap*' between what we believe, as teachers, we do and the reality of what actually takes place is further illustrated in case of the author's own return to the classroom, where he was unable to recall shouting at pupils for the return of equipment although other teachers in the base area remarked on the incident next morning (Galton 1989). Since all definitions of pedagogy accept that the interactions taking place between the pupils and the teacher in order to achieve desired learning outcomes are a key factor, then the possibility that these interactions are not always intentional must be considered. The situation is further complicated because once we accept that teaching is, in part, an emotional activity then so is learning from the pupil's point of view. Interactions between pupils and teachers are therefore continually operating at two levels. When we record these interactions (in whatever way) and then ask participants (teachers and pupils) for their explanations of these classroom events we must therefore be careful, as outsiders to the action, not to assume that these teacher and pupil accounts constitute the only explanation for the observed behaviours.

This study therefore attempts to interpret both the intentional and unintentional actions of the creative partners in exploring the pedagogies that they employ. The previous discussion suggests a number of key areas through which the moment by moment exchanges between the creative partners and the pupils can be explored. These are:

- the nature of the learning tasks that the creative practitioners ask pupils to undertake,
- the activities that the creative partners choose in order to address these tasks,
- the judgements that creative partners make about the levels of such tasks which different pupils undertake and
- the kinds of outcomes on which creative partners judge the success or failure of these activities.

There are relatively few accounts which examine in detail the pedagogy of teachers when engaged in the arts (Tickle 1987; Jeffrey and Woods 2003) and still fewer that look in a similar way at the classroom practice of artists (Burnard and Hennessy 2006). The present study therefore breaks new ground in seeking to identify those creative partners who appear able to reverse the current trends in attitudes and motivation and to describe what it is these successful practitioners of the arts do to bring about these changes in the pupils' dispositions. In addition, since research on highly successful teachers tends to suggest that the decision making of these experts is often intuitive (Claxton, 2000) the study also seeks to explore those cultural influences (personal philosophy, life history, artistic inclination etc.) that forms part of Alexander's (2004) 'moral, purposeful activity ...which we call education' and which might explain these intuitions. Moreover, the present situation in schools with the continued emphasis on target setting and testing, despite attempts to liberate schools from the worst elements of this regime, suggest that there may well be a clash of cultures when creative practitioners attempt to engage with teachers in various artistic ventures. Such clashes may be of interest in themselves but they may also offer an explanation of why creative practitioners sometimes succeed where schools often appear to fail.

Chapter 2: Scope of the study: samples and methods

In the light of the analysis set out in the previous chapter the aims of the proposed study were finally formulated as follows:

- To explore the pedagogy used by successful external creative partners in bringing about transformations in pupils' attitudes to (and motivation for) learning, particularly those disaffected pupils of an anti-school disposition
- To determine in what ways such transformations impact on pupils' creativity and transfer to other curriculum areas, particularly mathematics and science where pupils' attitudes have declined significantly in recent years.
- To examine the extent to which pedagogy used by successful external partners can be transferred to others (both fellow artists and teachers)

The original proposal required that creative practitioners and pupils would be interviewed at the beginning and towards the end of the experience. Two days would be set aside to observe each creative practitioner working in the classroom. In addition to the interviews, questionnaires and various '*projective*' methods would be used to determine shifts in pupils' self-concepts, attitudes etc., during the course of the creative practitioners' residence

It was hoped to identify some 10 creative practitioners with a successful track record of working in schools. It was intended that the sample should not only cover artists from traditional disciplines (drama, visual arts, literature etc.) but also include practitioners making regular use of various forms of information and communications' technology (ICT) such as digital photographers and film-makers. The initial approach was made through the central Creative Partnerships team at the Arts Council who mailed all regional directors with the outline bid. Some ten expressions of interest were received. These were followed up by telephone to ascertain whether the following conditions could be met:

1. The partnership involved a considerable amount of classroom or workshop collaboration between the external creative partner and the teacher.

2. The partnership had yet to begin so that base-line measure of the pupils' attitudes and motivation could be obtained.
3. The period of classroom collaboration extended for at least one school term so that there was a reasonable likelihood of detecting significant shifts in attitude should they occur.

Subsequently, meetings were arranged with five of the ten regional directors. During these meetings it became clear that the general feeling was that two school visits were thought insufficient. Most regional directors felt that the relationship between the creative practitioners and the schools tended to develop over time, so that more things could be attempted towards the end of the placement. Accordingly, it was decided to cut down the number of schools (ten in the original proposal) and increase the number of visits to a minimum of three. A further complication arose in that some of the suggested schools proposed to have more than one creative practitioner. In some cases there were also considerable delays because the proposals put up by schools didn't meet the requirements of Creative Partnerships and had to be re-negotiated. Eventually, eleven creative practitioners were selected from 6 schools in 3 partnerships. The choice was heavily influenced by the regional directors and their staff who were asked to bear in mind when suggesting schools that the main purpose of the study was to observe experienced creative practitioners who had built up a reputation for excellence. The breakdown was as follows:^{viii}

Creative Partnership A (situated in the North West of England)

Secondary School: Peveril Vale

Creative Practitioners: Sue and Phil, both visual artists and ecologists

Project: Improving the quality of the school environment by designing and decorating a new garden area using ecologically friendly materials and working with the Science Department to improve pupils' attitudes to the subject. Su and Phil worked in the school during the autumn and summer terms.

^{viii} The various schools and creative partners and teachers have all been given pseudonyms to preserve anonymity,

Creative Partnership B (situated in West Midlands)

Secondary School: Woodstock

Creative Practitioner: Glynn, a documentary maker

Project: Encouraging healthy eating by the provision of a juice bar. This was part of a school-wide enterprise initiative. Two documentary films were made: the first was designed to ‘sell’ the idea of the juice bar to staff and students, and the second to explain the methods of production. Films were made over two six week periods in the spring and summer terms.

Primary School: Ashby Grange

Creative Practitioners: Simon, a photographer and Alex, a dancer

Project: A one term study of the schools’ surrounding environment. Pupils took photographs of interesting buildings and these were edited on the computer to provide a source for various designs which were then used to create several dance routines.

Creative Partnership C (situated in the East Midlands)

Secondary School: Canongate

Creative Practitioners: Maggie and Theo, both dancers

Project: mainly concerned with introducing contemporary dance into the curriculum with a view to strengthening the school’s bid for specialist status as a Creative Arts College. On Thursdays, throughout the year, the dancers worked with staff and pupils during Physical Education periods but also ran lunchtime and after-school clubs and were involved with the English department on a production of a play.

Primary School: Barleycroft

Creative Practitioners: Asha^{ix}, Indian music and Bridget, a visual artist

Project: The school gave the entire Thursday throughout the year^x to partnership activity. Pupils had to choose from various groups (media, environment, historical,

^{ix} Asha was seen only once and then withdrew from the programme at Barleycroft because of outside professional commitments. On the day in question the children spent most of the time watching a film of Bangra dancing before holding an impromptu dance to the film’s accompanying music.

^x The head reluctantly agreed to cut the time to half a day after February at the request of the Year 6 teacher who wanted more time to prepare for the Key Stage 2 National Tests. This contrasted with the approach at both Ashby Grange and Merryweather, where Year 6 were totally excluded from any creative partnership activity

music, art, dance, photography) at the beginning of the year with a view to mounting an exhibition for parents in the summer term.

Primary School: Merryweather

Creative Practitioners: Pam, an actress and director and Andy, a conceptual artist

Project: Two periods of activity during the spring and summer term in which Andy created two visual presentations which were explored and added to by the pupils and which subsequently became the focus of several dramatic presentations. The first presentation was built around travel, the second around puzzles.

In some cases schools were visited more than three times. On each occasion extensive notes were taken of the activities undertaken, conversations taking place and instructions provided during the session. On occasions teachers were present either watching from the sidelines or participating in the activity. Where it was difficult to record an exchange either the creative practitioner or the pupil was approached at a convenient moment and asked to expand on what had taken place.

After each session the fieldnotes were dictated verbatim onto audiotape and expanded by including a commentary in which the researcher added thoughts, questions and references to similar occurrences recalled from other classroom research studies. Over time progressive focussing took place as similar patterns of behaviour were observed on different sites with different groups of pupils and creative practitioners.

All creative practitioners were interviewed at the start and end of the project. The main purpose of the first interview was to obtain a life history of the individual, including their previous links with Creative Partnerships, their professional experience and general philosophy towards working creatively with teachers and pupils in schools. The second interview attempted to draw out general impressions of the experience of working in this particular school and to explore some of the issues that emerged during the period of residence.

Pupils' attitudes and motivation were measured in two different ways. A short composite questionnaire made up of items from the *Sam*^{xi} series was constructed using a 5 point scale. These measures, created for the researcher's studies of transfer and transition (Galton *et al.* 2003) enjoy high reliability and face validity and have been used with pupils as young as seven and as old as 15 years. The second measure consisted of a cartoon picture of a situation in either a normal lesson or a creative partnership session. Pupils were asked to pick two pupils from the picture and to speculate what they were saying (or thinking) at the time. They also had to decide whether the adult present was speaking and if so to suggest the content of this utterance. This projective approach is based on Arnold's (1962) distinction between 'evaluative' and 'motivating' attitudes. She argues that only the latter can be used to predict likely action because evaluative attitudes, as most often measured by questionnaires, only call for a judgement that something is desirable. Thus a person can be in favour of religion but not attend church. In all cases the pictures were selected so that the adults' and pupils' features did not suggest a positive or negative impression (e.g. the teacher or creative practitioner smiling). In each case pupils were asked to compare a picture of the creative activity and a normal school lesson. In primary schools the 'normal lesson' picture was taken either in mathematics or English. In the secondary schools it involved the subject area in which the creative practitioners were engaged (e.g. Physical Education/Sport at Canongate, Design at Woodstock and Science at Peveril Vale).

The cartoon pictures had previously been used by the researcher in a number of studies involving primary schools where they had been very successful (see Galton and Williamson 1992, pp60-67). In the event it seemed harder for older secondary pupils to be able to project themselves into the characters within the pictures. Many of these students spent much time in trying to identify the actual occasion and the names of individuals present rather than accepting the sequence as one of many typical events which might occur during a school day. Consequently, a certain amount of coaching was necessary to get these pupils to engage with the task.

^{xi} So called because a pupil called Sam (Samuel or Samantha) is asked to help pupils to know about the school/class to which they will move in the following year.

The attitude questionnaires were administered to pupils at the beginning and end of the school year. This worked well in all three primary schools but only in one secondary (Peveril Grange). In Woodstock, the film making involved only 12 pupils at any one time so the groups were too small to be able to come to a reasonable statistical judgement. In Canongate, the teachers were under considerable pressure and failed to carry out the post-test administration with the original groups of pupils. In general, working with secondary schools proved more difficult because of the number of staff involved and the difficulty of ensuring that everyone had been briefed as to the purpose of various visits^{xii}. In two of the secondary schools the appointed co-ordinator was a junior member of staff and had to seek permission from senior management before she could agree to any arrangement. In these circumstances the creative agent was an invaluable go-between.

Pupil interviews took place in groups of six towards the end of projects. Initially the interview themes were left open but gradually over time the process became more structured as responses tended to highlight certain issues. At the beginning pupils were asked about their enjoyment of the creative partnership sessions and for their evaluations of the various activities. Pupils were also asked about the benefits of participating so that, for example, a keen footballer at Canongate said he had hated contemporary dance at first but come to appreciate that it had helped him to develop better balance with the result that his ball control had improved. In most interviews, however, pupils became more animated when asked to compare creative partnership lessons with other lessons and in answering the question, “Is Pam/Andy/ Maggie (the creative partner) like a teacher?”

All observations, interviews and measurements were completed during the 2006-07 school year.

^{xii} This seems to be an increasing problem. A colleague, John MacBeath, an expert in school leadership, questions the situation which currently operates in many secondary schools where it is difficult to speak directly to anyone on the phone. Instead one is taken through a series of numbers (press one to report an absence, two to complain, three to speak to a member of staff etc.) only to be told that nobody is available and to leave a message.

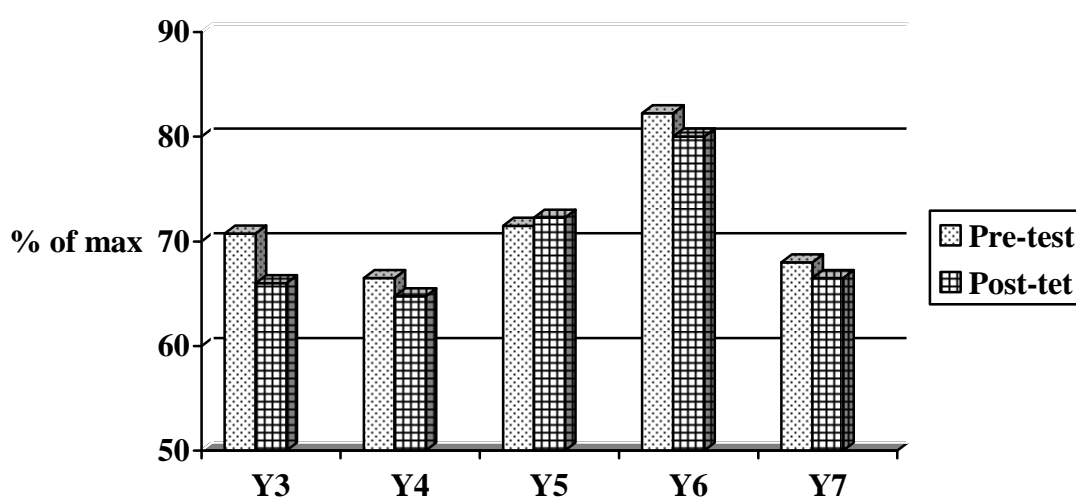
Chapter 3: Pupil Outcomes

The analysis of the attitudinal measures gave 5 sub-scales. Two of these were to do with an aspect of motivation, academic satisfaction and achievement mastery, based on the concepts developed by Dweck (1986). Marker items for the mastery measure included, *'I try to learn as much as I can about everything'*, and *'I would say I am a really hard worker'*.

Two comparisons are possible. The first records differences between year groups from Year 3 to year 7. These are however confounded in that the data was collected in different schools. Between schools comparisons can be carried out for Year 5 where data was available from all three primary schools. In each case scores are expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible. Using the scale 1 to 5, for example, would mean that a score of 3 is equivalent to the 50th percentile or the half-way stage.

Figure 3.1 shows the comparisons between year groups.

Fig 3.1 Year group comparisons: Achievement mastery

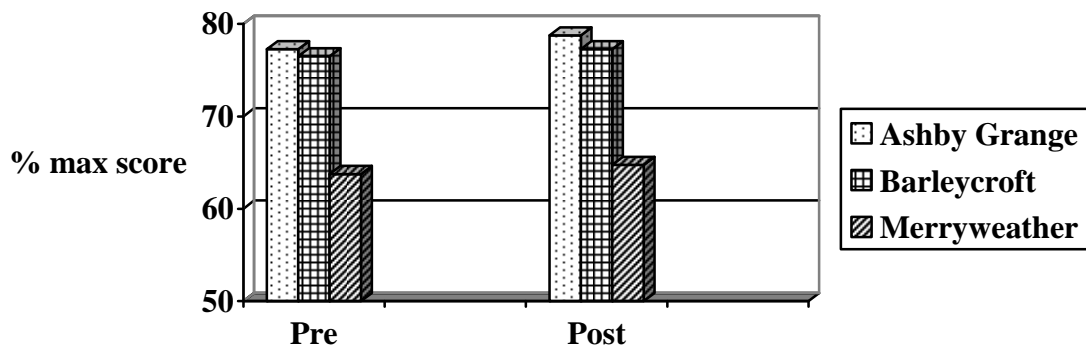


Differences over the course of the period between pre and post-test (minimum 6 months) are relatively small compared to those reported in work by the same author in

studies of transition (Galton *et al.* 2003). More interesting, is the fact that the maximum scores are obtained in Year 6 whereas in the transfer studies Y6 generally has the lowest totals in the primary school. One contributing factor could be that the Y6 scores were obtained in Barleycroft which unlike the other two primary schools allowed the Y6 to take part in the creative partnership programme. In both Merryweather and Ashby Grange Year 6 pupils were completely excluded while in Barleycroft, as a concession to the teachers' request for more revision time to prepare for the national tests, the headteacher reluctantly agreed to cut the CP programme after the February half term. However, she refused to discriminate against Y6 pupils so the reduction in time from a whole to a half day took place across the whole school.

Figure 3.2 shows the comparisons for Year 5 classes in the three primary schools.

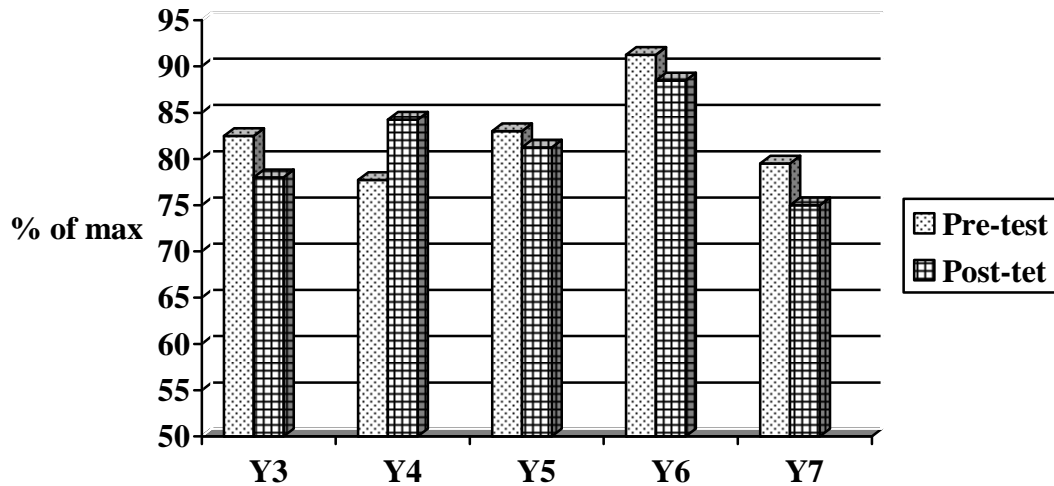
Figure 3.2 Year 5 comparisons: Achievement mastery



All three schools show slight increases between the pre and post-tests, while scores at Merryweather are significantly lower than the other two primary schools. Some explanation of this difference will be attempted when later in the report the creative partners' comments about working in the various schools are considered. Overall, girls tended to score higher than boys on both pre and post-test although in both cases there were only slight falls in the latter.

In contrast to the mastery criterion the other factor driving motivation is to do with satisfaction with academic performance. Marker items here concern *'feeling proud*

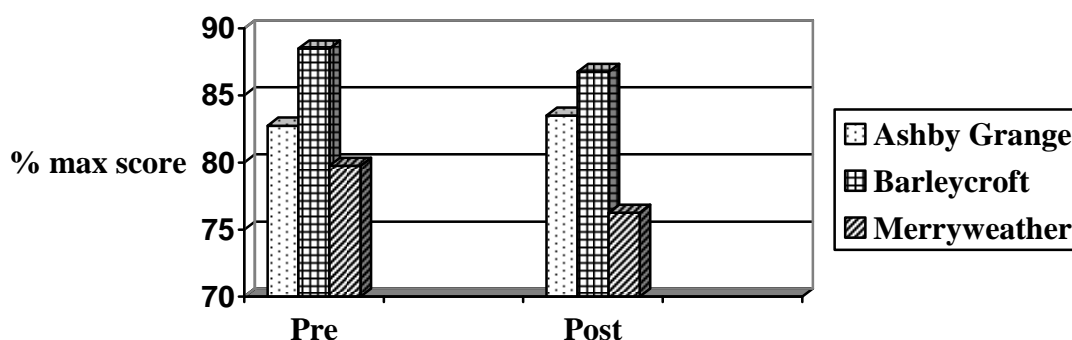
Fig 3.3 Year group comparisons: Academic satisfaction



when I get good marks' and *'doing my best to get the highest level in the SATs'*.

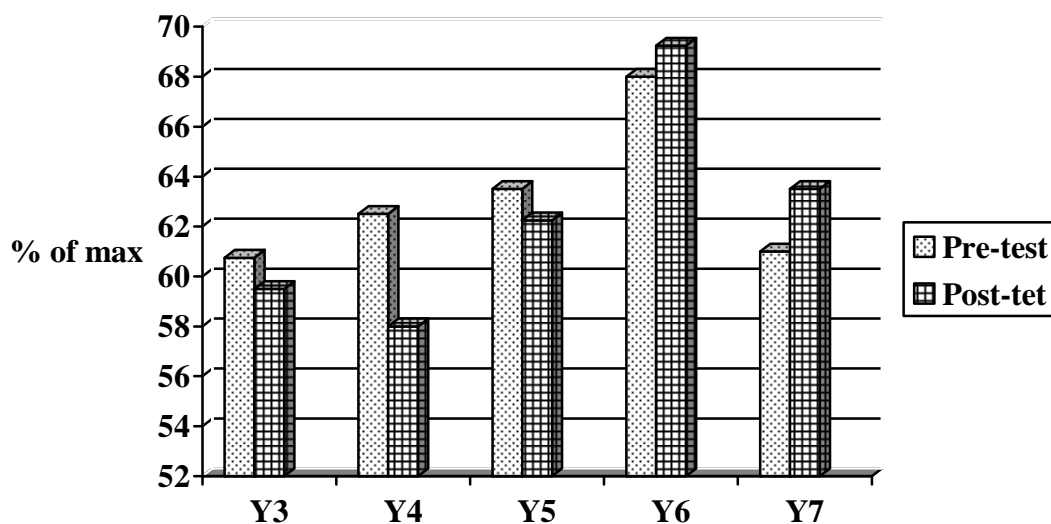
The results across year groups are shown in Figure 3.3. Here pupils in every year score even higher than on the mastery scale indicating that the performance culture as defined by Watkins (2003) remains firmly entrenched. In Year 5 this is especially true of Barleycroft as Figure 3.4 indicates, although the school appeared to adopt a fairly relaxed view of the Key Stage 2 national tests. Girls have significantly higher motivation on the pre-test ($p < 0.01$) but this difference had disappeared by post-test. These levels are all higher than those found in corresponding transfer studies.

Fig 3.4 Year 5 comparisons: Academic satisfaction



The third personality measure recorded was that of self-esteem. Key items included ‘I would say that I’m popular with my classmates’ and ‘I’m worried if I have to speak out in class’ (score reversed). Self esteem while recording lower scores than in the case of both motivation measures decreases over the year as Figure 3.5 indicates, except in Years 6 and 7.

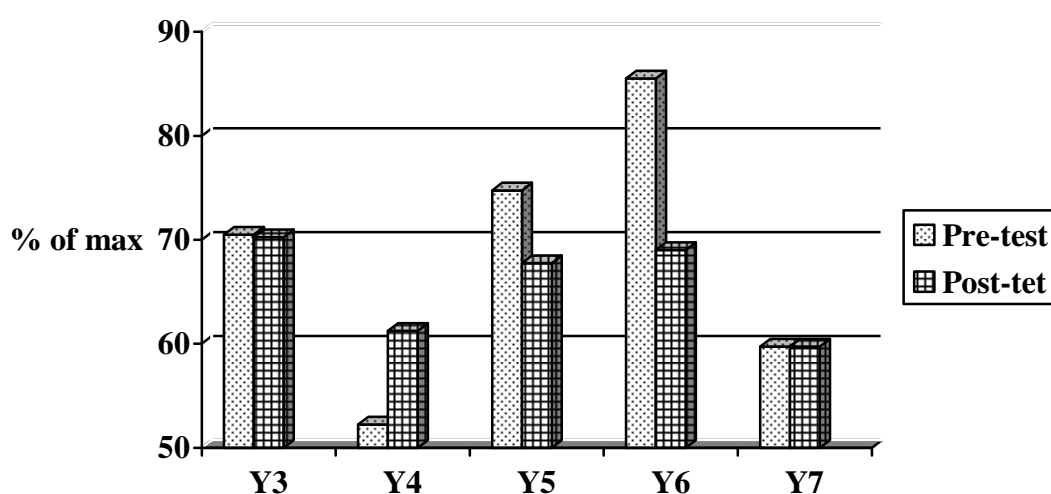
Fig 3.5 Year group comparisons: Self -esteem



Across the primary schools in Year 5 it is again Barleycroft which registers the highest scores (69.25% at pre-test; 67.75% at post test [no figure with bar chart included]). The corresponding figures for Ashby Grange are 60% and 58.25% respectively and for Merryweather the average is 62.75% and 62.25%. Boys record higher scores than girls but the differences are not significant.

The next set of comparison records the anti-learning, anti-school dispositions which are a growing feature of the current educational system. Items such as, ‘*I’m often in trouble at school*’ and ‘*I only learn exactly what I’m told*’ are characteristic of this scale. In constructing Figure 3.6 the scores on these items have been reversed to reflect a positive disposition.

Fig 3.6 Year group comparisons: School and Learning dispositions

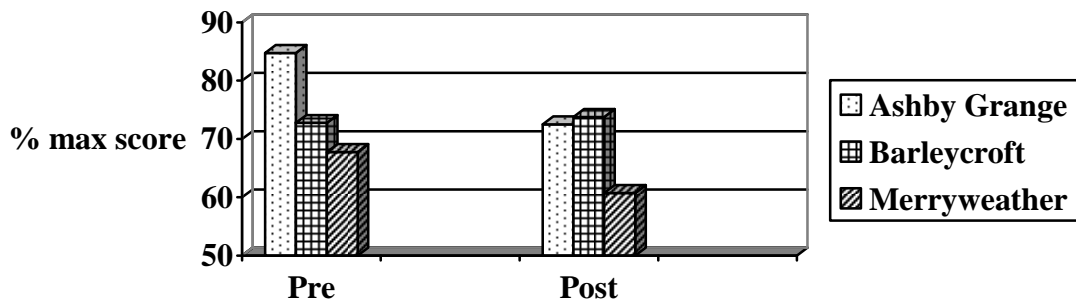


The pattern displayed in the figure is difficult to interpret. Y4 start at a low base but improve during the year. Years 5 and 6 become more anti school and ant-learning over the course of the year. In this they reflect the more normal pattern seen in transfer and transition studies, particularly in Year 6 where the effect of the SATs have a major impact. Differences here produce large effect sizes^{xiii}. In respect of the Year 5 data (Figure 3.7) it can be seen that the dips in enthusiasm for school are fairly

^{xiii} *Effect size* is increasingly being used in place of statistical significance because the latter is so dependent on sample size and may still represent a small educational difference. An *effect size* is the degree to which a phenomenon is present in a population (Cohen, 1988). A *small effect size* is equivalent to changing a 50/50 split of 100 subjects to a 45/55 split after a certain treatment, whereas for a *large effect size* the split would have become 25/75. In education and the social sciences, *small and medium effect sizes* predominate: *large effect sizes* are rare. *Very small effect sizes*, although statistically significant, cannot be interpreted as showing meaningful differences to observers in the real world. Hattie (2002) suggests that in terms of attainment or attitude change, an effect size of 0.5 is the equivalent to about half a year of schooling.

uniform for Ashby Grange and Merryweather, although each school starts from a different base position at pre-test. At Barleycroft, however, there is a small improvement.

Fig 3.7 Year 5 comparisons: Schooling and learning disposition



Examination of the correlations between these various scales shows a high degree of congruence between the two motivation measures and the disposition towards school and learning. These are shown in Table 3.1. This suggests that these sub-scales are part of a more general measure to do with general enjoyment of schooling associated

Table 3.1 Inter-correlations between the various attitude and motivation measures

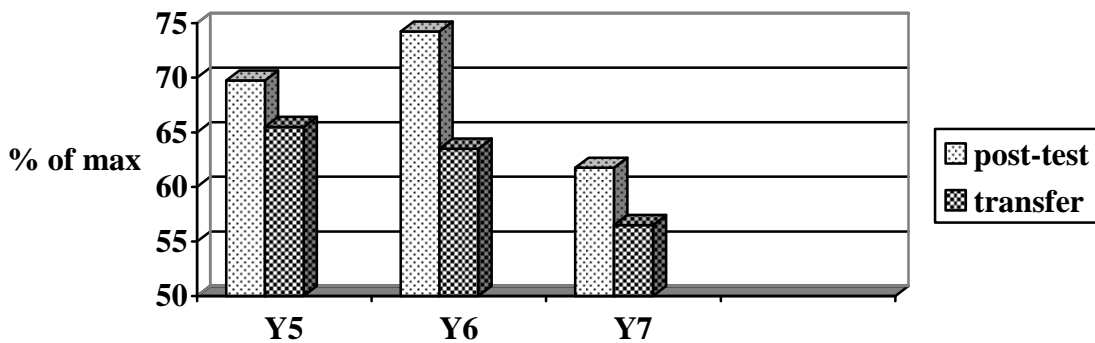
	Achievement Mastery	Academic satisfaction	Disposition to school & learning
Achievement mastery		0.56 (N=232)	0.68 (N=246)
Academic Satisfaction	0.56 (N=232)		0.63 (N=245)
Disposition to school & learning	0.68 (N=246)	0.63 (N=245)	

with a general determination to succeed. A subsequent factor analysis confirmed this proposition with the general factor accounting for 33% of the variation and having an internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) of 0.88. The items with the highest loadings

were ‘*I would say that I’m a really hard worker*’ (0.65), ‘*I find school work interesting*’ (0.64) and ‘*I try to learn as much as I can about everything*’ (0.63).

A similar combined measure is available from a yet unpublished study of transfer carried out in 2004-06. Here only one score is available in each year, corresponding to the post test in the present study since the comparisons were with the end of Year 5 and the end of years 6 and 7. The data is presented in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8 Enjoyment of schooling: Comparison of CP post test & transfer study scores



It can be seen that in every case the scores in the creative partnership schools are higher than those in the transfer ones. While caution should be applied when interpreting the above result the transfer schools in question did not appear too dissimilar in terms of intake or circumstances with regard to academic performance. They do represent (in the case of Y5 and Y6 data) the same pupils whereas in the case of Creative Partnerships the post-test year data involves different pupils from different schools. In the case of Year 5 the post-test scores for Ashby Grange, Barleycroft and Merryweather were 75.25%, 75.50% and 62.25% respectively compared to 65.50% for the transfer study schools. The Y5 scores in Merryweather have generally been on the low side when compared to the two other primary schools for reasons which may emerge when considering the observation data and the comments of the visiting creative practitioners.

To summarise, while it is disappointing that over the course of the year dips in the various measures used in the analysis were not always reversed, they were nevertheless much smaller than those found in previous studies of transfer and

transition where corresponding data was available. Most importantly the Year 6 figures from Barleycroft show a greater level of satisfaction than those reported earlier (Berliner 2004) where pupils in their final year of primary school were the least satisfied. Barleycroft was the primary school whose Creative Partnership programme was a weekly feature throughout the year with the whole school (both teachers and pupils) participating, unlike the other two primaries in the study that had shorter bursts of activity during the spring and summer terms and where the activities were not fully integrated into other parts of the curriculum and not all teachers participated. On this evidence it is possible to put forward a tentative hypothesis that improved attitudes are associated with exposure to creative partnership activities. In the case of these three primary schools more evidence is available from the projective tests.

The Projective Tests

For the projective tests pupils were shown a picture of a creative partnership activity taking place in the school, asked to pick two pupils from the picture and write four lines about what the pair were saying or thinking. In addition, if they thought that the creative practitioner was speaking they were asked to write down what they thought she or he might also be saying.

As a control pupils were also given two other pictures. In the primary classes this consisted of an English and a mathematics lesson. Pupils were again asked to write four lines of imagined conversation and also to include the teacher's comments if they felt it appropriate. A similar exercise was carried out in the secondary schools but was less successful. Older pupils had difficulty in understanding what was required. They spent considerable time attempting to identify the specific teaching situation and tended to be over-concerned with identifying pupils in the pictures even though these had been deliberately blurred to disguise individual features. When they did complete the sheet they often made suggestions about what they thought was happening rather than creating imagined conversations. For example, in response to one picture showing a group of boys practising football skills a Year 7 girl produced the following:

1st pupil: He looks like he's being left out and he is not doing much

2nd pupil: They look like they are playing a game in a pair

1st pupil: He is probably mumbling to himself

2nd pupil: probably shouting to each other

Teacher: telling the pupils to work together

Accordingly, only the primary responses were analysed. This was done by categorising the written content as positive, neutral or negative. In mathematics, for example, the following response from a female pupil in Year 5 was coded negative.

1st pupil: 7 x 8 what does that equal?

2nd pupil: What time's lunch?

1st pupil: Soon I hope. This is boring

2nd pupil: I don't get this question

Teacher: Stop talking and get on with your work

Generally, in mathematics, negative responses tended to be associated with getting things wrong and being told by the teacher to do corrections whereas in English the focus tended to be on completing the task, as in this neutral response by a Year 4 boy.

1st pupil: How do you write a Kaptile [*capital*] r?

2nd pupil: Simle [*simple*]: you do a big r and make a sole [*circle*] and a flik [*flick*].

1st pupil: Thanks

2nd pupil: Its [*it's*] all right

Teacher: Every one copy this off the board

With creative practitioners the dialogue usually tended to concentrate on the task in the picture since these tended to be specific to the activity taking place in the school. In the case of the drama activities at Merryweather, where pupils were asked to mime various bits of scenery, this comment by a Year 5 boy was coded positively.

1st pupil: What shall we do?

2nd pupil: Lets [*Let's*] make a brige [*bridge*]

1st pupil: OK. That will be fun

2nd pupil: You look like as brige [*bridge*] now

Teacher: Well done. Your [*you're*] Yoursing [*using*] your emanshon [*imagination*]

Taking the pupils' comments first Table 3.2 shows that the number of positive responses strongly favours the creative practitioners. The chi-square statistic for the 3 by 3 contingency table comes to a massive 25.2, which with four degrees of freedom is significant at well below the 1% level and produces a large effect size.

Table 3.2 Analysis of primary pupils' responses to the picture tests

Value of statement	Creative Partnership	Mathematics	English	Total
positive	17	2	2	21
neutral	19	7	6	32
negative	0	9	7	16
Total	36	18	15	69

It can be easily seen from Table 3.2 that the high value of chi-square arises because the overwhelming proportion of positive statements (81% with phrases such as '*I'm enjoying this*'; '*This is fun*'; '*This is interesting*' etc.,) are found in the responses to the creative partnership pictures, whereas 100% of the negative ones ('*This is boring*'; '*I don't like doing this*'; '*Can't wait till break time*' etc.,) are attributable to either mathematics or English. When the teacher's imagined responses are analysed the differences are less pronounced as shown in Table 3.3

In the case of the creative practitioners the majority of supposed statements (78%) are neutral compared to 51% for mathematics and English combined. What these figures do not show is that the nature of these neutral responses tended to differ. In the case of the creative practitioners it usually records a statement or question about the events

Table 3.3 Analysis of primary pupils' perception of teachers' responses to the picture tests

Value of statement	Creative Partnership	Mathematics	English	Total
positive	7	1	3	11
neutral	28	10	7	45
negative	1	7	5	13
Total	36	18	15	69

depicted in the picture such as, '*Who wants to go in?*' [the tent] or '*Lights, camera, action*' [a group about to perform in drama]. In the core subjects the statements are more general and often concern outcomes ('*Has everyone done?*') or correct procedures ('*You must join up your letters*'). Most of the negative responses (including the one attributed to a creative practitioner) have to do with discipline issues, particularly excessive talking with remarks such as, '*Stop chatting*' sometimes accompanied by threats to '*stay in after school*' or in one case '*to go to the headmaster*'. The chi-square value of 14.05 just exceeds the 1% significance level (13.38 when $df = 4$).

Overall, however, the results are very positive with respect to the creative partnerships. There are far more imagined conversations between pupils which reflect enjoyment and involvement and pupils are more likely to see practitioners as people who set the conditions in which they are able to engage effectively in activities. In mathematics and English, however, imagined pupil conversations are often off task and when teachers are speaking the comments often concern telling pupils what to do or correcting existing work. Just how far this accords with the observed practice will be explored in the following chapters.

Chapter 4: Initial Encounters

When creative practitioners first meet with pupils there seems to be several immediate goals which they seek to achieve. The first of these concerns the kind of relationships that they are seeking to establish. In every case they begin by giving a potted version of their life history. What distinguishes it from what a new teacher might say to a class s/he hasn't met before, of the form '*I'm Mr Smith and I'll be taking you for History,*' is that the creative practitioners' accounts are often accompanied by expressions of feeling about certain past events which are offered as explanations for certain choices. Thus Alex at Ashby Grange with a Year 4 class and Pam at Merryweather with Year 5 tell the pupils:

I'm Alex and I'm a dance artist and I live in Portsmouth. I've worked with lots of junior groups and parents and tots. I've been a dance artist on Creative Partnerships for two years and it's made me realise this is the work I like doing; it's the kind of work I enjoy doing most.

Hello I'm Pam. I write and direct plays and I also act. I didn't train in drama. I did a degree in modern languages which led me into teaching but fairly quickly I became a teacher of English and drama because that was where my heart was... I then became a writer working with young people on drama and loved that too so now I combine work in the professional theatre with work for Creative Partnerships in schools.

At Woodstock, Glynn arrives late for the first morning and tells a group of pupils, a mixture of Years 8 and 10:

My name's Glynn and I'm a film maker. I'm sorry I'm late; blame the trains, but it's made me anxious because I wasn't here to set up before you came. I've been doing this kind of work for some years now and I got into it by helping out with groups of pupils who were excluded from school - so I had to learn the hard way.

Whereas an introduction such as '*I'm Mr Smith*' etc seems designed to establish the respective roles of the participants and, to a certain extent, reinforce the power relationship between the teacher and the class, those of the creative practitioners appear to take the form of an opening conversation gambit which signifies a more

equal relationship. In Glynn's case there may also be a secondary purpose, in that his task at Woodstock is to work with groups of disaffected pupils, and by telling them about working in a referral unit he indicates he has seen and can cope with most manifestations of disengagement.

Once introductions are over then the second purpose of the initial session would appear to focus on ways of stimulating the pupils' interest as a means of increasing intrinsic motivation. The manner of doing this seems to vary according to the particular artistic discipline but what each approach has in common is that all creative partners seek to achieve this by exploring the pupils' own ideas, even if this means departing from the main purpose of the activity. Teachers, on the other hand, are more constrained by the curriculum and tend to avoid wide ranging discussions which don't stick to the topic. Thus Simon, the photographer uses power-point to display a picture of a baby.

Simon: What is it?

Pupil: It's a picture of a baby

Simon: Yes but it's a special picture

Pupils [*chorus*]: It's you

Pupil: It's a picture which makes you happy

Pupil: It's a memory

Simon: Yes it's one of the things my mother particularly remembers about me as a young child. There isn't anything else that can give you a memory except a drawing or a film so how do films differ from photographs?

Pupil: It's time

Pupil: it's place

Simon [*after a pause when no more answers are forthcoming*] Ok where do we see photographs?

Pupil: In a museum

Pupil: In a photo album

Pupil: The Living Room

Pupil: the Bedroom

Pupil: In a scrap book

Pupil: In books

Simon: And something else? What about something your parents read that comes through the door each day?

Pupils: Oh! Newspapers.

Simon: Ok then. How about we take some pictures of the playground? But before we do we need to think about what makes a nice photograph. [*Goes on to explore lines, shapes, patterns and emotions with a sequence of his own pictures*]

Here, Simon's main purpose is to teach pupils to consider line, shapes and patterns before they go out to the playground. But he begins with a slight digression by showing the class pictures of himself as a baby. In an even clearer use of this approach, Glynn begins with a new group of pupils and shows them the film made by another group during the previous term. At the end of the film he asks for comments but there are none. Two girls appear totally disinterested; one plays with her hair. Glynn calls for a volunteer who will act as a model for others to photograph. Nobody volunteers so Glynn smiles and says, '*Ok. I'll have to volunteer myself again.*' He gets pupils to take different shots (head, full length etc.) and then displays the results on the computer. There is laughter when one shot has a light shining above Glynn's head.

Girl: It's like you've a halo.

Glynn: Anything else you notice? [*Prolonged silence*] Ok. I read that you guys spend all your time downloading videos illegally. So tell me something about the movement that goes with the music on these videos. [*Again there is silence*] I can't believe this. You spend your time downloading videos and you can't tell me a thing about them. [*Another long pause*] Ok. Think about an Oasis video and someone like Justin Timberlake. Can you think of any differences?

Girl: One's a story and one's movement. [*Again silence*]

Glynn: Is there a MTV style?

Boy: It features unusual places like standing on a volcano

Glynn: Would a video for rap look the same as an indi?

The two disinterested girls: No.

Glynn: Why not.

Girls: Different dress and movement.

Glynn: Ok I'm going to take you back to those pictures. Which tells you most about whether I'm feeling happy or sad?

Pupils [*chorus*]: The full one.

Glynn: I'm going to disagree with you there. Look at my feet. Are they sad?

Pupils: No

Glynn: Ok. What about my face? Does that show sad?

Pupils: Yes.

Glynn: So it's got to be the face that shows most emotion.

Glynn's purpose, as it emerges during the rest of the lesson is to get pupils to understand that although all films tell a story it is the camera angle, the particular features displayed (full profile/ clothes/background etc.) which shape the narrative in the eyes of the viewer. He has wanted to use the pictures taken by the pupils, themselves, to draw out these conclusions but getting little response he looks for something to gain their interest, and picks on music videos, before returning to the pictures once he has gained their attention. Typically in such situations teachers use what Edwards and Mercer (1987: 142-6) call '*cued elicitations*' in which the teacher asks questions while providing heavy clues as to the answer required.' Such exchanges are dominated by what Tharp and Gallimore (1988) call the '*recitation*' script whereby the teacher asks a question and the pupil having responded the teacher repeats the answer coupled with another question by way of a prompt for the response s/he was seeking in the first place. In such sequences, according to Tharp and Gallimore there are both explicit and tacit rules governing such classroom discourse. These routines give rise to the two-thirds rule first enunciated by Flanders (1970) whereby two-thirds of classroom activity consists of talk and two-thirds of this talking is done by the teacher.

This, in part, explains the reluctance of Glynn's group of pupils to respond initially to his questions, since instead of giving them a clue when they remain silent when he asks for comments on the pictures they have taken he appears to go off at a tangent by introducing the topic of videos. In a similar situation a teacher following a recitation script would have prompted with a series of questions such as, '*What about my face? What does it look like? Happy or Sad?*' until the required response was forthcoming. It is noticeable in the sequence involving Simon that 13 of the 19 utterances come from the children and in one case there is a sequence of six replies by pupils before Simon intervenes. A similar pattern can be discerned in the case of Andy, the conceptual artist, whose technique is to get pupils to ask questions which he rarely answers, preferring instead to raise further problems. In the following sequence Andy has added a mosquito net to the objects surrounding the tent.

Pupil: What is it? What is it? Is it a tent?

Andy: What would happen if it rained?

Pupil: Where's the door?

Andy: That's a good question. What would Harry do if he found this tent? [*The Y4 class have invented a person called Harry who lives in the old army tent*]

Pupil: he'd say it was modern

Pupil: hot.

Pupil: close the door-close the door

Andy: Are you sure? Are you sure?

Pupils [*chorus*] Yes. Yes [*excitedly*]

Pupils [*shouting*] We all want to dance. We all want to dance

Andy: I'm going to shut the door then. Can you still hear us?

This sequence provides a good example of this approach, in that instead of responding to the question, 'Is it a tent?' by directing the pupils to look at the tent and spot differences he responds by asking the children what would happen if it rained? Andy's expectation is that pupils will conclude that the net is not a tent because it would let water through the holes. In the same way because the mosquito net has no door he hopes that they will also conclude that it is not a tent. In this particular instance, the pupils never make these inferences but this does not seem to concern Andy since his main purpose is not to arrive at a conclusion but to stimulate the children's thinking since as he comments in an interview:

'To me being here is about several things. One important thing for me is to look at a different model of working; of the ways artists can work with schools and teachers in a much more collaborative way rather than be expected to come in and deliver and then go away again.. And another important thing is with the children. What we [*pointing towards Pam*] are trying to do here is to be a person who responds to ideas that the children are coming up with and then to bring our own practice to share '

In the same way Glynn appears to place a high priority on getting pupils to think for themselves because at the end of the lesson in which he first tries to stimulate the students' interest by getting them to talk about music videos he concludes by saying:

'What have we learned today? Anything? Nothing? Loads? [*Most pupils nod in agreement*] Well it's about raising questions rather than just making decisions. Films don't happen by accident, We're going to have to make lots of decisions about the kind of ways we want to present the juice bar and that's what we have been starting to do here.

Behind these creative practitioners' viewpoint there is a notion of creativity which might be characterised by what the theatre director, Jude Kelly, termed '*promoting flexibility of the mind*' at the NUT/NCA (2002) conference on the subject and contrasts with the more frequently quoted definition with its emphasis on the creation of an original product which is perceived by others to be of value. This approach to creating has been described elsewhere as '*aesthetic intelligence*' (Raney 2003: 149). Whereas for the creative practitioner the skills they possess are merely a means of engaging in a process of enquiry and problem solving, for teachers they tend to be the main reason for supporting the initiative in that they hope that they will acquire sufficient knowledge and technique to enable their students to make films, take better photographs and perform other artistic activity. Thus when creative practitioners initially set up situations designed primarily to engineer 'cognitive conflict' so that the pupils are forced to think 'out of the box' teachers are often concerned about the lack of structure which they fear will result in an unacceptable performance.

Emily Pringle (2007: 15) argues that the creative practitioners' approach stems from their own experiences of small working communities where the emphasis is on 'participatory arts practice, wherein creativity is developed and meaning emerges through collaborative processes of facilitated dialogue and making activities.' Certainly, most of the creative partners in the present study who were active professionally belonged to small cooperatives. In the earlier quote, Andy specifically mentions that developing a collaborative way of working with schools is, for him, an important goal. When these creative practitioners work in schools, therefore, they regard both the teachers and pupils as co-learners in the same way as they view their colleagues in their cooperatives and this goes some way to explaining the emphasis in the introductory phase of school projects on attempting to establish relationships as co-workers and co-learners rather than as teacher and taught. Talking about one of the highlights of her time in school Pam, when interviewed at the end of the project, reflected on the following experience:

'I felt one class in particular were moving towards a way of working that was risky for the teacher but he was completely committed to it. It was simply that he realised how spontaneous things could be and how much he could respond to things the children were coming up with; to their ideas. That he could work with them in a

different way. That it could feel like a genuine collaboration between himself and his class. That something that started with questions then moved to imaginative playful spontaneous stuff then moved to creating something visual, first in 2-D then 3-D and finally poetry came out of it. The week just gelled and grew incredibly organically. It was unplanned but if you look back on it there was a wonderful structure and a very clear journey from A to B.

That is not to claim that creative practitioners were averse to periods when it was necessary to instruct rather than explore. This was particularly the case in dance and drama where pupils were introduced to certain moves and then asked to act out a situation using this new knowledge. Pam began by introducing the meanings attached to the terms *action*, *freeze* and *neutral*. She then got pupils to take turns to direct her while she mimed eating an ice-cream and turning on the tap to wash her hands afterwards. Groups of pupils then had to create their own mimes, each taking turns to direct the action. Each group then performed their mime in front of Pam and the rest of the class who were asked for evaluative comments. In a similar manner Maggie at Canongate first explained and then demonstrated to the class the differences between *unison*, *mirrors* and *canons* before going on to get the pairs of pupils to design their own dance sequence incorporating these moves. Again the class was asked to comment on each others' performance. Generally, however, whenever the situation allowed it, creative practitioners preferred to begin a lesson by getting pupils to explore their own ideas before going on to decide on the tasks to be undertaken. Only when new knowledge or skills were required in order to perform these tasks did creative practitioners undertake direct instruction.

Chapter 5: Risk taking and the Management of Time and Space

There is a long history of research showing that many pupils in school are averse to risk taking. Among the earlier evidence is the account by John Holt (1970) when he asked a class what they did when he, as their teacher asked them a question. As Holt recounts, there was a stunned silence before one pupil replied, ‘*We gulp.*’ Pollard (1980) argues that primary pupils cope with risk by quickly developing ‘*knife edging*’ strategies in which they steer a course between responding to the teachers’ questions, so as not to be thought stupid, while at the same time not showing themselves too interested in case their peers label them ‘swots’ (or in Holt’s phrase ‘apple polishers’). Similar concerns also dominate secondary school (Rudduck *et al* 1996) particularly in the period after transfer when pupils are seeking to establish their position within the year group. Galton (1989), for example, describes how on an occasion when he asked pupils ‘What they did when the teacher asked them a question?’ the following exchange took place:

First Pupil: We put up our hands. Because if you don’t the teacher will ask you.

Second Pupil: Then you put them down again and pretend to be thinking so she’ll ask someone else.

These feelings appear to develop right from the start of formal schooling. For example Barrett (1986) showed pictures of classrooms to reception children three weeks after the beginning of the school year. She asked them to describe what was happening. Most of the replies carried negative connotations:

Pupil: A boy doesn’t know what to do. He’s sucking his pencil. He can’t do his work. He must tell the teacher.

Pupil: I couldn’t make a snail. I couldn’t draw a picture. It was too hard. I was too little. I feel miserable when I can’t do it. I’m frightened I might get it wrong.

Some might argue that these fears were a natural consequence of starting school but the evidence is that they seem to carry over into the junior years for when Galton (1989) replicated Barrett’s procedure, using pictures similar to those developed in the present study, pupils also expressed similar anxieties.

Pupil: There's no teacher. You're worried in case you get things wrong.

Pupil: The children in the picture are trying to learn how to do some [sums] they feel nerves and skared [*scared*] in case they get it wrong.

These examples serve to make two important points. The first concerns the argument, which is frequently put forward, that these negative dispositions on the part of students are largely the consequence of government reforms, particularly those concerned with the standards agenda. Although it has been argued in evidence to the Primary Review^{xiv} that this emphasis on performance has increased stress levels in pupils (Mayall 2007) the above quotations make it plain that avoidance of risk, mainly because of '*fear of failure*' has long been a part of typical classroom culture.

The second point helps to illuminate the earlier discussion on questioning in the previous chapter, since once the proposition concerning risk avoidance is accepted it helps to explain the failure of teachers to break away from the '*cued elicitation*' patterns of questioning which have continued to dominate classroom discourse, despite the best intentions of teachers, curriculum developers and those responsible for inducting new entrants into the profession. Put simply, when teachers attempt to encourage more open dialogue, pupils through the use of various strategies draw the adult into giving more and more clues until the answer to the question becomes obvious. One of the favoured pupil strategies of avoidance is silence (indicating lack of understanding) exemplified in the exchange described in the previous chapter when Glynn was attempting to gain the pupils' interest by asking them about music videos. In this situation, teachers tend to offer clues in the hope of persuading some in the class to risk an answer. Creative practitioners seem more comfortable with silence. Another tactic which creative practitioners frequently employed (again illustrated by Andy in the previous chapter) is to reverse the roles so that the pupils and not the adult ask the questions.

The social psychologist, Walter Doyle (1983) has analysed this situation by looking at the inter-relationship between the risks inherent in getting something wrong when the

^{xiv} The Primary Review under the direction of Professor Robin Alexander was launched in October 2006. Based in the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, it is a wide-ranging independent enquiry into the condition and future of primary education in England.

task is a challenging one. He argues that for a task to present a challenge there has to be a degree of *ambiguity* involved since if pupils already had a clear idea of the procedures required to come up with an acceptable answer there would be little risk involved. The kind of tasks set by creative practitioners, because they are designed to promote ‘flexibility of the mind,’ are likely to be high on ambiguity and therefore perceived, initially, by the pupil as risky. Two solutions, according to Doyle are then available to teachers; either they can scaffold^{xv} the task by lowering the level of ambiguity and thereby lowering the risk or they can find ways of lowering the risk while maintaining the level of ambiguity. Guided discovery and modelling are two ways in which teachers most frequently scaffold tasks. Both methods reduce the ambiguity and thereby the risk in that the pupil is given insight into the kind of result expected. However, the danger in these ‘teacher framed’ scaffolds is that pupils come to rely on this kind of help when confronted with difficult problems and this dependency on the teacher’s help increases the predisposition to deploy risk avoidance’ strategies when help is not forthcoming. The situation is clearly illustrated in Bridget’s case towards the beginning of her time at Barleycroft. The headteacher, in an effort to build better relationships with the local community, has agreed with Bridget that some pupils will help produce the scenery for the local pub pantomime, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. With Bridget’s help a group led by Jason have constructed a castle and now have to decide how to paint it. The following exchange takes place:

Jason: Can I paint this red? [Pointing to the tallest turret]

Bridget: What do you mean by ‘can’? Do you mean are you allowed or are you able?

Jason: I can do it alright but am I allowed?

Bridget: Why ask me? You’re running this group.

Jason: I know that but we usually ask teachers first.

Scaffolding a task by lowering risk while maintaining ambiguity is the more difficult to do. Because of the dependency effect inherent in ‘teacher led’ types of scaffold, it is generally done during the design stage of a task. For example a teacher might ask

^{xv} The analogy is with a scaffold around a building which makes working safer. The teacher provides a framework in which the pupils can do their thinking so that in Jerome Bruner’s (1966) phrase, “there are fewer degrees of freedom.”

the class to 'brainstorm' in groups in an attempt to develop ideas or solve a particular problem. Before beginning, however, the rules governing the activity will be spelt out. Pupils will be reminded that initially all ideas or suggestions are to be received without comment. There may be suggestions as to how to proceed to the next stage; for example in science they may be told to sort all ideas into two piles, one for those that it is easy to test and the second for those which are either not testable or that would require complex apparatus. Here the complexity of the task is maintained but risk is reduced because each suggestion is not linked to any particular individual. Other forms of this type of scaffolding can involve the use of cue cards, as with writing frames, when for example a teacher who wishes to develop the pupils' understanding of ways to describe characters in their stories might instruct them to write 5 lines of dialogue, "which tells you something about the character," followed by 5 lines of narrative, then 5 lines of action and 5 lines of description that fulfils the same purpose.

These types of scaffold appear to foster independence (Rosenshine *et al.*1996) so that pupils complain if the teacher offers too much assistance too early. For example, in a study of group work in primary school, where scaffolds such as the brainstorming were initially used, pupils were questioned about the role of the teacher (Galton 1989:132-33).

Pupil 1: When you have to do something, like we have had before and you've got to do a certain number of things, when the teacher comes and tells you you've got a right good idea you go away and do it and they will come back and alter it all and they make you do something else and tell you, 'It's got to be like this.'

Interviewer: Now why do you think that is?

Pupil2: because they think it's best

Interviewer: Because they think it's best?

Pupil 1: because they think it could be improved.

Interviewer: And does that stop you from putting your ideas?

Pupils [in chorus]: No.

Interviewer: So you can still put ideas forward then?

Pupils [in chorus] Yes.

Interviewer: O.K. So what do you feel like if you think your idea is a good idea and then it happens like you say and the teacher comes and changes it?

Pupil 1: You feel a bit upset. You have put all that work into it and then the teacher suddenly changes it.

Pupil 3: You get a bit mad with her.

Pupil 4: You don't feel it's your piece of work. You feel as if it's the teachers. When you have done everything to it and you think that's my piece of work and no-one else has done owt to it. But when the teacher has done something to it [then] it don't feel as good.

Here the pupils complain that teachers change things and this takes away the sense of ownership of their ideas. On the same theme, another more recent study of group work, this time in the lower secondary school, produces another criticism concerning the speed at which such interventions sometimes take place (Galton 2007: 108-09)

Interviewer: Are there times in the group when you don't want the teacher to come?

Fiona: Sometimes but like if we're really stuck, but not at other times.

Interviewer: So if you're not stuck?

Fiona: Mm, no. I don't like it when teachers are on top of you, looking at what you're doing. It gets a bit annoying. Like staring at you.

Martin: makes you nervous.

Interviewer: So if you're discussing a topic like today on probability or whatever and you feel you've got some good ideas and the teacher says 'No'

Martin: You feel gutted and annoyed and you can't be bothered to work it out again.

Fiona: You feel like, Oh, I've done it wrong. I need to do it again and if it's wrong again you get worked up a bit.

Interviewer: So what should teachers do?

Martin: just tell you to rethink your answer.

Fiona: She could give you a clue but you've got to work the test out for yourself.

Interviewer: So what I'm hearing from you is that you don't want teachers to interfere too much at the beginning?

Martin: That's right [other pupils nod in agreement] You just want to get off easily at first.

So it appears that if pupils are to take risks with their learning they require time and space to sort out their ideas initially. When they are on the wrong track they don't necessarily want to be corrected directly but prefer help with their thinking. And this is just the kind of approach the creative practitioners appear to favour, as the remarks of one group of pupils at the end of their school project testify:

Interviewer: Is [*naming the artist*] the same as a teacher?

Pupils [in chorus] No.

Interviewer: In what ways is she different then?

Pupil: She lets you make big decisions

Interviewer: How do you feel about that?

Pupil: Scary at first in case things go wrong [nods of agreement]

Interviewer: But if it comes out right in the end?

Pupil: Then it's magic. You feel proud and warm inside [nods of agreement]

There were numerous examples where teachers rushed to pupils to help by making suggestions while the creative practitioners stood back and watched. In dance, for example, with a Year 10 class, Maggie was focusing on the use of arms, first explaining

You do jazz with long arms, ballet with curved, but contemporary dance, because the Africans were quite short is in-between [demonstrates]

The students then practice the movements Maggie demonstrated. When one student complains she can't manage all of them she is told "Don't worry, just do as much as you can." The class then form groups of three and are asked to build a sequence using the arm movements demonstrated and incorporating both mirrors and cannons.

For the next 10 minutes Maggie just watched unless a group of students approached her for advice. For example one group wished to do a roll but the floor was hard and one of the girls hit her head. Maggie then suggested they try going backwards instead of forwards so the head is not exposed. Meanwhile the teacher immediately joined a group. She did most of the talking (although the field note records that I'm not near enough to hear what's being said.). The talk was accompanied by frequent gestures as the teacher demonstrated possible combinations.

Even more striking is the situation observed at Merryweather where Pam was developing a drama sequence and in order to get all the class involved in the performance (since there were only six playing parts). She tells the children that as there is no money for scenery they will have to mime their own. She wants them to provide some houses, and then stands back and watches. But the class teacher immediately goes to one group and begins to arrange them into position (actually

gripping them by the shoulders and propelling them to their various stations). He explains each person's respective role saying such things as, '*You can be a pair of semi-detached houses. You can be the garage on the side*'. He repeats this procedure several times, including, when building a helicopter, suggestions on what sounds the pupils miming the rotor blades should make. However, on the final occasion when the task is to mime a river with a bridge, he was called away to take a telephone call. In his absence the children create their mime without difficulty when left to their own devices and their performance is evaluated best by the rest of the class.

Sometimes, the different approaches could produce tension between the creative practitioner and the teacher. The following account describes an afternoon at Barleycroft with Bridget. She has arranged for the group to visit a local arts centre to meet some working artists. She wants the children to be inspired but also to see that doing art can also be profitable since the centre is a commercial venture. Her hope is for the children to come back with ideas about designing various kind of clothing (caps, T-shirts etc) for sale. Part of this particular afternoon is to be spent on planning the visit, including getting some pupils to telephone the centre and confirm the arrangements. The edited field note, with comments added later, reads as follows;

There is a lot to do in the afternoon. First the details of the trip have to be discussed and organised. Then the group have to design and make an apron since on a previous occasion they have got paint onto their clothes [the school aprons are too small]. Bridget has brought a lot of shirts from a Charity Shop [presumably with her own money (checked later)]. Bridget begins by writing up the afternoon timetable. From 1.30 to 1.50 they will discuss the trip and then at 1.50 they will discuss today's activities. Discussion time is organised like circle time, although the latter is not used at Barleycroft. The children and Bridget only get to talk when they hold an old empty water bottle filled with sand. Bridget speaks without the bottle and the children are quick to correct her.

Bridget tells them about the idea of a trip but the teacher (Mrs P) interrupts and says 'I've found out we can meet any artists we want and they will be working artists' [this spoils the surprise element because Bridget intended to break this news later that they would see artists working and that they make things to sell] Bridget makes the best of it by saying, "We're on the same wavelength Mrs P."

Bridget suggests that Mrs P goes to help the group who are going to liaise with the art centre. [A device to get her out of the way?] She asks for volunteers. Lots of hands go up.

Bridget: How can we decide?

Boy: Why don't you choose?

Bridget: because it's your project; not mine

Girl: It should be the ones in Year 6 because this is their only chance

Mrs P: There is also an offer from an artist who uses Breeze Block. So Y6 who don't get to organise this trip could do that one.

Bridget: Ok this is hard. Who will be willing to organise the Breeze Block trip? [Sara puts her hand up] Thank you Sara. Right the rest of you sort yourself out into which will organise which.

The rest of the group have to choose between T-shirt design and aprons. James doesn't want to do either. [At lunch Bridget has said she had a 'run in' with him because he had got flour all over his trousers when they were doing paper maché. His mother had come in and complained. James has already told Bridget that his mum thinks she's a lousy artist and that his Gran had said painting was always messy and if Bridget was a proper artist she'd have known this and made sure that the paste didn't go all over the place.] Bridget is very patient with him.

Bridget: Ok. Do you want to do hats? [James shakes his head] Well we will need to have a conversation about this. Are you happy to wait until I'm free [James nods his head]

Mrs P comes back to the classroom, sees James sitting there doing nothing.

Mrs P: What are you doing James?

James: Bridget told me I had to think out what I'm going to do.

Mrs P: Are you thinking James?

James: Yes

Mrs P: Well not too long about it then. What ideas have you got so far?

James: None

Mrs P: Well you can't sit here all day. I know you're interested in shells. Why not do a sketch of a beach and put some shells on your apron? I'll help you. We can go to the library together to look at shell books and get some ideas.

This rather lengthy extract illustrates quite vividly the different perspectives that teachers and creative practitioners sometimes bring to the task of encouraging pupils to develop and express their own ideas. We do not know if James' exhibition of

'learned helplessness' is the result of his previous experience of being dragged up to school by an angry parent to complain about the mess on his trousers, or if it is merely a manifestation of his reputation throughout the school of being *'a difficult boy.'* The teacher, Mrs P, saw Bridget's open invitation 'to sit and think about it' as a rash move and set about forcing things to a conclusion. In doing so she made use of her previous knowledge about James' interest in shells to scaffold the task, in Doyle's (1983) terms by removing some of the ambiguities and thus lowering the risk. This is because once James agrees to Mrs P's suggestion the choice of design is limited and the risk is then reduced further by the teacher's offer to go with James to the library to choose which particular shells to use.

Most teachers would argue that Bridget left the choices too open. Because of lack of time she failed to set sufficient limitations on the apron or T-shirt tasks so that, as a result, some pupils' designs had too many words to fit onto the material. A framework which suggested a picture and a limit to the number of words would have reduced the ambiguity and also forced the children to think more carefully about which words were more important. Notice, however, that at no point would Bridget have suggested which words to use, unlike one teacher at Merryweather where the pupils at Assembly were set the task of designing the programme for a musical evening (with the best one being chosen for the concert). Her advice consisted of the following:

One way to go about the design would be to think about all the musical instruments which will be played and draw pictures of them on the front cover with a box in the centre for the writing.

Bridget clearly reflected on the problem that pupils had with too many words because she began by setting limits to the number they could use in the following week when the group again meet. She tells the class that

This will really force you think what it is important in what you want to say

Her different approach in giving pupils ownership of the ideas while helping them to cope with the risks that this creates can be seen in an episode at the end of the previous session when Mrs P suggested that next time she would bring in catalogues

showing T-shirts which '*the children can use for ideas*'. Bridget reacted strongly to this offer by saying, '*then it will just be something to copy*'. At the end of the conversation she told Mrs P that she was going for a walk to calm down [at the end of the lesson she had shouted, '*is it going to be like this each week?*' at the children's failure to carry out the agreed procedure for tidying away]. The later comment added to the field notes continues,

Afterwards Bridget tells me she is on the point of giving up. She is particularly upset by an incident where Dean, a Liverpool fan, had a problem. He wanted to put 'Liverpool 4 Ever' on his apron but also pictures of a football and various other things. He had forgotten to leave space for the letters. Bridget had merely told him to look for gaps or to consider the back of the apron. But when Mrs P came and he explained his problem she had responded,

Don't use words. You don't need them. You represent your words with pictures instead of words.

The link here is to the pupil's earlier comment that when teachers change things '*You don't feel it's your piece of work...You don't feel so good*'. In this instance, an understanding headteacher found an urgent task elsewhere in the programme for Mrs P so that she was replaced in Bridget's group by a teaching assistant and so the art classes continued. During the visit in the following week everything seemed to be going well^{xvi} and James was busy making a puppet's head. He was sticking paper maché onto a balloon (this time wearing an apron to protect his school jumper and trousers). After watching him concentrate, utterly absorbed, for nearly ten minutes, the following exchange took place,

Interviewer: What are you doing?

James: making a ball

^{xvi} At Bridget's request I only came for the second half of the afternoon because she wanted to have a 'heart to heart' conversation with the group about what had gone wrong in the previous session with some children 'not wanting to do anything' and going back on the agreed arrangements for tidying up. On this latter issue the arrangement had been that if there was something needed doing someone with nothing to do did it. As the result of this discussion and at the children's suggestion the system was changed so that each table had specific tasks.

Interviewer: Did you choose to do this? [nods] You weren't very happy last week when you couldn't decide what to do. [nods again] You didn't want to make a T-shirt or an apron. Why not?

James: it wasn't interesting

Interviewer: And this is? [nods] so what are you going to do next?

James: Wait until this dries and then probably put some more paper onto it to make it bigger.

James continued to concentrate on this task for the best part of the afternoon, something so unusual that it was remarked on by the teaching assistant in the staff room. The incident is all the more telling when it emerges that the pupil in the earlier exchange who talked about having to make '*big decisions*' and about '*feeling proud and warm inside*' when one's choices were successful was James. Bridget's final reflection on the incident was to recognize the need to scaffold tasks initially,

"I think I probably gave them too much freedom initially and this frightened some of them. They need restricted choices at first and then one can build on that".

Managing risk taking

Scaffolding is one way of managing risk taking. Creative practitioners also use several other strategies. They seem to appreciate that many of the reasons which determine the pupils' responses are emotional rather than cerebral. Teachers, on the other hand rarely tend to attribute pupil behaviour to feelings. For example, a recent study by Ravet (2007) looked at teachers' and parents' explanations of pupil disengagement. Most of the teachers explanations involved deficit theories (either of attitude, ability or personality) or attributed disengagement to contexts outside the control of the school (home situation, family background or peer relationships). Parents, on the other hand tended to attribute lack of interest in school to feelings of boredom, shyness or fatigue.

Creative practitioners tend to work at the emotional level where fear of failure often determines pupils' response to challenge. Thus Glynn in the following episode confronts the pupil, Chris, with his tendency to be dependent on others for ideas. Having made their film the pupils are asked to include a little

signature piece that describes them as persons. They can do this by filming some object, cutting out a picture from a magazine or by doing their own drawing. One pupil, for example films himself in football kit. Chris, however, chooses to copy a picture drawn by another boy.

Glynn: This is about yourself. What does it say about you that it's a copy?

Chris: I don't know

Glynn: Have a little think about that.

For the same reason creative practitioners are often quick to recognise situations where pupils are prepared to expose their feelings to others. Another boy in Year 10, Gavin, has drawn a picture which shows a person with one half of the torso submerged in a cloud of smoke. He explains to Glynn that it represents his character; the visible part is what others see [around the edge of the visible picture he has written words such as *superior scornful* while on the side that people don't see are words such as *vulnerable, 'sensitive, uncertain]*

Gavin: It's one half of me; the other is surrounded in smoke. It's my split personality.

Glynn: I think it's quite challenging to be so open about yourself. It's very courageous. Well done.

Teacher [arriving later and being shown the picture]: That could be an eye. You could draw another eye.

One very frequently used approach is for creative practitioners to express their own feelings, as if conveying a message to the pupils that talk of this kind is acceptable currency among the group. We saw for example that during initial encounters creative practitioners often include emotional statements about who they are. They often use it also to explain the reasons for their decision making. In one instance, for example, Bridget is faced with a persistent request from a keen student to add snow to the trees that have been constructed and painted as part of the scenery for the pantomime, 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.' This girl wants to add bits of paper, painted white to represent snow flakes.

Bridget: I like your suggestion but it's been a hard afternoon with everything that's being going on. I'm a bit stressed and can't cope with any new ideas at the moment. So can we leave it for now? I'm not saying it isn't a good idea. It is but not now. OK?

Compare this to an episode when pupils at Ashby Grange are editing their photographs.

Simon [to class]: Are you happy with that. We need a title.

Teacher: Stained glass snake

Pupil: What about stained snake

Teacher: Sshh! We've chosen.

Yet another strategy to increase pupils' self-belief, and thus the capacity for risk taking, is to allocate responsibility while displaying great confidence that the pupils will be able to cope with it without mishap. Whereas a teacher when handing out expensive equipment to pupils might stress its cost and therefore the need to take great care by following the correct procedures, creative practitioners sometimes appear very casual and unconcerned as the following extract illustrates. Here pupils at Woodstock have been given the task of taking a video camera around the school and filming anything which interests them.

Glynn: How much do you think this particular camera costs? [Various guestimates]

Who's highest?

Chris: Me. £850.

Glynn: Double it

Chris: what happens if it breaks?

Glynn: I'd cry. Now whose going to carry the camera? Ok. Jack's hand is up first.

What's the most expensive part?

Jack: The camera

Glynn: Ok. Then hold it there [pointing to the handle] and not the tripod.

The Use of feedback

Two other factors which also appear to help pupils cope with challenge concern the nature of the feedback offered and the capacity to match tasks to meet the needs of different pupils. In his analysis of feedback mechanisms Hattie (2002) distinguishes between three elements; *feeding upwards*, *feeding back* and *feeding forward*. Feeding upwards is the process whereby the teacher makes it clear to pupils from the start what will be expected of them. By this term Hattie is not referring to the kinds of

learning objectives that are a feature of the numeracy and literacy strategies but the more subtle ways in which teachers convey their expectations as in the above example where Glynn is telling pupils, *'I trust you to come back with the camera in one piece.'* When used to inform pupils about expected higher order outcomes, such as comparing, contrasting or evaluating, it enables pupils to track their performance and to decide on the viability of certain strategies. Thus when Maggie conducts the lesson with Year 10 about the use of the arms she shows them several pictures of dancers in various positions and says,

These pictures are to promote ideas, not to copy. You might think looking at the picture, at the motion of the legs but I want you to try to think how this affects the upper half of the body and then the whole movement.

Pupils now know that the lesson, with its main aim of coordinating hand and arm movements in a series of mirrors and canons, should take into account the whole body movement when it comes to deciding what works.

The second category, feeding back tells pupils how they are doing. When it done informally, and not by testing, Hattie remarks that it is often not specific enough to enable pupils to be certain that it is genuine. This is particularly true when it is accompanied by praise such as *'Well done.'* A noticeable feature of the feedback provided by the creative practitioners is that it tended to be specific so that Maggie, for example, always tended to point out a particular feature of the pupils' performance.

That was good work. I can see you've got the ideas. I can see that you've absorbed some of the moves from contemporary dance and what was most interesting to me was the way you integrated these with your own style to create a kind of fusion dance. Next time let's think more about that.

In the same manner Bridget would point to a particular line in a drawing or some aspect of a pupil's design or a combination of colours etc.

Feeding forward involves helping pupils to decide what to do next. It is primarily about choice of strategies and is best brought about by inducing pupils to become self-

questioners. As we have seen in the previous chapter responding to pupil questions by questioning the purpose of the question was one of the main ways that creative partners operated.

Matching tasks to pupils' needs

Matching tasks to pupils' needs is also important. (Bennett *et al* 1984). These researchers report that in many primary classrooms the overwhelming number of mismatches resulted in the use of an excessive proportion of practice tasks. Pupils who were already able to perform a certain mathematical operation were given another page of examples to work through so that the teacher could concentrate attention on those in the class who had still to complete the first page. This form of differentiated learning might be termed *differentiation by pace*. It is mainly designed to slow down the faster workers while the slower ones catch up. Whole class teaching, which as a result of Government prescription now dominates primary as well as secondary modes of instruction, (Webb and Vulliamy, 2006) tends to encourage this approach whereby teachers pitch their teaching to the middle of the class so that the most able don't get too far ahead while the slower ones don't fall too far behind.

Obtaining the best match, although extremely difficult, generally requires pupils either to work individually, or in pairs or in groups because it is then possible to *differentiate by task*. Because creative practitioners are concerned to have pupils make the big choices about what to do, albeit within a framework, and because when giving feedback they tend to modify and extend pupils' own ideas rather than offer corrections by way of suggested alternatives, the activities that they require pupils to do tends to be differentiated by task rather than by pace. This is particularly true of the visual artists that were observed, since pupils were often encouraged to use their own ideas in design. This contrasts with Ofsted's (2002c) example, where the object of painting a rainbow was not experimentation and spontaneity but 'to learn how to blend colours' so that the result would likely consist of 30 identical half sections of paper plates containing several semi-circular bands of pre-specified mixtures of the primary colours.

In the performance arts this provided another boost to the pupils' confidence. A feature of both the drama and dance and to a lesser extent in other modes of creative activities was that the final outcome was often subject to critical evaluation by peers. Groups were encouraged to develop their own routines so that the level of the task tended to match the abilities of the pupils. However, because of the tendency of the creative practitioners to extend rather than change the pupils' ideas, the outcomes, while tending to result in improved, if sometimes limited, performances were still ones where ownership resided with the pupils. Thus in the case of two somewhat overweight girls, the performance consisted of a hand jive which with the help of the creative practitioner was acclaimed critically by the rest of the class and where both girls at interview confessed that they had been *'frightened of dance at first but they were now more confident in themselves both inside and outside of school'*.

Thus in summary, creative practitioners, whenever possible, present pupils with *'big choices'* designed to encourage thinking that is *'outside the box'*. They provide both the space and time for pupils to undertake this thinking. To this end, they generally scaffold these tasks by reducing the risk of failure while maintaining the ambiguities inherent in the tasks that they set pupils. Because they see avoidance of risk as mainly an emotional response, they also frequently emphasise the part played by feelings (both their own and the pupils') as well as discussing techniques and skills when working on such tasks. In giving feedback they tend to extend rather than change pupils' ideas, so allowing them to retain a strong sense of ownership. At the same time this form of help is designed to produce an outcome, which although sometimes limited in range, is capable of serious critical scrutiny by their peers and which is likely to result in a positive evaluation. In this manner they boost the pupils' self confidence so that they are willing to take on greater challenges on future occasions.

This approach was shared by all creative partners even when the circumstances prevented them from operating it to the fullest extent. Thus Bridget, because of the need to produce the scenery in time for the pantomime rehearsals expressed her frustration at having to restrict some of the pupils' initiatives, as in the case of putting snow on the trees. In a similar way, Glynn had to meet tight deadlines in order to have the film ready for a School Enterprise day. When asked to comment on the

successes and failures of his time at Woodstock he began with the following reflection:

There were successes and frustrations really. The successes are overall in that I'm happy with what I've made. I'm also happy with the experience overall that the students have had. A lot of it for me is about making them more autonomous; so that starting off by feeding them responsibility so they go off and do it by themselves. And in that sense it was very successful because by the last day I was directing, I wasn't operating the camera. To an extent I'd stopped directing, they knew what needed to be done.

Frustrations have been mainly time. It's been something of a time squeeze which has got in the way of giving them the richest experience possible. We'd planned to get them to edit part of the film, such an important part of the learning process, where the language of what you are making is, and we didn't get to do that. Although in the workshops we did some editing so they did experience that but it's nice to see your finished product on the screen that you've put together yourself so it's yours.

Interviewer: You wanted them to have ownership of the lot?

Glynn: Yeah, Yeah, very much so.

On the other hand, when creative practitioners were required to take on the role of teachers, for example, when conducting formal evaluations they found it hard to continue using the above strategies and tended to employ teacher directed scaffolds, not always as successfully as the teachers did. For example when Theo, Maggie's partner at Woodstock brought a class of 24 boys together for the final session he began by showing a video of them dancing in a previous lesson. The dancing was much more physical than the girls' performances and involved lots of somersaults. Theo then handed out paper and pencils and told the class to get in the groups.

Listen up you guys. Cool. I want to get some ideas about what you feel about doing dance. It's the first time we've worked together so I need some good feedback. I like you to think what you've done and what others have done. Have some kind of attitude some passion. I don't mind if it's positive or negative.

The pupils appear confused so Theo responded by saying

List your skills and achievements that you've achieved. Any ideas, it doesn't matter.
I'm cool.

With the majority pupils still appearing to be uncertain about what they are being asked to do, Theo tried to explain once more:

Some people need to know what I'm saying. Some people don't need to ask. So if you just all listen for a moment and let the others find out. It's skills I want. What have you got from the dancing? It's what you think you've achieved. What's been the challenge? What have you enjoyed? I want your feelings, your thoughts. And you can put more than one word. I want you to explain what you mean

From an outsider's perspective, each of Theo's attempted elaborations tend to create greater confusion and uncertainty. He wants skills, he wants to know about challenge, he wants what they have enjoyed, their feelings their thoughts etc. Eventually Mr B, the teachers stepped in. While Theo has been talking he has recognised that pupils have been asked to sit in groups on the floor to write, and has busied himself setting up chairs and tables. He now picks on one pupil, Paul.

Mr B: Paul. What did you like about dance?

Paul: I thought it was a girl thing at first but it was hard; quite physical

Mr B: And something you didn't like?

Paul: Missing games

Mr B [to the class] Ok then. Make a list. Up to three things you found you liked or that surprised you about doing dance and three things you didn't like about it.

In the following plenary session Theo's questioning skills, which were very much in evidence during dancing sessions appeared to desert him so that, for example, when a pupil tells him that dance has given him confidence it is left to Mr B to follow up the boy's statement by asking, '*In what ways?*'. In this situation Theo seemed more than happy to have the teacher take over, unlike the earlier episode between Bridget and Mrs P.

In the next chapter we examine another area where the school's approach and that of the creative practitioners often seemed to the outsider to be at odds; that is in the exercise of control and the management of pupil behaviour.

Chapter 6: 'I can't condone but I understand': Managing behaviour

In the past decade teachers have expressed increasing concerns about pupils' behaviour, and these have been backed up in official reports such as (Ofsted 2005). In a survey for the National Union of Teachers by MacBeath and Galton (2004) secondary school teachers ranked poor pupil behaviour as the major obstacle to teaching. In response to the same question in an earlier survey, primary teachers only ranked behaviour fifth out of the fifteen possible options (Galton and MacBeath 2002). However, when the schools in that study were revisited five years later poor behaviour was signalled out by most of the primary teachers interviewed as a major problem. This relationship between teacher and taught was said to be exacerbated by a minority of parents who often took their child's side in any dispute (Galton and MacBeath in press). According to some teachers, mostly with less than 10 years experience, children often modelled their behaviour in class on these parental interventions so that they were more likely to challenge rather than accept a reprimand. '*Why me Miss? He did it too*', was now said to be a frequent response. More experienced teachers, however, tended to explain this deterioration in pupil behaviour on the highly structured nature of today's curriculum.

To cope with this deterioration in behaviour many primary schools have adopted the approach used in secondary schools and introduced 'assertive discipline' procedures. Parents are informed at the outset that there are a clear set of rules. Children are rewarded for good behaviour with, for example, five minutes extra play or a Headteacher's Commendation at School Assembly, and penalised when they break the rules. Sanctions are graduated and may start with verbal warnings before moving to periods of isolation. If all else fails pupils will be sent to the Headteacher and given a letter to take home. The process is carefully documented so that it can be produced as evidence if parents challenge the school's decision.

Critics of this strategy (Watkins and Wagner 2000) argue that this '*one size fits all*' approach is often applied in an inflexible manner. From the school's point of view, if parents are to be convinced that the treatment their child received is fair there must be few 'special cases'. More pertinent to the present discussion about the fostering of

creativity is their other criticism (ibid: 48) that this '*staged response*' approach does not, typically, allow for class discussion of the situation, nor the generation of joint (teacher and pupils) solutions to problems.

Watkins and Wagner's position reflects a longstanding alternative approach which argues that teachers need to separate the consequences of the behaviour from the motives for the behaviour when seeking to create a climate in the classroom which allows pupils to take risks with their learning. Deci and Chandler (1986) for example, developed a theory that argues that children will only be intrinsically motivated in a classroom environment which is not controlling, but where children's initiatives are supported and where there is freedom for pupils to exercise choice. They stress that these conditions must apply both to learning and behaviour and that in creating this kind of environment teachers must engage in what they term, '*honest evaluations.*' The can do this by giving genuine reasons why they require pupils to behave in certain ways. Thus telling pupils they are doing something for their own good ('*You'll need to tidy your own home when you grow up so you better learn how to do it now*') or accusing pupils of character defects ('*You are a messy lot*') are not effective ways of exercising control (ibid: 591). It is better, according to Deci and Chandler to give a genuine explanation such as, '*If you leave the room untidy, I have to clear it up after you've gone, otherwise the caretaker gets cross, and so I'd like you to help me.*'

Elsewhere, Deci and Ryan (1985) stress that in the process of providing '*honest evaluations*' teachers must sometimes be prepared to acknowledge that feelings may play a part in determining one's actions. In this way it is possible, while not condoning unacceptable behaviour, for the teacher to indicate that s/he understands the reasons for it. This makes it possible to sustain relationships because teachers are then able to convey the message that '*just because your behaviour is unacceptable I don't think this means you are a bad person*'

In the present study two of the secondary schools seemed to have gone some way in moving towards this approach in the two departments where the creative partnerships were situated, although in both cases there was a school assertive discipline policy in operation. At Woodstock, the Design Department appeared to be relaxed about applying this assertive approach, while at Canongate in the PE department staff,

particularly, the males, tended to adopt a *laddish* style of behaviour with the boys that seemed to appeal. For example, in dealing with unacceptable uniform the pupil might be jokingly asked about what he had been doing to get into such a mess during the previous evening, with the implication that he had been out with a girl. In both cases the creative practitioners were left much to their own devices. This involved only small mixed gender groups at Woodstock but at Cannongate, the sessions usually consisted of all boys' or all girls' groups with upwards of 20 pupils. PE staff sometimes came to join in but rarely interfered with the conduct of the lesson, other than to move pupils so that they were in the line of sight of the dancers.

The primary schools presented a different picture. In Barleycroft, there were rules although no formal sanction policies. The school tended to avoid confrontations outside the classroom by keeping children occupied. At lunchtimes, for example, there were numerous clubs, including a regular daily news bulletin compiled and presented by the pupils. Serious issues were the subject of class discussion. At Ashby Grange and Merryweather the atmosphere was less relaxed and it was not unusual, on occasions, to arrive at the former and hear a teacher shouting at children in the corridor. Initially, in both these schools teachers mainly tended to watch the creative practitioners rather than participate in the activities, the exception being the reception teachers and their classroom assistants. In most cases, however, while watching from the sidelines teachers sought to retain control of behaviour often interrupting the creative practitioner to reprimand a pupil or in some cases the whole class.

Creative practitioners, on the other hand, tended to deal with misbehaviour by using honest evaluations. The contrast can be illustrated by the following episode at Ashby Grange where Alex was rehearsing the reception class children in the dance they were to perform for their parents. As a finale, they had to lie on the floor and then, at the count of five, jump up with arms outstretched like a flower busting into bud. The pupils were supposed to count silently but at the jump up most shouted out 'five' very loudly.

Alex: We will need to do this again until you can do it quietly. It's supposed to be a surprise. We keep quiet until we jump so nobody expects it. I know you're feeling

excited but see if you can do it without talking or do you need my help? Can you manage it by yourselves?

Pupils [in chorus]: Yes.

Alex: Ok then. I'll count you in

Teacher [interrupting the count]: We won't start again until you are all quiet. Brandon [shouting] that means you.

Alex [soft voice]: Are we nice and still? Off we go.

Teacher [at the end of the dance as pupils get ready to leave] Ok. Back to normal.

Line up in pairs and go quietly back to the classroom

Here Alex both hints she understands the reasons for the children's behaviour (their excitement) but also provides the genuine reason why she requires them to be silent. She also models the behaviour by using a soft voice when asking for stillness and this is in sharp contrast to the teacher's call for quiet by shouting at Brandon. As remarked on earlier, in the case of Maggie and the girl who wished to attach paper snow to the pantomime trees, creative practitioners often cite their own feelings in conveying messages to children and this appears to be particularly effective when it concerns behaviour because it provides a powerful means of demonstrating the '*can't condone but understand*' principle which Deci and Ryan (1985) argue enables the adult to maintain the relationship with children while still effectively controlling their behaviour.

A case in point was at Merryweather with Pam. After exploring the tent with Andy a Year 3 class decided that it was a time machine. Their theory was that the tent's inhabitant, whom they had named Harry, really belonged to the Second World War period because of the state of the tent (army issue) and the contents (canvas sleeping bag, ration book and RAF forage cap). Harry had a wooden leg and limped (false leg plus walking stick found beside the tent). In subsequent discussions with Pam and Andy the class decided that they would like to help Harry get back to where he belonged so they sought to discover from the study of various events, still pictures, films and songs etc., something about each of the intervening decades between the 1940 and the present day. In groups the children then created an assortment of sounds (songs, made-up snatches of conversation etc) which represented a single decade. The

idea was for each group to make an audio-recording of their chosen sequence which could then be left for Harry to play his way back in time.

On this particular afternoon each group is to practise their medley while another goes into the tent to listen. At the outset, they are warned by Pam that this could be risky because it could activate the time machine and whisk them all off to another decade. As might be imagined this notion provoked considerable excitement and this generated much laughter and noise so that Pam had problems controlling the class. At this point she clapped her hands for attention and says

“When I was your age my brother and I had a tent in the garden. We wanted to sleep in it but my mum said, No; we wouldn’t get any sleep because we’d get excited and be giggling all night. So do you think when you go into the tent you could not have a giggle. I know that’s hard but you will have to stop yourself if you want to hear all the sounds when you go on time travel. So are you ready for the challenge?”

Here Pam is able to put the ‘*can’t condone but I understand*’ principle to good effect by conveying the message that although no giggling is allowed she understands from her own experience why it is one does giggle when excited. Compare this with an episode observed earlier in the day when another class were exploring the tent with Andy. Because of the cold, three of the pupils asked and received his permission to go back into the classroom for a short period in order to warm themselves up. The door of the classroom wouldn’t open so they knocked on it to attract attention. When nobody responded they began banging more loudly on the window until eventually a teacher appeared.

What’s the matter? [shouting] Are you all animals? Do you act like baboons and bang on the window or do you knock politely?

One final description of an incident at Ashby Grange, again with Alex, the dancer, illustrates most powerfully the value of the approach adopted by most of the creative practitioners in situations where mistakes were made and needed to be rectified. This time the Year 4 class were also rehearsing their routine for the parents’ concert. They had previously taken photographs of buildings around the neighbourhood, and have edited these using ‘Photoshop’. Alex has now turned these pictures into a dance

routine. Because most of the pictures have been transformed into waves and swirls the centrepiece of the routine has the pupils move from a circle into a tight spiral. This coil then unwinds with pupils breaking off to form new groups ready for the next section of the dance routine. On this particular day, one girl, Melissa, has left the spiral too early and has run to her next position. Realising her error she clasps her hand to her mouth in horror.

Teacher [shouting above the music]; Melissa. Concentrate and pay attention.

Alex waits until the music is finished. There is a lot of pushing and shoving because when children come out of the spiral they don't always end up at the exact spot where they are supposed to stand waiting for the next move to begin. When more pupils arrive they try to take over the occupied space.

Alex [turning to Melissa]: I want to congratulate you Melissa. You did exactly the right thing. You went to the next spot and didn't run back into the spiral. I did something like that when I was your age and I was so embarrassed I did what you did and put my hand over my mouth. But afterwards I realised that nobody in the audience realised it was a mistake, that is until I put my hand to my mouth. They thought I was doing a solo. And now then you others [turning to address the rest of the class]. Melissa has taught us all something. Mistakes are going to happen. It doesn't matter. What matters is how you cope with them. So when you come out of the spiral and you find someone is in your position don't try to move him away but go to his place instead. So well done Melissa for teaching us all such an important lesson.

This incident had a powerful impact on the class. When interviewed and asked the usual question, '*Is Alex like a teacher?*' they all gave negative responses and said that this was mainly because, '*She didn't shout like teachers.*' Asked to explain further, they mostly talked about the above incident with Melissa. Whether it left a similar impression on Mrs Matthews, the class teacher, we shall never know since in a subsequent interview with Alex it was established that neither of them ever referred to the matter afterwards.

Before leaving this section of the report, with, hopefully, its rich descriptions of the pedagogies employed by the creative practitioners, it is appropriate to return to the

original research questions in an effort to explain the responses of pupils to the attitude and motivation questionnaire. Of the primaries, where the data was strongest, pupils at Barleycroft maintained the strongest dispositions, overall. They confounded the previous trends in that the Year 6 pupils were highly motivated (achievement mastery and academic satisfaction) whereas in previous transfer studies Y6 scores were always the lowest. When Year 5 comparisons were made they equalled the scores of Ashby Grange pupils while both surpassed those of Merryweather. When self-esteem was examined pupils at Barleycroft, on average, registered 10 percentage points more than their peers at the other two primary schools. The only negative feature was the increase in anti-learning, anti-school sentiments on the post-test, which took place shortly after SATs.

It is not possible to be certain that the Creative Partnership activity brought about these positive outcomes, but nevertheless there are certain inferences that can be drawn from the different approaches adopted by the primary schools. Although at Barleycroft there were teachers like Mrs P who were controlling, they were others who recognised from the start that if pupils were to take risks they needed to have a voice in decision making and freedom to make their own mistakes. Thus the choice of creative partnership activities was initially made by pooling the results of class discussions. Children were then allowed to choose their own group; the only restrictions being a limit on numbers and the fact that once choices were made pupils were not permitted to change. Until the SAT revision period the school devoted a whole day each week to creative activity. This meant that all staff were actively involved in working alongside the creative partners, unlike the two other primary schools where, for the most part, teachers watched from the sidelines or absented themselves from the sessions. A further advantage was that the school coordinator, the headteacher, had a good theoretical understanding of the principles associated with the development of self regulated learning in young children, through her attendance at a Masters course at the local University. She was thus able to provide staff with a rationale for change as well as appreciating when it was necessary to intervene to sustain this approach to learning (as in the case of Bridget and Mrs P).

At both Ashby Grange and Merryweather the coordinators saw themselves as organisers rather than leaders. Class teachers had the final say over the form and

extent of their pupils' participation, so that creative agents and practitioners had to negotiate at Year rather than at school level. Both these schools favoured short periods of activity. This took place throughout the summer term at Ashby Grange and in the second half of the autumn and summer terms at Merryweather. At the latter school it consisted of two special 'event' weeks so it is not surprising that with such short exposure the pupils' scores were the lowest of all. But the major differences from Barleycroft lay in the extent of control that teachers sought to retain over learning and behaviour, when pupils were engaged in partnership activities. Although it was not possible to test the differences statistically (because of the relatively small sample sizes) the largest number of negative statements attributed to teachers and subjects in the projective tests was from Ashby Grange, the least from Barleycroft.

The evidence presented in the previous pages supports the view that even in less favourable conditions creative practitioners still foster pupils' emotional development as well as their creativity and problem solving. They do this by creating warm, friendly cooperative environments where pupils feel able to risk expressing their feelings as well as their ideas. There were numerous other examples that could have been used to illustrate the changes brought about in the pupils as a result of their interaction with these creative practitioners. In Glynn's first group at Woodstock, for example, one girl, Lucy, was totally withdrawn and said little. She had gained sufficient confidence by the time the second filming took place to lead a group at the planning stage and to direct the final filming. At Barleycroft besides helping James to take big decisions, Bridget also succeeded with Cleo, a pupil with a reputation for sulking and sometimes outbursts of violent temper whenever she didn't get her own way. It was Cleo who wanted to put the snow flakes on the trees for the pantomime. By the end of the year, Cleo had become the group leader and had learnt to accept other points of view as well as her own. In the group's decision-making discussions she frequently defended other pupils' right to be heard and insisted that consideration be given to minority views.

Yet these creative practitioners seemed reluctant to engage in conversations with teachers about the ways in which these small but significant triumphs were achieved. Some, ex-teachers themselves, who had left the profession because of the restrictive nature of the curriculum and the tyranny of testing, felt it unreasonable to put more

pressure on classroom practitioners. As one creative practitioner put it when discussing these findings:

Teachers often get defensive and I think this is because lots of them aren't able to teach as they wish but are constrained by targets, other initiatives and concerns of the management. Allowing pupils to take ownership is a big risk.

The next and final chapter will therefore consider what might be done to break through this defensive barrier.

Chapter 7: Should Teachers become more like Creative Practitioners?

At one level the answer to the above question must be in the affirmative. The pupils in the study, for the most part, clearly relished not only the experiences provided by the Creative Partnerships but also the contact with the creative practitioners. They talked about them with warmth and also about the transformative effects these individuals had had on their self-confidence, their capacity to face challenge and on their relationships with other pupils and sometimes teachers. And yet to say this is to be accused of creating a ‘them’ and ‘us’ situation where creative practitioner equals good and teacher equals bad. Emily Pringle (2008) in her presentation to the Creative Partnership Seminar on Implementing Creative Learning, based on the findings from her doctoral thesis, makes a similar point.

In the contexts of CP consideration must be given to how and whether artist-led pedagogy can endanger broader and longer-term creative learning strategies across the school. One issue associated with artists’ interventions in education (which these artists are aware of) is that art practitioners can adopt creative and experimental pedagogic modes because generally they are free from curriculum constraints whereas teachers are not always at liberty to do so. The artist thus becomes a creative ‘other’ whereas the teacher can be cast in the role of didact or policeman. There is a danger that artists’ reinforce normative relations because they act as one off bubbles where they are perceived as limited outside interventions^{xvii}.

A number of counter-arguments can be developed to promote the case for seeking a greater degree of intervention in schools by successful creative practitioners. The first concerns the plight of the learners and the accumulated research evidence of the decline in intrinsic motivation and the growth of dependency among pupils leading to a lack of self-confidence and a lowering of self-esteem. This has been recognised by the Government, which in response has instituted the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) initiative in primary schools and recently launched a parallel programme for secondary institutions. A second argument relies on studies showing that despite the constraints of the present curriculum there are teachers who work in

^{xvii} The passage in quotes comes from a report by Addison and Burgess (2006:92)

ways that closely resemble the creative practitioners described in the previous chapters (Berliner 2002). As argued in the opening chapter, the focus should be on the '*culture of teaching*' not with the individual teacher's practice, since there is good evidence that practice can be changed when conditions are favourable. The approach, therefore, should mirror that of Deci and Ryan (1985): 'I can't *condone* certain practices, because I believe they harm and stifle pupils' creative abilities but I can *understand* why you do what you do'.

For example, a recent visit to a school provided an opportunity to see the programme, 'Philosophy 4 Children' (Lipman *et al.*1980) in operation. Two Year 5 classes were observed during which pupils and the teacher discussed such topics as, '*Is it ever right to tell a lie?*' and '*Is losing one's temper a rational or emotional response?*' In each case teachers were giving pupils the space and time to think, teachers' questions were open-ended and challenging and pupils were encouraged to support their arguments with examples which often described motives and subsequent feelings. In turn teachers reciprocated so that when asked by her pupils if she had ever lied, the class teacher owned up and also explained how she had felt afterwards.

The school had adopted the programme by chance. The headteacher attended a conference where another teacher had described how the Philosophy 4 Children was being used in her school. The headteacher was impressed, visited the teacher's school, was convinced of the programmes merits and found the money for her staff to be trained in phase I of the programme. And yet despite the enthusiasm shown by the staff the cultural impediments of schooling still operated as the following extract of an interview with the children illustrates.

Interviewer; In the P4C class what happens if the teacher says something and you don't agree?

Pupil: We tell her.

Interviewer: Does that go for all of you? [nods all round] So what if it was something else like in literacy or maths and you didn't agree. Would you tell her?

Pupil: No.

Interviewer: Why not?

Pupil: Because she's the teacher.

When this conversation was reported back to the teachers they were genuinely upset as they had assumed that the practices they had done so much to encourage in the Philosophy classes had transferred to other lessons. The example serves to confirm the current view that the change process is more complex than conventional school improvement models would suggest and that the process is difficult, not always predictable, is likely to take more time than first anticipated and is often difficult to sustain (Thomson 2007).

The third argument in favour of teachers adopting the practices of the more successful creative practitioners comes from the research findings showing that when such practice is a regular feature of the classroom it improves not only the pupils' personal dispositions but also their academic performance. In the United States a program of research was begun in 1987 by the newly formed National Board of Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTS). The entire research program was designed to find and celebrate good and successful teachers (Bond *et al.* 2000). These researchers set out to determine whether practitioners certified as '*master teachers*' actually perform in their classrooms in the ways that experts might be expected to, and whether these teachers had a positive effect on student achievement.

To gain master teacher status requires a rigorous examination costing a candidate US\$ 2,000 and involves an estimated preparation time of several hundred hours. Candidates have to produce evidence of their pupils' academic performance together with portfolios and videotapes of classroom practice as well as undertaking a series of tests at an assessment center. The pass rate is low (between 10% and 20%). On the basis of the literature Bond *et al.* (2000) choose to specify expert classroom performance. Trained observers assessed these features by analyzing and numerically coding teachers' classroom lessons and video-taped transcripts. The comparison consisted of teachers who had succeeded and failed to gain the master teacher qualification. Observers worked '*blind*' in that they were unaware of the result of each

teacher's final assessment. The following characteristics were found to discriminate between the masters' and non-masters' classrooms.^{xviii}:

1. Pupil exploration will usually precede formal presentation.
2. Pupils' questions and comments often determine the focus of classroom discourse.
3. There is a high proportion of pupil talk, much of it occurring between pupils. So that the metaphor "*teacher as a listener*" and "*guide on the side*" rather than as a "*sage on the stage*" are characteristic of the lesson.
4. The lesson requires pupils to reflect critically on the procedures and the methods they used.
5. Whenever possible what is learned is related to the pupils' lives outside school
6. Pupils are encouraged to use a variety of means and media to communicate their ideas.
7. Content to be taught is organized around a limited set of powerful ideas
8. Teachers structure tasks in ways which limit the complexity involved.
9. Higher order thinking is developed within the context of the curriculum and not taught as a discrete set of skills within a separate course unit.
10. The classroom ethos encourages pupils to offer speculative answers to challenging questions without fearing failure

It will be seen, from a reading of the previous chapters, that the descriptions of the way that the creative practitioners engaged with pupils closely replicates the above criteria.

If it's about learning do as you think but if it's about behaviour do as I say.

Most teachers, like doctors, seem to be able to keep their working lives and their private lives in separate boxes. If they didn't then teacher burnout would occur more often. At Ashby Grange, for example, Mrs Matthews was overtaken by concern for a son who had just joined the army and might be posted to Iraq. She regularly voiced her anxieties in the staffroom. On the trip to photograph buildings she was relaxed and

^{xviii} The original prototypical skills were not in this exact form. The wording provided here relies heavily on Brophy's (2004) definition of the key pedagogic characteristics in teaching for understanding.

engaged with her class in a manner that very much replicated the type of relationship that the creative practitioners strived to develop in their dealings with the pupils. Back in the classroom, however, she ruled with the proverbial *rod of iron*.

For the creative practitioner, however, life in the outside world and life as an artist do not appear to be separate entities. They bring this approach into schools and engaged with pupils in much the same way as they did with fellow artists or with their families. In an interview, when asked how he developed his approach, Andy, the conceptual artist, responded:

‘I don’t really like working in galleries, although I do work in galleries. But I kind of like working with other artists within systems. I see Local Councils as a system, regeneration as a system and education in schools being a system. And my job as an artist is to sit outside that and question it and challenge it. And I think that’s what I’ve tried to do here like in any other project. As an artist I’ve challenged the system, so it’s been like a piece of work. It’s conceptual for me.

Whereas at Barleycroft, Bridget, when asked to comment on her handling of certain incidents, such as James not wanting to opt for any of the offered choices, or Cleo, the girl who pestered her to be allowed to add snow to the pantomime trees, said

I’ve got a big family; children of my own and step-children and sometimes that’s not easy. So when there’s a problem here like today with James I just respond in the same way I might do at home.

Teachers, however, are taught from the outset that to be successful you need to keep your life and feelings separate from your relationship with the pupils. Galton (1989:144) quotes from a document provided by the Local Authority Advisory Service for probationary teachers, which under the heading Good Working Relationships with Children, offers the following advice:

The formal encourages discipline; the informal indulgence
See yourself from their [i.e. children’s] viewpoint. Any teacher is expected to fulfil a role of authority.
A tough new teacher deserves respect
A friendly new teacher is weak

A teacher craving to be popular never is.

The premise: Until you've got them where you want them no real teaching can be done. Discipline is primary, subject matter secondary UNTIL YOU HAVE WON.

Don't smile for the first month. Develop your style while strict. Don't try to be popular.

The '*don't smile till Christmas*' model of coping with poor behaviour was very much in evidence in the class of Mrs Matthews and other teachers at Ashby Grange in particular. Many primary teachers tend to revert to this maxim whenever it appears that they are losing control of the situation so that on days when there has been an incident of poor behaviour in class these practitioners will choose more formal activities in which children are expected to work silently on some writing task or numerical calculations. Any deviation from the rule (talking, fidgeting etc) is likely to receive a strong reprimand, while at the outset the class might be told that

We're going to have a quiet day today

In the teacher's mind, therefore, there is a clear distinction between learning and behaviour. When engaged in cognition teachers want pupils to say what they think but when the issue concerns behaviour the teacher wants the pupils to do as they are told. Hence the tensions that surfaced when the creative practitioners tended to blur these clear lines of division and the speed with which teachers sought to retrieve the situation by telling pupils at the end of the session that it was '*back to normal.*'

From the children's perspective, however, the teacher's distinction between behaviour and learning may not be so clear cut. When teachers ask questions, for example, they are often designed to discover whether the class is paying attention as well as attempting to learn about the depth of pupil's knowledge. Pupils often resolve the ambiguity of such situations, as we have seen, by the use of '*knife edging*' strategies which allows them to avoid answering until they have discovered the purpose of the questioning. The approach adopted by creative practitioners, such as always giving reasons for their decisions, (rather than merely telling children what to do and expecting them to do it) therefore helps to lower this inherent ambiguity and appears

to encourage children to abandon this strategy of avoidance and to take more risks when faced with a difficult challenging task. Certainly there is evidence to suggest that too controlling an environment can stifle creativity. Koestner *et al.* (1984) for example, conducted an experiment where the degree of control that the teacher exercised was varied when children were engaged in a painting activity during an art class. In the first '*controlling*' condition pupils were presented with a set of rules which were constructed by the teacher. They could only use a certain size paper, they were not to spill paint, they had to wash their brush and dry it with a paper towel before changing to a new colour etc. The second condition, described as '*no limits*' allowed the pupils to do much as they pleased. The third condition, '*informational limitations*', gave pupils reasons for rules as did the creative practitioners in the present study. Pupils were told, for example, that the reason for not spilling paint was that the backing paper would subsequently be used as a border for the picture and therefore needed to retain its original colour.

All paintings were rated by a panel of judges for creativity (mainly using originality as the criterion) and also expression. Koestner and colleagues also tested the pupils' intrinsic motivation by arranging for a number of attractive alternatives (games, books, puzzles etc) to be placed around the room. After ten minutes of painting, pupils were told that if they wanted to stop they could move over to these alternative activities. While in keeping with other studies, the '*no limits*' or *laissez-faire* approach had little to recommend it, it was also found that pupils under the '*controlled*' approach were less intrinsically motivated and that their paintings were also judged to be less '*creative*' than those of the pupils in the '*informational limitations*' class.

Perhaps the last word on this matter should be left to a creative practitioner, Pam:

I think the structure that you have to work in brings its own kind of discipline. You try to give children freedom within a framework. I mean theatre is an incredibly rigorous disciplined activity which is why I keep saying, and always will, that you learn everything by doing it. Because it's so disciplined you have to accept those disciplines if you wish to take part. But within that discipline framework you are then free to let your imaginations run away. And I don't think children have a difficulty with that.

The next steps?

It is possible that these findings may present too pessimistic a view of what is taking place in Creative Partnership schools. In this research, in order to establish a base line for measuring pupils' attitudes, Phase III schools, with no previous experience of working with creative partners, were deliberately chosen. It could be that where relationships have been sustained over a longer period some of the identified differences in pedagogy between teachers and creative practitioners have been resolved. From a personal perspective, this does appear to be the case in some of the establishments applying for the Schools of Creativity Awards. It would have been an interesting extension to this research if some Phase I schools had been included.

On the other hand, Pringle's (2008) analysis suggests that the issues surrounding the pedagogy of creative practitioners and teachers, which have been identified in the previous chapters, also exist in other schools where the links with Creative Partnerships have been built up over an extended period. This is because, as argued here, they represent a clash of cultures. Pringle points out that in describing their practice:

Artists tend to define themselves in opposition to teachers or to school scenarios. They resist describing their practice as 'teaching'. Although respecting the teaching profession, the constraints of the curriculum and the need to transmit a specific body of knowledge are seen by them as counter to their mode of pedagogy. Instead artists seek to engage participants primarily through discussion and the exchanging of ideas and experiences... In line with the co-construction learning model these artists typically identify themselves as co-learners, who question and reorganise their knowledge, rather than as infallible experts transmitting information.

The clash between the two cultures, that of the teacher and the creative practitioner has also been identified in the work of Thompson *et al* (2006) and Hall *et al* (2007). They make use of Bernstein's (1966) notions of *competence* and *performance* pedagogies to analyse the interactions between teachers and creative practitioners in three arts initiatives. Competence pedagogies focus on the learner and what the learner has achieved so tend to be 'active, creative and self-regulating'. Control is usually implicit in that it 'tends to inhere in personalised forms of communication' so

that 'learners have a greater degree of control over what they learn and the pace and sequencing of lessons' (Hall *et al.* 2007:607). Performance models of pedagogy place the emphasis upon clearly defined outputs so that learners are expected to acquire certain skills or to construct specific texts or products in fulfilment of the required outcome. For Bernstein this requires '*visible practice*' where the sequence and pace of the lessons are controlled by the teacher and the criteria for success are made explicit. As a result there is a clear hierarchical relationship between teacher and pupil. It would appear, judging by the earlier response of the pupils participating in the Philosophy 4 Children's lessons, that these two cultures can operate side by side in the same school and can, as was the case, sometimes involve the same teacher.

Creative practitioners tended, as in the present study, to adopt competence pedagogies while teachers tended to favour performance ones. However, these researchers found that although creative practitioners were often politically adept at working around the school's visible pedagogy it tended to minimise productive dialogue between the respective parties in the partnership because there were too few opportunities to engage in detailed discussion about the '*pedagogic text*'. Whereas for teachers, evaluation is primarily about whether the pupils have achieved the set criteria, for creative practitioners its main purpose is to indicate possibilities for the learner's future development (Hall *et al.* 2007:617). In the case of one school in these researchers' study this clash of pedagogic cultures resulted in a decision not to publish the work produced by the pupils with the help of a resident writer (Thomson *et al.* (2006). While it is argued that such differences are not easily resolved, given the 'professional histories and training' of teachers and artists, these researchers note, as in this present study, that few formal opportunities exist within the Creative Partnership arrangements for the necessary discourse to occur. They suggest that one useful way of initiating this discourse is for teachers and creative practitioners to engage in joint evaluations so that in the case describe by Thomson and her colleagues 'a joint reading of the pupils' finished work and a shared analysis and pooling of thinking about the children they were teaching' might lead to 'increased understandings of any barriers to the pupils' future progress' (Hall *et al.* 2007:617).

Even where attempts are made to integrate the creative practice within standard lessons, rather than in most of the cases cited in this research, where activities consisted of special projects outside the normal school curriculum, the separation between the teachers' and the creative practitioners' roles was maintained. In Peveril Vale, for example, Sue and Phil were asked to work with several science classes. In one Year 7 class the topic, 'food chains' was being investigated. The teacher chose two examples of the shift from plant to herbivore to carnivore and then to predator, one on land and one on sea. For the sea example the shift is from plankton to seahorse, then to fish, then shark and finally killer whale. The creative practitioners have produced a large piece of decorated hard-board and at various points cut out holes so that pupils could insert their heads. Their task consisted of face painting various children to represent different creatures and then recording the enactment of the particular example of a food chain. The teacher acted, for the most part, as the provider of information. She wrote down for each child several lines of dialogue of the form, *'I am a mouse. I get my energy from eating juicy caterpillars'*. These descriptions of the food chains were then filmed with pupils reciting the teacher's chosen words. Although both creative practitioners were ardent ecologists as well as artists, and might have therefore been expected to have had something to contribute to an exploration of the role of different plants and animals in the food chain, their respective roles were primarily as technicians with expertise in painting and filming.

Like the artists in Pringle's (2008) account the creative practitioners in this present study mostly felt that only by sustained dialogue with small groups of teachers and students can this clash of pedagogies be resolved. There is growing evidence that such networks can be a powerful way to bring about changes in pedagogy (Watkins 2005), although as Thomson (2007) reminds us, gains sometimes come at the cost of increased workloads and additional bureaucracy. To work well participants need a shared philosophy and the structure needs to be both cooperative and collegial Ainscow and West (2006). In this research, as in Pringle's case, most of the schools, particularly at primary level, wanted all pupils (except Year 6) to avail themselves of the experience of working with the creative practitioners. This inevitably meant seeing any one group of children (and their teacher) for very short periods so that building up the kind of relationships which allowed discussion of respective teaching

approaches was difficult if not impossible. Even at Barleycroft, where contacts were maintained over a whole year, the creative practitioners came and went because they had other professional lives outside the school and other commitments. Schools were also often keen to have an outcome for public consumption, in the form of a show, or open day for parents and governors. This also restricted opportunity for dialogue in that the pressures to produce an acceptable finished product sometimes meant that the creative partners, as in Glynn's and Alex's case, gradually took on more responsibility for decision-making than they would do normally. Thus the distinction between their approach and that of the teacher became blurred towards the final stages.

Since completing this research the next step has been to bring some of these most successful creative practitioners and their creative agents together. In presenting them with the findings the aim has been to facilitate a process where they can begin to articulate more clearly the rationale behind their approach to fostering creativity in schools and the conditions necessary to sustain it. Like successful expert teachers, these creative practitioners often found it difficult during interviews to say '*why they did what they did*', tending to see most of their interventions as '*intuitive*' (Claxton 2000). But without communicating an understanding of the underlying principles governing this '*creative*' practice, teachers are unlikely to imitate and sustain similar approaches over the longer term. This is what Coburn (2003) in a review of innovations which have been sustained over time refers to as *depth*. Desforges (2003) also argues that without an understanding of the underpinning rationale teachers are often unable to adjust the recommended approaches to meet the needs of a particular class. Take up, therefore, often remains superficial and results after a short period in a return to the status quo.

In the two meetings, so far held, with a group of creative practitioners from this study there has been a marked eagerness to engage in this kind of debate. Participants have talked about it being '*a privilege*' to be invited to participate and '*to discuss ideas and thoughts with such an interesting group of people.*' They also spoke of feeling '*for the first time*' that their expertise beyond their particular skills was '*being valued*'. All of these creative practitioners recognised the constraints that exist in schools and for this reason think that the kind of learning communities suggested by Watkins (2005)

should begin by involving selected groups of school coordinators who, in the creative practitioners' judgement, have developed more than others. This also fits in with Ainscow and West's (2006) view that the members of successful networks need to embrace a common philosophy.

This also fits well with developmental models of increasing expertise (Galton 2007). Few teachers in this study were at a stage in their thinking where they wished to engage in discussions concerning the rationale for the creative partner's approach to learning and creativity. Most wished for '*hands on sessions*' where they could acquire new knowledge and skills. For some, it was simply a question of applying what was offered fairly uncritically. This viewpoint reflects an early '*initiation*' stage where teachers were seeking to minimise the personal effort required (both intellectual and practical) by seeking to have someone else tell them what to do. This response also has the advantage that if things go wrong the blame can be placed upon those offering the suggestions in the first place. Teachers who favour '*hands on sessions*' but adapt the suggested approaches are likely to be at the '*consolidation*' stage. Most of their ideas will focus on the content and context of creative activities and not the processes. Thus at Merryweather primary school, some teachers were so impressed by the enthusiasm shown by the children when exploring Andy's tent that they proposed another similar happening by making the climbing frame in the play area into a pirate ship. At the same time they continued to ask for explanations about the purpose of the various artefacts inserted into the tent rather than viewing them merely as a stimulus to the pupils' imaginings.

Such transfer of knowledge between creative practitioner and teachers, without deeper understanding of the processes involved, is therefore likely to be superficial. Only at the *re-orientation* stage, where issues are increasingly being raised about the children's personal development and their learning, are teachers likely to be receptive to theoretical implications behind the creative practitioners' approach. This is because such teachers are at the point in their development where they are willing to attribute failure to their own efforts, rather than blaming it on factors outside their personal control. With this wish to take co-ownership of the creative experience comes a desire to be better informed about the ideas that underpin the creative practitioner's

approach. These *'enlightened'* school coordinators could then *'cascade'* the process, either in their own school or by forming new networks with other colleagues elsewhere.

As in most initiatives of this kind, however, effective school leadership is an essential. In the present study a deputy headteacher of a secondary school was assigned a coordinating role while in one primary school the headteacher took on the role of coordinator. In all other cases leadership of the creative partnership initiative was assigned to a junior staff member and in one school it was jointly shared between a part-timer and a teaching assistant. Few headteachers saw the creative partnership initiative as a vehicle for changing the school's approach to teaching and learning. For some it was to help cope with *'difficult'* pupils^{xix}. For some primary schools it served as a response to Ofsted's criticisms about the quality of the pupils' spoken language. For others it met the demands of SEAL and the emphasis in the new revised strategy on bringing creativity back into the curriculum. While the local Creative Partnerships and their creative agents did attempt to introduce a wider perspective, the discussions tended to centre on the need for greater curriculum integration as a first step to transforming school practice. For example, filming about the juice bar at Woodstock was originally to be part of an initiative about healthy eating but after lengthy discussions the school agreed to situate the creative activity within the wider context of a cross-curriculum development in Enterprise Education. More often than not such negotiations were extended because the school coordinator, being a junior member of staff, then had to hold more meetings with the *'movers and shakers'* within the school hierarchy in order to get informed consent to any proposals.

The purpose of this research, however, was not to concern itself with questions of leadership and whole school change, although this clearly has major implications for any activity that seeks to bring about a transformation in classroom practice. The group of successful creative practitioners in the present study are, currently engaged in developing their ideas for establishing a network of *'like-minded'* practitioners. They have suggested that the starting point should concern patterns of questioning and

^{xix} In one of the secondary schools the arrangements had to be quickly changed because most of the original target group of pupils were under suspension.

issues of scaffolding so that children are given the time and space to '*think their own thoughts*'. They feel this is potentially less threatening than issues of classroom management, although they suggest that creative agents should, when negotiating with the school, establish some ground rules whereby, for example, teachers would not shout over the exchanges between the creative practitioner and the class in order to deliver reprimands etc.

These creative practitioners have also suggested an approach whereby they and the teachers are responsible for consecutive sessions so that each participant can build on previously observed practice. As a concept this is not so far removed from the Japanese tradition of '*lesson studies*' which has been reviewed by Marton and Booth (1997) and modified for use in Hong Kong schools by Lo *et al.* (2005) as a way of helping teachers cater more effectively for individual pupils' learning needs. In the Hong Kong version each teacher takes a turn at adapting and then teaching a lesson or sequence of lessons following reflection of what has been previously been observed in a colleague's class. More recent versions do not have such a rigid, formal structure and often use video recordings but embrace the crucial ideas of joint planning and then reflection on each other's practice.

Another proposal to emerge from the creative practitioners discussions is the need to provide space for teachers to have an opportunity to practise an art form. This again raises interesting issues because there are as yet no observation studies of teachers who currently span the two cultures; that of teaching while at the same time pursuing their art in a semi-professional form. As one creative agent wrote in response to this idea

This is difficult and sensitive but what might change things would be for teachers to be allocated the possibility of an hour each week to practise some art form. I really do believe that only by doing art can one remain alive to the possibilities and processes; to the personal engagement with risks etc. This is what Creative Partnerships is supposed to be about but very often schools think we can leave teachers out of this experience or only give it to them through the children. Wouldn't it be good if one of the five cultural offer hours this government is so keen on was spent doing some art. I know this seems idealistic but seeing we are trying to do something new, something

that will really make a difference, this would be the most creative way -and then we could work backwards or sideways from there.

Suggestions of this kind will be viewed as impractical by many and are never likely to amount to more than individual small-scale initiatives. However, given the repeated failures of both '*top down*' and '*bottom up*' reforms to impact in a fundamental way on existing pedagogy, it is perhaps time to give more attention to '*seed corn*' projects of this kind which could, at least, provide signposts for future development. If the research described in the previous pages can offer a useful starting point for some of these collaborative ventures between teachers and creative practitioners it will have served a useful purpose.

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